

# Health Effects of Human Trafficking

## **A Lasting Effect: Physical and Psychological Consequences of Trafficking**

Child victims of human trafficking can face significant problems. Often physically and sexually abused, they have distinctive medical and psychological needs that must be addressed before advancing in the formative years of adulthood. For child victims of exploitation, the destructive effects can create a number of long-term health problems including:

Physical Effects	Psychological Effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sleeping and eating disorders</li> <li>• Sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, pelvic pain, rectal trauma and urinary difficulties from working in the sex industry</li> <li>• Chronic back, hearing, cardiovascular or respiratory problems from endless days toiling in dangerous agriculture, sweatshop or construction conditions</li> <li>• Sexual dysfunction</li> <li>• Muscle tension</li> <li>• Untreated illnesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear and anxiety</li> <li>• Depression, mood changes</li> <li>• Guilt and shame</li> <li>• Cultural shock from finding themselves in a strange country</li> <li>• Posttraumatic Stress Disorder</li> <li>• Dissociative Identity Disorder</li> <li>• Traumatic Bonding with the trafficker</li> <li>• High risk behaviors (i.e., drug and alcohol abuse)</li> <li>• Impaired judgment</li> <li>• Emotional exhaustion</li> <li>• Feelings of being mentally broken</li> <li>• Spiritual questions</li> <li>• Suicidal Ideation</li> <li>• Difficulty establishing/maintaining healthy relationships</li> </ul>

## **Specific Health Indicators**

*The following indicators may present in the context of a physical exam or similar health assessment or treatment*

- Malnourishment or generally poor health
- Signs of physical abuse – in particular, unexplained injuries or signs of prolonged abuse
  - Bruises
  - Black eyes
  - Burns
  - Cuts
  - Broken bones
  - Broken teeth
  - Multiple Scars (including from electric prods)
- Evidence of a prolonged infection that could easily be treated through a routine physical/check up
- Addiction to drugs and/or alcohol
- Individual has no idea when his/her last medical exam was
- Lack of healthcare insurance – i.e. paying with cash

### **For more information/questions, Contact:**

**National Human Trafficking Hotline 888-3737-888**

**Or your local Anti-Trafficking Coalition (listed at):**

<http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/humantrafficking.aspx>



Sources and for further information:

<http://www.polarisproject.org/resources/resources-by-topic/human-trafficking>

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/resource/child-trafficking>

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