

Teens and Hemophilia—Understanding Stress and Anxiety

This information is provided for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace discussions with a health care provider. Please speak to your treatment team if you have any questions about your/your child's care.

This content is brought to you by Pfizer.

The teenage years have many types of changes, including ones that are physical, emotional, and social. Teens with hemophilia have another aspect to consider, which is learning how to manage their health when moving from pediatric to adult care. However, parents of kids with hemophilia may tend to be overprotective.¹ It's important to recognize and address this challenge, especially if parents are finding the transition more difficult than their child does.

The Added Stress of Hemophilia

Teens might be able to find support from friends about many issues, but hemophilia may not be among them. Limitations on sports and exercise may be a source of stress.² Part of managing hemophilia is helping teens to have experiences much like their peers do, while avoiding joint damage that can affect them later in life.² Families can talk with their hemophilia care team to learn how to be active as a teen with hemophilia and prevent joint damage.³

Watching for Anxiety and Depression

Unfortunately, symptoms of anxiety and depression may be seen in kids with hemophilia.¹ Parents may be overprotective of their children. However, kids may be better able to cope with the stress and anxiety of chronic illness when they know more about their condition.¹ Working with providers to teach teen patients about hemophilia and empowering them in self-care, as well as helping parents to take a supportive role, can help improve quality of life.²

How Caregivers Can Support Teens

Parents and caregivers may find themselves feeling anxious during the teen years.⁴ The hemophilia care team can help in learning how to create a supportive atmosphere, which may lead to better outcomes for the teen.² As teens take on more responsibility, this will mean encouraging acceptance around hemophilia, regular self-care, and a healthy environment.²

References: 1. Abali O, Zülfikar OB, Karakoç Demirkaya S, Ayaydin H, Kircelli F, Duman M. An examination of the symptoms of anxiety and parental attitude in children with hemophilia. *Turk J Med Sci.* 2014;44(6):1087-1090. doi:10.3906/sag-1310-82 2. Garcia-Dasi M, Torres-Ortuno A, Cid-Sabatel R, Barbero J. Practical aspects of psychological support to the patient with haemophilia from diagnosis in infancy through childhood and adolescence. *Haemophilia.* 2016;22:e349-e358. doi:10.1111/hae.13018 3. Petrini P, Seuser A. Haemophilia care in adolescents—compliance and lifestyle issues. *Haemophilia.* 2009;15:15-19. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2516.2008.01948.x 4. Bottos AM, Zanon E, Sartori MT, Girolami A. Psychological aspects and coping styles of parents with haemophilic child undergoing a programme of counselling and psychological support. *Haemophilia.* 2007;13(3):305-310. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2516.2006.01428.x 5. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 5 Things You Should Know About Stress. National Institutes of Health. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/stress/> 6. Carskadon MA, Acebo C, Jenni OG. Regulation of adolescent sleep: implications for behavior. *Ann NY Acad Sci.* 2004;1021:276-291. doi:10.1196/annals.1308.032

Recognizing and Reducing Stress

Everyone feels stress so it's important to find ways to manage it. Some signs of stress can include sleeping less, feeling irritable or depressed, and having less energy than usual.⁵ Some of the ways teens with hemophilia can reduce stress and its effects might include⁵:

- Learning to be aware of signs of stress in the mind and body
- Making enough time for sleep and taking naps when needed⁶
- Limiting caffeine and other substances that might impact sleep⁶
- Talking to a parent, friend, family member, or health care team member about difficulties and frustrations
- Keeping active with appropriate physical activity
- Finding relaxing activities or hobbies

Resources for Addressing Stress and Anxiety

Caregivers and teens who are looking for more information on coping with stress and anxiety in the teenage years may find value in the following links:

These websites are neither owned nor controlled by Pfizer. Pfizer does not endorse and is not responsible for the content or services of these sites.

- American Psychological Association: www.pfi.sr/hemophilia-stress
- The American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry: www.pfi.sr/hemophilia-families
- HealthyChildren.org: www.pfi.sr/hemophilia-children
- National Hemophilia Foundation contact line: Call 1-888-463-6643
- Crisis Text Line: Text "HELLO" to 741741
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255); En español 1-888-628-9454



Patient Affairs Liaisons are a team of non-sales, non-promotional field-based professionals. Pfizer's Patient Affairs Liaisons are dedicated to serving the rare disease community by connecting patients and caregivers with Pfizer Rare Disease tools, including educational resources, access support, and community events in your area.

Visit www.pfizerpal.com to connect with your Patient Affairs Liaison.