Internet addiction
Summary

Internet addiction is an umbrella term that refers to the compulsive need to spend a great deal of time on the Internet, to the point where relationships, work and health are allowed to suffer.

Medical opinion is divided on whether Internet addiction exists as a mental disorder in its own right. Professional treatment, which may include cognitive behaviour therapy, aims to allow the person to use the Internet properly rather than compulsively.

Internet addiction is when a person has a compulsive need to spend a great deal of time on the Internet, to the point where other areas of life (such as relationships, work or health) are allowed to suffer. The person becomes dependent on using the Internet and needs to spend more and more time online to achieve the same ‘high’.

There is a range of behaviours that can be referred to as Internet addiction. Other terms for this addiction include Internet addiction disorder (IAD) and net addiction.

Generally speaking, surveys suggest that males who are addicted to spending time online tend to prefer viewing pornographic websites, while females are attracted to chat rooms for making platonic and cybersexual relationships.

Internet addiction is controversial

Medical opinion is divided on whether Internet addiction exists as a mental disorder in its own right or whether it’s an expression of pre-existing mental disorders or behavioural problems. For example, a person who compulsively trawls the Internet for online gambling venues may have a gambling problem rather than an Internet addiction.

More research is needed into this ‘chicken or the egg’ aspect of Internet addiction before any conclusive answers are known. A recent study in the USA showed that four per cent of college (university) students aged between 18 and 20 showed problematic internet behaviour.

College and university students may be particularly vulnerable to addiction, yet studies on internet addiction in students typically only use self-selected online surveys, with no control groups for comparison. Sometime survey studies do not give reliable results as they may only study a single class so the data cannot be generalised to a broader group or population, and the construction and use of surveys can produce results that are hard to interpret.

Signs of Internet addiction

According to the American Psychiatric Association, Internet addiction can include three or more of the following:

- The user needs to spend ever-increasing amounts of time online to feel the same sense of satisfaction.
- If they can’t go online, the user experiences unpleasant withdrawal symptoms such as anxiety, moodiness and compulsive fantasising about the Internet. Using the Internet relieves these symptoms.
- The user turns to the Internet to cope with negative feelings such as guilt, anxiety or depression.
- The user spends a significant amount of time engaging in other activities related to the Internet (such as researching internet vendors, internet books).
- The user neglects other areas of life (such as relationships, work, school and leisure pursuits) in favour of spending time on the Internet.
- The user is prepared to lose relationships, jobs or other important things in favour of the Internet.

Different types of addiction

The categories of Internet addiction include:

- **Sex** – the person uses the Internet to look at, download or swap pornography or to engage in casual cybersex with other users. This results in neglect of their real-world sex life with their partner or spouse.
- **Relationships** – the person uses chat rooms to form online relationships (‘online dating’) at the expense of spending time with real-life family and friends. This could include having online affairs (‘cyberadultery’).
- **Games** – this can include spending excessive amounts of time playing games, gambling, shopping or trading. This can lead to severe financial troubles.
- **Information** – the user obsessively searches for and collects information.

Social networking addiction – includes the desire to constantly monitor social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. This includes constantly updating profile posts and checking messages to inform friends of what you are doing at the present moment.
A range of theories

The actual cause is unknown. The current range of theories for compulsive Internet use includes:

- **Personality issues** – the user may have personality issues that make them likely to become dependent on a range of things – such as cigarettes, alcohol, gambling, other drugs or the Internet – given the right circumstances.
- **Shyness** – people who are shy in real-life situations may be drawn to the anonymity of the Internet and believe they can be their ‘true selves’ when online.
- **Biochemical responses** – the person’s brain responds to the online rewards with ‘feel good’ chemicals and this biochemical ‘high’ encourages dependence.
- **Escapism** – the Internet is so absorbing that the user can forget about their problems or escape negative emotions while online. Because it makes them feel better, it encourages them to turn to the Internet more and more for relief.
- **Instant gratification** – search engines help users find what they want quickly – for example information, gambling opportunities or pornography. This instant gratification encourages them to stay online.

