

THE OTHER SIDE OF COVID-19

Pandemic safety measures have had a negative impact on some aspects of children's and teens' health. Follow our series to learn more and take action.

MENTAL HEALTH

1 in 5 children suffer from a mental health concern, but only **1 in 4** of those struggling actually receive treatment.

At McMaster Children's Hospital:

- **Youth admitted for medical support after a suicide attempt has tripled compared to last year.** Patients are staying in hospital longer due to more serious attempts.
- **Youth admitted with substance use disorders has doubled compared to last year.** In particular, the use of potentially deadly opioids has increased.
- **Referrals to our Eating Disorders Program have increased by 90% compared to last year.** Admissions are projected to increase by 33% over the 12 months since the pandemic started.

As children get older, they become increasingly able to understand and express their emotions. They need coaching to learn new coping skills to navigate tough times in life. Parents and caregivers play an important part.

In times of uncertainty, anxiety increases and youth can become overwhelmed and have to work hard to feel in control. Learning a new skill and engaging in meaningful activities can increase their sense of control and recharge their batteries.



Mental health challenges during the pandemic can be a result of:

- Increased isolation and boredom
- Lack of day-to-day structure
- Family tension due to more time spent at home
- Anxiety related to attending school in-person or virtually
- Limited access to doctors, teachers, coaches and peers who may notice changes in health
- Additional stress due to systemic racism

Help that will work for you is available.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, visit your local emergency department or call 911 right away.

If you or your youth is in need of mental health support, talk to your family doctor or use the resources below.

hamilton.ca/CYmentalhealth

Contact Hamilton:
905-570-8888

Kids Help Phone:
1-800-668-6868

Ways to cope that could help:



Establish a routine



Sleep well



Exercise



Stay connected to those you care about



Eat regularly



Learn a new skill or find an activity you enjoy