

# Warning signs of suicide in adults

Take any mention of suicide seriously. You can take steps to prevent a suicide attempt. Be willing to listen, and help the person find help. Don't be afraid to ask "What is the matter?" or bring up the subject of suicide.

## Warning signs of suicide

It is hard to know if a person is thinking about suicide. But you can look for warning signs and events that may make suicide more likely.

People may be more likely to attempt suicide if they:

- Are male.
- Have attempted suicide before.
- Have a family member who has attempted suicide or who has died by suicide.
- Have had or have mental health problems such as severe depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, or anxiety.
- Have been through family violence, including physical or sexual abuse.
- Drink a lot of alcohol or use drugs.
- Are older. Older Americans have the highest suicide rate of any age group. The rate is highest among white men ages 65 and older. Within this group, divorced and widowed men have the highest rate.
- Are veterans or are members of the armed services.

Events that may put people at greater risk for suicide include:

- Changes in life such as the death of a partner or good friend, retirement, divorce, or problems with money.

- The diagnosis of a serious physical illness, such as cancer or heart disease, or a new physical disability.
- Severe and long-lasting pain.
- Loss of independence or not being able to get around without help.
- Living alone or not having friends or social contacts.

Adults who are at risk may show these warning signs of suicide. They may:

- Plan to or say they want to hurt or kill themselves or someone else.
- Talk, write, read, or draw about death, including writing suicide notes and talking about items that can cause physical harm, such as pills, guns, or knives.
- Say they have no hope, they feel trapped, or there is no point in "going on."
- Buy guns or bullets, stockpile medicines, or take other action to prepare for a suicide attempt. They may have a new interest in guns or other weapons.
- Drink more alcohol or use drugs, including prescription medicines.
- No longer want to see people and want to be alone a lot.
- No longer take care of themselves or follow medical advice. Give away their things and/or hurry to complete a will.

The warning signs in children, teens, and young adults may be different. They include running away from home or doing risky or dangerous things, such as drunk driving.

**Help is available. For additional information, visit [MagellanHealth.com/MYMH](https://www.MagellanHealth.com/MYMH)**

Source: Healthwise