Self-help suggestions

If you think you may be addicted to the Internet and you want to change your behaviour, you could try the following strategies:

- Take note of your symptoms – for example, keep track of your behaviour, thoughts and feelings.
- Think about why you use the Internet so much. What makes you go online? Is there a real problem you’re not facing up to?
- Brainstorm (think about) other ways to cope with your problem that don’t involve the Internet. Choose some that will work and put them into practice.
- Use relaxation methods like deep breathing or meditation to manage anxiety symptoms.
- Rediscover the neglected areas of your life – for example, socialise with friends, make love to your partner, take your children to the beach, get out and be active.
- Seek professional help if necessary.

Professional treatment

It isn’t necessary to quit using the Internet altogether. Professional treatment aims to allow the person to use the Internet positively rather than compulsively.

Internet addiction seems to respond well to cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT). This type of therapy focuses on changing patterns of thinking and beliefs that are associated with and trigger anxiety. The basis of cognitive behaviour therapy is that beliefs trigger thoughts, which then trigger feelings and produce behaviours. Consult with your doctor for further information and referral. There are also internet addiction support groups available that may help treat your addiction.

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Psychologist
- Australian Psychological Society
  Tel. (03) 8662 3300 or 1800 333 497

Things to remember

- Internet addiction is an umbrella term that refers to the compulsive need to spend a great deal of time on the Internet, to the point where relationships, work and health are allowed to suffer.
- Medical opinion is divided on whether Internet addiction exists as a mental disorder in its own right.
- Professional treatment, which may include cognitive behaviour therapy, aims to allow the person to use the Internet properly rather than compulsively.

References

- Internet addiction disorder: causes, symptoms and consequences, Psychology Department, Virginia Tech. More information here.

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Please note that we cannot answer personal medical queries. If you are looking for health or medical advice we recommend that you:

- talk to your doctor or pharmacist
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- ring NURSE-ON-CALL Tel. 1300 60 60 24.

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Parents

The following content is displayed as Tabs. Once you have activated a link navigate to the end of the list to view its associated content. The activated link is defined as
Active Tab

- Parenting basics
- Family structures
Parenting basics

- Children and health services
  There is a range of subsidised and free health services, including services for mental health and dental health, available for children in Victoria...

- Family and child support services
  There are many government funded family support services available to help parents and young people deal with family issues...

- Happy families
  It might be valuable to occasionally evaluate the dynamics of your family to ensure that everyone is as happy as they could be...

- Healthy budget - tucker talk tips
  You can buy more food if you spend most of your money on basic healthy foods like bread, cereals, fruit and veggies...

- Parenthood and your relationship
  The birth of your first child can significantly change your relationship with your partner and may impact on other relationships...

- Parenting children through puberty
  Puberty is a time of great change for your child, and for you as a parent too. You can help your child in many practical ways, mostly by being reassuring...

- Parenting on your own
  A person can become a single or sole parent for many different reasons. You may have chosen to start a family on your own, you may be separated or divorced, or your partner may have died. As a...

- Parenting services
  Parenting is one of the most important tasks we undertake but it doesn't always come naturally...

- Raising Children Network
  Raising Children Network is an online parenting resource providing research-based information...

- Travelling with children
  If your child is old enough, involve them in planning a trip so they can get excited about it...

Family structures

- 10 tips for happier step-parenting
  Give your undivided attention when your child asks for it... 10 tips for happier step-parenting...

- Adoption
  Adoption can give a secure family life to children who can't live with their birth family...

- Empty nest syndrome
  The grief of empty nest syndrome often goes unrecognized, because an adult child moving out of home is seen as a normal, healthy event...

- Foster care
  Foster care is temporary care of children up to 18 years by trained, assessed and accredited foster carers...

- Kinship care
  Kinship care is the care provided by relatives or a member of a child's social network when a child cannot live with their parents...

- Moving out of home – tips for parents
  If you don't approve of your child's reasons for moving out, try to keep the lines of communication open...

