

REACTIONS YOUR CHILD MAY HAVE AFTER A MEDICALLY INDUCED TRAUMA

Increased anxiety is a natural reaction to any traumatic event. This happens to children and adults. However, children cannot always tell you that they are anxious. Children usually do not know why they feel the way they feel or do what they do. Children rely on their caretakers to help teach them the meaning behind their feelings and behaviors and positive tools for handling their stress in the future. **Common reactions may include:**

- Appetite changes
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Changes in activity level
- New difficulty with memory
- Difficulties with concentration and/or attention
- Increase in aggression or tantrums
- Acting younger/older than previously --
 - Acting Younger -- Some children regress to a previous "safer" developmental stage after a trauma. This may include bedwetting, baby talk, and tantrums. This is alarming and can be annoying to many parents. It is important to acknowledge that your child did not choose to regress, but rather felt a NEED to do so. When your child feels like he/she has a more effective way to handle his/her emotions, he/she is likely to return to age-appropriate behaviors.
 - Acting Older -- For some children, the trauma causes them to act more mature or adult-like. They may take on new responsibilities around the house or stop participating in their previous games or play activities. This is likely to get praise from others, but should be monitored. It is still an anxiety response and indicates that your child may feel he/she HAS TO BE more mature to take care of others. Remember, your child's first job is to be a child.