

[IMAGE]

Physical Complaints May Predict Teen Depression

If you're a parent, especially the parent of a teenager, each day brings new joys and new frustrations. For many parents, a constant challenge in the family home is dealing with a common teenage condition: complaining. In fact, you're probably so accustomed to the steady stream of complaints that you "tune out" most of it.

But don't tune out everything. A study published in the journal *Pediatrics* reports that adolescents with multiple physical complaints (that cannot be explained by known physical conditions) may be at risk for depression. The study evaluated 1,015 teenagers (13-16 years old) and found that teens reporting physical symptoms (i.e., headaches or abdominal pain) with unknown causes faced the possibility of panic attacks and major depression four years later.

If you don't think these results are cause for concern, listen to this somber statistic: The suicide rate for adolescents has increased by more than 200% over the last decade!

We should all listen more in general. Parenting is more than just telling your children what to do. It's also about listening to what they have to say and what they're feeling. As this study suggests, seemingly harmless physical complaints might be a manifestation of depression.

Reference:

Zwaigenbaum L, Szatmari P, Boyle MH, et al. Highly somatizing young adolescents and the risk of depression. *Pediatrics*, June 1999: Vol. 103, No. 6, pp1203-09.

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