- Parenting on your own

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
A person can become a single or sole parent for many different reasons. You may have chosen to start a family on your own, you may be separated or divorced, or your partner may have died. As a...

- **Parenting when you’re a foster carer**
  As a foster carer, you are providing a safe and supportive home for a child or teenager who can’t live with their family of origin. You may face challenges that affect you physically, emotionally and...

- **Permanent care**
  After experiencing abuse, neglect or rejection, many children are slow to put their trust in anyone...

- **Single parenting**
  In single-parent households, issues such as holidays or major family purchases are more likely to be decided with the children...

- **Stepfamilies**
  Becoming part of a stepfamily involves adjusting to a number of changes...

- **Surrogacy**
  Surrogacy is a form of assisted reproductive treatment (ART) in which a woman carries a child within her uterus on behalf of another person or couple...

### Communication, identity and behaviour

- **10 tips for managing sibling rivalry**
  Teach your children to sort out minor differences themselves... 10 tips for managing sibling rivalry...

- **Body image and young people - staying positive (video)**
  The pressure on young girls and boys to be physically perfect is creating an epidemic of children and teenagers with low self-esteem and negative body image. Reporter Flip Shelton introduces us to the...

- **Body image – tips for parents**
  Give your child opportunities to appreciate their body for what it can do, rather than what it looks like...

- **Bullying**
  Parents can help with bullying by supporting their child and involving the authorities to find solutions...

- **Children and shyness**
  If your child's shyness is especially debilitating, you may like to consider professional help from a counsellor or psychologist...

- **Children and sibling rivalry**
  Sibling rivalry is a common problem, particularly among children who are the same sex and close together in age...

- **Discipline and children**
  Disciplining your child means teaching them responsible behaviour and self-control...

- **Family conflict**
  It is normal to disagree with each other from time to time and occasional conflict is part of family life...

- **Internet addiction**
  Internet addiction refers to the compulsive need to spend a lot of time on the Internet, to the point where relationships, work and health suffer...

- **Parenting on your own**
  A person can become a single or sole parent for many different reasons. You may have chosen to start a family on your own, you may be separated or divorced, or your partner may have died. As a...

- **Partying safely – tips for parents**
  With a few simple plans in place, a good time can be had by all at a teenage party – even the parents...

- **Peer pressure**
  Peer groups can be a very positive influence on your teenager's life...

- **Sex education - tips for parents**
  Mothers are more likely to talk about intimate, emotional and psychological aspects of sex than fathers...

- **Talking to primary school children about sex**
Some parents find it hard to talk with their primary age children about sex, but help is available...

- **Young children and communication**
  Children thrive with words of encouragement and praise.

### Raising healthy children

- **A Healthy Start to School**
  A Healthy Start to School – a guide for parents of children in their foundation year of school.

- **A Healthy Start to School**
  A Healthy Start to School – a guide for parents of children in their foundation year of school.

- **Children – keeping them active**
  A young child is naturally active, so build upon their inclinations to use their body.

- **Children's diet - fruit and vegetables**
  If you eat and enjoy fruit and vegetables every day, your child may eventually follow your lead.

- **Dr Margaret's Story (video)**
  Access to vaccines has changed lives and protects our children from crippling diseases such as polio.

- **Eating disorders and adolescents**
  Often, an eating disorder develops as a way for an adolescent to feel in control about what's happening in their life.

- **Healthy eating tips**
  A good balance between exercise and food intake is important to maintain a healthy body weight.

- **Immunisation – deciding which vaccines you need**
  Everyone's immunisation needs are different and are influence by your health, lifestyle, age and occupation.

- **No Jab No Play**
  No Jab No Play – from 1 January 2016, all parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child at an early childhood service in Victoria must provide evidence that the child is fully immunised for their age.

- **Obesity in children - management**
  If your child is overweight, you can help by making healthier lifestyle choices for yourself.

- **Parenting on your own**
  A person can become a single or sole parent for many different reasons. You may have chosen to start a family on your own, you may be separated or divorced, or your partner may have died. As a...

