

WHAT IS SEXUAL ABUSE?

Child sexual abuse is the exploitation of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult or an older child. Sexual abuse involves forcing, tricking, bribing, threatening, or pressuring a child into sexual awareness or activities. The abuse often begins gradually and increases over time. Children normally do not tell anyone about the abuse.

TYPES OF SEXUAL ABUSE

- Sexual touching and fondling
- Exposing children to pornographic materials
- Masturbating or being sexual in front of a child
- Photographing a child for sexual purposes
- Rape or attempted rape
- Verbal and emotional abuse of a sexual nature

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

PHYSICAL INDICATORS

Frequent urinary infections
Bed wetting or soiling
Sleeping problems, nightmares, or insomnia
Rashes or itching in genital areas
Unexplained stomach aches, headaches or vomiting

EMOTIONAL INDICATORS

Exceptional secrecy
Lacks concentration or has difficulty remembering
Difficulty making decisions
Fearful of certain places, things or people
Fear of bathroom or shower
Receives gifts or money from a questionable

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS

Withdrawal from family, friends or usual activities
Excessive bathing or poor hygiene
Reluctance to undress
Avoidance of touch
Self-mutilation and self-destructive behaviors