Warning signs of suicide in children and teens

Common warning signs for suicide include:

• Making suicidal statements.
• Being preoccupied with death in conversation, writing, or drawing.
• Giving away belongings.
• Withdrawing from friends and family.
• Having aggressive or hostile behavior.

It is extremely important that you take all threats of suicide seriously and seek immediate treatment for your child or teenager. If you are a child or teen and have these feelings, talk with your parents, an adult friend, or your doctor right away to get some help.

Other warning signs can include:

• Neglecting personal appearance.
• Running away from home.
• Risk-taking behavior, such as reckless driving or being sexually promiscuous.
• A change in personality (such as from upbeat to quiet).

Suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts

Certain problems increase the chances of suicidal thoughts in children and teens. Other problems may trigger a suicide attempt.

• Problems that increase the chances of suicidal thoughts include having:
  - Depression or another mental health problem, such as bipolar disorder (manic-depressive illness) or schizophrenia.

• Problems that may trigger a suicide attempt in children and teens include:
  - Possession or purchase of a weapon, pills, or other means of inflicting self-harm.
  - Drug or alcohol use problems.
  - Witnessing the suicide of a family member.
  - Problems at school, such as falling grades, disruptive behavior, or frequent absences.
  - Loss of a parent or close family member through death or divorce.
  - Legal or discipline problems.
  - Stress caused by physical changes related to puberty, chronic illness, and/or sexually transmitted infections.
  - Withdrawing from others and keeping thoughts to themselves.
  - Uncertainty surrounding sexual orientation.

Help is available. For additional information, visit MagellanHealth.com/MYMH

Source: Healthwise