- **Parent's guide for active girls**
  Physical activity is an important part of health and wellbeing and girls should remain active as they grow up.

- **Soft drinks, juice and sweet drinks - children**
  Encourage children to drink and enjoy water. Sweet drinks such as juice, cordial and soft drinks may cause health problems for children if consumed in large amounts.

- **Youth suicide – the warning signs**
  All suicide threats are serious. You don't have to be a trained professional to help a person contemplating suicide.

### Common childhood health concerns

- **Abdominal pain in children**
  Children may feel stomach pain for a range of reasons and may need treatment.

- **Allergies explained**
  Allergy occurs when the body overreacts to a 'trigger' that is harmless to most people.

- **Anxiety and fear in children**
  You can help your child overcome anxiety by taking their fears seriously and encouraging them to talk about their feelings.
• Asthma, children and smoking
  Exposure to second-hand smoke increases the risk of children developing asthma and provokes more frequent asthma in children with asthma.

• Asthma in childhood - triggers (video)
  Parents and children talk about some of the factors that can cause a child's asthma to flare up.

• Back pain in children
  Children with back pain may grow into adults with chronic bad backs, so it is important to encourage sensible back care.

• Bedwetting
  Bedwetting is a problem for many children and punishing them for it will only add to their distress.

• Behavioural disorders in children
  Untreated behavioural disorders in children may mean they grow up to be dysfunctional adults.

• Bronchiolitis
  Bronchiolitis is a common chest infection in babies under six months of age.

• Chest infections
  A chest infection affects your lungs, either in the larger airways (bronchitis) or in the smaller air sacs (pneumonia).

• Chickenpox
  Chickenpox is highly contagious, but it is generally mild and gets better without the need for special treatment.

• Children and vomiting
  Mild vomiting is normal in most babies and improves over time.

• Children's feet and shoes
  A child learning to walk receives important sensory information from the soles of their feet, and shoes can make walking more difficult.

• Choking
  Don't slap a choking person on the back while they are upright - gravity may cause the object to slip further down their windpipe.

• Colds
  Cold viruses are spread by sneezing, coughing and hand contact.

• Colic
  Caring for a crying baby with colic can be stressful, so take some time out to calm down.

• Constipation and children
  A healthy diet, plenty of fluids, exercise and regular toilet habits can help relieve constipation in children.

• Coughing and wheezing in children
  Coughing and wheezing in babies can be distressing for you and your baby, but in most cases symptoms can be relieved at home.

• Cradle cap
  Cradle cap is not contagious and it is not caused by poor hygiene or bad parenting.

• Croup
  Croup is a viral infection of the throat and windpipe that causes noisy breathing, a hoarse voice and a harsh, barking cough.

• Cysts
  Cysts may be as small as a blister or large enough to hold litres of fluid.

• Dental anxiety and phobia
  Dental anxiety is common, but there are ways to help you manage it. Talk to your dentist about which strategies are right for you.

• Dental treatment
  Modern techniques mean that dental and oral health treatment is almost always painless.

• Depression explained
  The most important thing is to recognise the signs and symptoms and seek support.
• Ear infections
  It is estimated that around four out of five children will experience a middle ear infection at least once.

• Epilepsy in children
  Children with epilepsy generally have seizures that respond well to medication, and they enjoy a normal and active childhood.

• Feet - problems and treatments
  Correctly fitted shoes help you avoid foot and leg pain or injury.

• Fever - children
  Fever is a way in which the body fights infection. A fever is not dangerous and does not always indicate a serious illness.

• Fever - febrile convulsions
  A febrile convulsion is a fit that occurs in children when they have a high fever.

• Food allergy and intolerance
  Food allergy is an immune response, while food intolerance is a chemical reaction.

• Gastroenteritis in children
  Gastroenteritis or Gastro can be dangerous for very young babies. Gastro is common in young children and spreads easily. Gastro is a bowel infection which causes diarrhoea (runny or watery poo) and...

