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PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN

APRIL 2012

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: BULLYING

Bullying can turn kid's everyday activities into a nightmare. Children who are bullied may fear going to school or participating in an event because another child is bullying them. If you know children who are being bullied there are ways to help them handle the bully.

What is bullying?

Most kids have been teased at some point, either by a sibling or a friend. Much of the teasing may be harmless or done in a playful way. A child who is bullied may be teased in hurtful and unkind ways. Often a bully does not tease a child occasionally — it is a common, everyday event.

Bullying can range from physical violence such as hitting, kicking, pushing and shoving to mental torment such as name calling, threatening and mocking. Some bullies even take money or belongings from the person who is being bullied. In these days of technology, some bullies use texting, instant messaging or social networks such as Facebook or Twitter to tease others and hurt feelings.

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Some bullies use texting and social networks like Facebook to tease others.

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Signs of bullying

It may be hard to know if your child is being bullied unless there are physical signs (bruises or injuries) or your child tells you about the situation.

There are warning signs to help you determine if your child might be the victim of a bully:

- May suddenly seem nervous about going to school
- May stop eating
- May stop sleeping well
- May seem moodier
- May start avoiding things that once were enjoyed

Often kids do not tell their parents about being bullied because they are afraid their parents will be ashamed of them.

Let your children know if they are being bullied and have not told you about it, that it is okay to talk about the situation and that it does not have to be with you. Encourage them to talk to any adult, teacher, counselor, another parent, or even a sibling that they trust.

If your child has opened up to you about being bullied

try to comfort and support him, even if you are very upset. Many times kids do not want to tell their parents because they are afraid they will be embarrassed and think their parents may be ashamed of them.

A child who is bullied might feel as though it is her own fault. Try to assure your child that she has done nothing wrong. You may also want to remind your child that she is not alone and that many kids have been bullied. Make sure to explain that you will work with each other to figure out how to handle the bully.

If you are told that the bullying will get worse if it is found out that your child has told an adult about it, take it seriously. Generally, the school counselor and teachers are the best place to start when looking for ways to help your child handle the bully at school.

Hearing that your child is being bullied can be hard. Remember that there are lots of support and resources available for both you and your child.



REFERENCES:

- Nemours KidsHealth.org "What Kids Say About: Bullying" October 2010
- Nemours KidsHealth.org "How Do I Help a Kid Who's Bullied?" April 2011
- Nemours KidsHealth.org "Dealing with Bullies" October 2010
- Nemours KidsHealth.org "Helping Kids Deal with Bullies" October 2010

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