

Signs & Symptoms of Child Sexual Abuse

Behavioral

- Appearing threatened by physical contact or shrinking away from touch
- Sudden preference for being alone
- Changing hygiene routines, such as suddenly refusing to bathe or bathing excessively
- Silence and secret-keeping
- Regressive behaviors such as thumb-sucking or bed-wetting
- Age-inappropriate sexual conduct
- Excessive or age-inappropriate sexual talk or knowledge of sexual terms

Emotional

- New anxiety, fearfulness, or worry
- Decrease in confidence or self-esteem
- Personality changes such as newfound aggression or defiance
- Separation anxiety from primary caregivers or fear of being alone with certain people
- Nightmares or other sleep disturbances
Depression or loss of interest in daily activities, friendships, and school
- Paranoia or hallucinations
- Self-harming behaviors

Physical

- Bruising, swelling, or other trauma on or around the genitals, anus, or mouth
- Non-menstrual blood on sheets or in underwear
- Persistent or recurring pain while urinating or during bowel movements
- Development of sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy in pubescent children and adolescents

Potential Long-Term Effects

- Mental health problems
- Loss of sense of self
- Personality disorders
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Physical issues like obesity, chronic pain, and overall poor health are also common for childhood sexual abuse survivors.