• Growing pains
  Growing pains may cause a lot of pain but they are harmless and can respond to simple treatments.

• Hand, foot and mouth disease
  Good personal hygiene is essential to prevent the spread of hand, foot and mouth disease to others, both for those infected and their carers.

• Head lice (nits)
  No product can prevent head lice, but regular checks can help prevent the spread.

• Hearing problems in children
  The earlier that hearing loss is identified in children, the better for the child’s language, learning and overall development.

• Immunisation history statements for children
  By law, parents or guardians must provide an Immunisation History Statement when enrolling children in any childcare service, kindergarten or primary school in Victoria.

• Immunisations - vaccinations in Victoria, Australia (video)
  Vaccinations are encouraged for all individuals living in the state of Victoria, Australia. The immunisation program in Victoria may be different than other countries, and individuals who have moved...

• Jaundice in babies
  If your baby is full-term and healthy, mild jaundice is nothing to worry about and will resolve by itself within a week or so.

• Lactose intolerance
  Symptoms of lactose intolerance include bloating, gas, abdominal pain and diarrhoea.

• Male Circumcision
  Male circumcision involves the surgical removal of the foreskin of the penis.

• Melissa's story (video)
  Melissa shares her story of how her baby caught chickenpox at 5 weeks old.

• Meningococcal disease
  Do not leave young adults alone if they suddenly develop a fever because they may become seriously ill very quickly.

• Nappy rash
  Most babies get nappy rash at some stage, no matter how well they are cared for.

• No Jab No Play
  No Jab No Play – from 1 January 2016, all parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child at an early childhood service in Victoria must provide evidence that the
child is fully immunised for their age...

- Obesity in children - causes
  Once children are overweight, it takes a lot of effort for them to return to a healthy weight...

- Obesity in children - management
  If your child is overweight, you can help by making healthier lifestyle choices for yourself.

- Oral conditions - young children
  Oral thrush, mouth ulcers and cold sores are common oral conditions in babies and young children.

- Pain management (acute) - children
  If you think your child is in pain, always see your doctor for diagnosis and treatment.

- Pinworms
  Despite the unsavoury reputation, a pinworm infection (worms) is relatively harmless and easily treated.

- Tooth decay - young children
  Every child is at risk of tooth decay, but good feeding habits and oral care can help prevent decay in baby teeth.

- Whooping cough
  The major symptom of whooping cough is a severe cough, which is often followed by a 'whooping' sound.

### Immunisation

- No Jab No Play
  No Jab No Play – from 1 January 2016, all parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child at an early childhood service in Victoria must provide evidence that the child is fully immunised for their age.

- Flu (influenza) – immunisation
  Influenza immunisation is recommended for people in known high risk groups.

- A Healthy Start to School
  A Healthy Start to School – a guide for parents of children in their foundation year of school.

- A Healthy Start to School
  A Healthy Start to School – a guide for parents of children in their foundation year of school.

- Fight flu this winter
  Fight flu this winter. Protect yourself – get vaccinated.

- Pre-immunisation checklist
  This immunisation checklist will help you prepare so you know what to expect and what information you will need to give your GP or clinic staff before your immunisation.

- Immunisation history statements for children
  By law, parents or guardians must provide an Immunisation History Statement when enrolling children in any childcare service, kindergarten or primary school in Victoria.

- Childhood immunisation
  Being immunised from an early age helps protect your child against serious childhood infections.

- Immunisation – common questions
  We answer some common questions about immunisation, including how immunisation works, why it’s important and where you can be immunised.

- Immunisations for older people
  Immunisations are important for you as you get older, because your immune system can become less effective at protecting you from some diseases.

- Why immunisation is important
  Immunisation saves lives. It protects you, your family and your community. And it also helps protect future generations by eradicating diseases.

- Immunisation – deciding which vaccines you need
  Everyone’s immunisation needs are different and are influenced by your health, lifestyle, age and occupation.
Immunisations – catch-ups and boosters
If you've recently arrived in Australia or missed out on an immunisation for any reason, you may need catch-up doses.

