

As a Matter of *fact*

The Relationship Between Child Maltreatment and Adult Health

The lasting adverse effects of child maltreatment on adult health are clear. Adults who were abused or neglected as children are at a greater risk for a variety of adverse physical and mental health conditions when compared with adults who were not maltreated as children. Preventing child abuse and neglect not only protects children, it creates healthier adults. ⁽¹⁻⁵⁾

1

Individuals who experienced childhood abuse and neglect have an increased risk for a variety of physical ailments, including:⁽¹⁻⁶⁾

Autoimmune Disorders ⁽⁶⁻⁸⁾	Hypertension ^(6, 19)
Arthritis ^(6, 8, 9)	GI Disorders ^(6, 20)
Lung Disease ^(6, 9, 10)	Peptic Ulcers ^(6, 21)
Heart Disease ^(6, 11, 22)	Type 2 Diabetes ^(6, 22)
Obesity & Increased BMI ^(8, 12-15)	Liver Disease ^(4, 6, 23)
Migraines & Frequent Headaches ⁽¹⁶⁻¹⁸⁾	Chronic Pain ⁽²⁴⁻²⁵⁾

2

Adults who experienced child abuse and neglect may also experience negative mental health conditions well into adulthood, including:^(3, 8, 26)

Depression ⁽²⁶⁻²⁹⁾	Sleep Disorders ⁽²⁹⁾
Anxiety ^(26, 29)	Panic Disorders ⁽²⁶⁾
PTSD ^(26, 29)	Phobias ⁽²⁶⁾
Suicide Attempts ^(3, 29-31)	

3

Adults who were maltreated as children are more likely to engage in behaviors that put them at further risk for negative physical and mental health outcomes, including:⁽¹⁾

Alcohol Related Problems ^(8, 26, 27, 32)	Anti-Social Behaviors ⁽²⁸⁾
Drug Use ^(8, 27, 28)	Sexual Risk Behaviors ^(3, 8, 34-36)
Eating Disorders ^(12, 29)	Daily Cigarette Smoking ⁽³⁷⁾
Poor Pre- and Post-Natal Care ⁽³³⁾	Self-Mutilation ⁽⁸⁾

4

Individuals who experienced maltreatment during childhood utilize more medical and mental health services, including more emergency room visits resulting in higher healthcare costs.⁽³⁸⁻⁴¹⁾

5

Women with a history of child sexual abuse are much more likely to be revictimized sexually and physically as adults.^(35, 42)

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