

Q3

## Moody Blues

**My son used to be a happy and active child. However, since entering adolescence, his mood has become sullen and he is withdrawn and listless. Is there such a thing as 'teenage depression' and will kids typically grow out of it? Or is it the start of something long-term? What can I do as a parent to help him?**

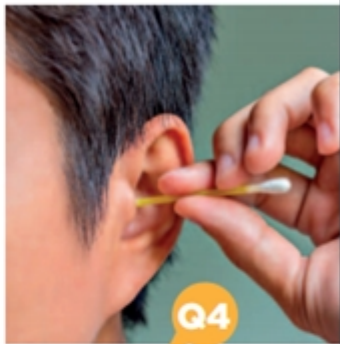
Yes, it is possible for teenagers to be depressed. Youths today face higher expectations from all around — at home, in peer groups, in social media and in school.

A change of mood and behaviour is a common sign of stress and it is important that you continue to monitor for other symptoms of depression, such as changes in eating or sleeping habits; a lack of interest in activities that he used to enjoy; and expressions of hopelessness, etc.

If you spot these warning signs, you may refer your child to his school counsellor. IMH's community teams work very closely with the school counsellors and teachers in early detection and intervention of mental health issues.

As a parent, you can help by offering emotional support and encouragement as your child tries to bounce back from any adversity. Doing things together as a family, keeping to family traditions and having a shared faith and belief system, can be positive factors in helping to build emotional resilience in the family and child.

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## Wax Build-up and Odour

**My husband has excessive wax build-up in his ears and I have also noticed a faint smell coming from them. Is this a condition he should be worried about? What safe and hygienic ways are there to clean our ears?**

All healthy ears produce earwax in varying amounts and consistency. Earwax consists of dead skin cells mixed with an oily secretion and represents part of the normal self-cleansing mechanism of healthy ears.

Many people habitually remove wax through various means, including ear candling, but this is unnecessary.

Injuries and infections due to ear cleaning by unsafe methods are not uncommon because of poor visualisation of the delicate ear structures.

However, the minority of people with troublesome earwax should seek the attention of an Ear Nose and Throat doctor for reliable, safe and painless removal of excessive earwax under direct vision.

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