How to find your vaccination records
If you've recently arrived in Australia or missed out on an immunisation for any reason, you may need catch-up doses.

Melissa's story (video)
Melissa shares her story of how her baby caught chickenpox at 5 weeks old.

10 tips for secondary students on how to deal with immunisation
10 tips for secondary students on how to deal with immunisation.

Immunisation – DTP, polio, hep B and Hib
A number of combined immunisations against diphtheria, tetanus and other infectious diseases are available to provide protection at various life stages.

Immunisations for work
Some jobs have a higher risk of exposure to infectious diseases, so if your job is one of these, it’s a good idea to check your immunisation status.

Immunisation and pregnancy
Immunisation can protect a woman and her unborn baby against many infectious diseases.

Dr Margaret's Story (video)
Access to vaccines has changed lives and protects our children from crippling diseases such as polio.

Ros' Story (video)
Talk to a qualified medical expert like your doctor to find out more about immunisation.

Caitlin and Liam's story (video)
Find out how important you and your child's immunisation is to the most vulnerable members in our community.

Immunisations - vaccinations in Victoria, Australia (video)
Vaccinations are encouraged for all individuals living in the state of Victoria, Australia. The immunisation program in Victoria may be different than other countries, and individuals who have moved.

Immunisation in secondary schools
Some immunisations are recommended for all Australian teenagers.

Time to immunise - free vaccines for men who have sex with men
Immunisation is one of the best ways you can protect yourself and others from infectious diseases in our community. In partnership with Thorne Harbour Health (formerly Victorian AIDS Council), the...

Keeping yourself healthy
10 tips for happier step-parenting
Give your undivided attention when your child asks for it ... 10 tips for happier step-parenting.

10 tips for managing sibling rivalry
Teach your children to sort out minor differences themselves ... 10 tips for managing sibling rivalry.

10 tips to prepare your child for high school
Visit the school before the school year starts ... 10 tips to prepare your child for high school.

Abdominal pain in children
Children may feel stomach pain for a range of reasons and may need treatment.

About child, family and relationship services (video)
Services include parent education to maternal and child healthcare, child care, crisis support, child protection, family violence and relationship services.

Acne
Acne is common and can make people of all ages feel embarrassed, but treatments can help if acne is causing distress.

Adoption

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Adoption can give a secure family life to children who can’t live with their birth family...

- A Healthy Start to School
  A Healthy Start to School – a guide for parents of children in their foundation year of school...

- Alcohol and teenagers
  Alcohol is responsible for most drug-related deaths in the teenage population...
  Don’t give up if your plan doesn’t work the first time...
  Alcohol - how much is too much? (video)
  Youth Central journalist Soren Frederiksen asks young people what they think is the limit for safe drinking and comes up with some interesting results...
  Alcohol - tips to turning down drinks (video)
  Saying no can be hard. There are things you can do to make it easier...

- Allergies explained
  Allergy occurs when the body overreacts to a ‘trigger’ that is harmless to most people...

- Animals and child safety
  Children should always be closely supervised near animals and taught how to behave safely around pets...

- Anxiety and fear in children
  You can help your child overcome anxiety by taking their fears seriously and encouraging them to talk about their feelings...

- Assertiveness
  It is helpful to imagine assertiveness as the middle ground between aggression and passivity...

- Assessing your alcohol and drug use
  If you are worried about your alcohol or drug use or, call DirectLine on 1800 888 236 for counselling, information and referral, or speak with your local doctor...

- Asthma and teenagers
  Asthma affects about one in ten teenagers in Australia...

- Asthma, children and smoking
  Exposure to second-hand smoke increases the risk of children developing asthma and provokes more frequent asthma in children with asthma...

Children with special needs

- Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
  ASD is a complex disorder that affects a person’s ability to interact with the world around them...

- Autism spectrum disorder - tips for parents
  Autism spectrum disorder is a lifelong condition, but you are not on your own and there are plenty of professionals and groups who can help...

- Cognitive disability and sexuality
  People with intellectual disability can express their sexuality in satisfying ways...

- Disability - schooling choices
  If your child has a disability, you need to consider extra issues when your child starts school...

- Down syndrome and family support
  For a person with Down syndrome, being included in all aspects of family life can lead to a successful life within the community...

- Down syndrome and health
  There are a number of significant health and medical issues that are more common in people with Down syndrome...

- Down syndrome and learning

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
You should focus on what your child with Down syndrome can do, rather than what they can't do.

- **Physical disability and sexuality**
  Sexuality is a key part of human nature. Expressing sexuality in satisfying ways is important for everyone, including people with a disability. Some people with disability may need additional support.

- **Sex and chronic illness**
  Sexuality is a key part of human nature. Expressing sexuality in satisfying ways is important for everyone, including people with a disability. Some people with disability may need additional support.

**Child safety and accident prevention**

- **Animals and child safety**
  Children should always be closely supervised near animals and taught how to behave safely around pets.

- **Bicycle safety and children**
  As they grow and develop, and with the help of adults, children become increasingly aware of how they can manage their own safety and become safer road and bicycle users.

- **Body image – tips for parents**
  Give your child opportunities to appreciate their body for what it can do, rather than what it looks like.

- **Bullying**
  Parents can help with bullying by supporting their child and involving the authorities to find solutions.

- **Child safety and injury prevention**
  By making a few practical changes to your home, you can dramatically reduce the risk of injury to your child.

- **Child safety – at home**
  The best way to reduce the risk of injury to children is to remove a potentially dangerous item or add a safety product.

- **Child safety in the car**
  Taking care to restrain children correctly while travelling in a car is the best way to prevent injuries.

- **Farm safety – children**
  Children who live on farms are at greater risk of injury and death than their parents or other farm workers.

- **Hot weather and child safety**
  Babies and children can quickly lose body fluids in hot weather, which can lead to dehydration.

- **Internet safety for children**
  A child's digital footprint can be as easy to follow as their real footprints.

- **Mobile phone safety for children**
  Teach your child strategies for responding to mobile phone bullying.

- **Playgrounds and child safety**
  Play environments can be safe and beneficial for your child. With proper planning, you can make sure your child gets plenty of playtime activity.

- **Poisoning and child safety**
  Call the Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26 immediately if you suspect your child has been poisoned or given the wrong medicine or the wrong dose of medicine.

- **Road and traffic safety for children**
  As they grow and develop, and with the help of adults, children become increasingly aware of how they can manage their own safety, and become safer road users.

- **Water safety for children**
  Toddlers are most at risk of drowning because they are mobile and curious but don't understand the danger of water.

**Child protection and family violence**

- **Bullying**
Parents can help with bullying by supporting their child and involving the authorities to find solutions.

- Child abuse - reporting procedures
  Any person who believes, on reasonable grounds, that a child needs protection can notify Child Protection.

- Child Protection Service
  Child Protection provides child-centred, family-focused services to protect children from harm caused by abuse within the family.

- Family violence - tips for children
  Kids are not to blame for violence at home, it's not your fault and it's not a special secret.

- Parenting support to help prevent abuse
  There is a range of non-government agencies available to help families under stress in caring for their children.

- Recognising when a child is at risk
  Too many children are physically, sexually and emotionally abused and when this happens, it is up to adults to speak up.

- Sexual abuse - helping your child
  As a parent, you have an important role in helping your child recover from sexual abuse.

### Grief and trauma

- Death of a baby
  Miscarriage, stillbirth or neonatal death is a shattering event for those expecting a baby, and for their families. Grief, relationship stresses and anxiety about subsequent pregnancies are common.

- Grief and children
  It can be difficult to talk to a child about death, but it is important to be honest with them.

- Grief – support services
  People who have support from family and friends are less likely to suffer poor health after bereavement and loss.

- Recent arrivals, asylum seekers and family support services
  Provides an overview of family support programs and health services available to refugees and asylum seekers living in Victoria.

- Sudden unexpected death in infants (SUDI and SIDS)
  You can reduce your baby's risk of sudden unexpected death by providing a safe sleeping environment and avoiding tobacco smoke.

- Trauma and children - newborns to two years
  Babies and toddlers can be as affected by trauma as any other family member.

- Trauma and children – tips for parents
  Tell your child the facts about a distressing or frightening experience using language they can understand.

- Trauma and children – two to five years
  Preschoolers may not have the words but will show their distress at traumatic events through changes in behaviour and functioning.

- Trauma and families
  When a family is affected by trauma, everyone will react in a different way.

- Trauma and primary school age children
  Children look to their parents or carers to judge how to deal with a crisis.

- Trauma and teenagers - common reactions
  A teenager may be deeply upset by a traumatic event, but not share their feelings with their parents.

- Trauma and teenagers - tips for parents
  Teenagers may turn to friends rather than parents for support in times of trauma and distress.

- Trauma - reaction and recovery
  It is normal to have strong emotional or physical reactions after a distressing or frightening event, and help is available.

- Youth suicide – the warning signs

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betterhealth.vic.gov.au
All suicide threats are serious. You don't have to be a trained professional to help a person contemplating suicide.

Support for parents

- **About child, family and relationship services (video)**
  Services include parent education to maternal and child healthcare, child care, crisis support, child protection, family violence and relationship services.

- **A Healthy Start to School**
  A Healthy Start to School – a guide for parents of children in their foundation year of school.

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- **Children and health services**
  There is a range of subsidised and free health services, including services for mental health and dental health, available for children in Victoria.

- **Community health centres**
  A community health centre is publicly funded and offers a range of health services to local residents.

- **Early support for a child with disabilities**
  For children diagnosed with a disability, getting the support they need as early as possible will give them the best chance of minimising the long-term effects of the disability.

- **Family and child support services**
  There are many government funded family support services available to help parents and young people deal with family issues.

- **Foster care, permanent care and adoptive parent support services**
  Provides an overview of the financial and family support services available to foster carers, families providing permanent care and adoptive parents.

- **Maternal and child health services**
  Your local maternal and child health service will be a great source of support after your baby is born.

- **Parenting centres support families**
  Early Parenting Centres help families whose children have sleep, feeding or other difficulties.

- **Parenting children through puberty**
  Puberty is a time of great change for your child, and for you as a parent too. You can help your child in many practical ways, mostly by being reassuring.

- **Parenting on your own**
  A person can become a single or sole parent for many different reasons. You may have chosen to start a family on your own, you may be separated or divorced, or your partner may have died. As a...

- **Parenting support to help prevent abuse**
  There is a range of non-government agencies available to help families under stress in caring for their children.

- **Phototherapy at Home**
  Jaundice is very common in newborns, so it’s nothing to be too worried about. Treatment is very easy and safe. It all happens using blue light from a special blanket that you wrap your baby in. The...

- **Recent arrivals, asylum seekers and family support services**
  Provides an overview of family support programs and health services available to refugees and asylum seekers living in Victoria.

- **Relationship support services**
  You may need outside help to resolve problems and ensure your relationship stays healthy and strong.

- **Year 12 exams - managing stress**
  Help your child manage stress during exams by getting them to use good study habits, eat well, exercise, relax, sleep and keep things in perspective.

Related Information

- **A Healthy Start to School**
  A Healthy Start to School – a guide for parents of children in their foundation year of school.
No Jab No Play – from 1 January 2016, all parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child at an early childhood service in Victoria must provide evidence that the child is fully immunised for their age...

A Healthy Start to School

A Healthy Start to School – a guide for parents of children in their foundation year of school...

Teenagers and communication

Accept that your adolescent may have a different view of the world and respect their opinions...

Body image – tips for parents

Give your child opportunities to appreciate their body for what it can do, rather than what it looks like...

Related information on other websites

Centre for Online and Internet Addiction.

Content Partner

This page has been produced in consultation with and approved by: Better Health Channel - (sent to new cp)