



Sunday Night – Monday Morning Anxiety

Many of us experience feeling cranky and tense on Sunday night and uneasy about Monday morning as we look to the coming week's ups and downs. Some children are especially prone to strong "Sunday Night Stomach" reactions. They are often temperamentally shy or slow to warm up to change. Often they are homebodies who have to force themselves through this dread every week. They have what professionals call an anxiety disorder. The stress of facing a new school week (or work week) can trigger a worsening of their anxiety. This can be even worse after a Friday holiday or vacation week.

Most of us react to anxiety by avoiding whatever it is we think is making us anxious. This may be based on a biological reaction that helps us recognize and survive in dangerous settings. Sometimes this reaction misfires or fires off too easily. Our body reacts to a spelling quiz like it should react to a lion jumping out from behind a bush. It can react to Sunday Night like it is the end of the world and not just the end of the weekend. When this happens persistently mental health professionals call this an anxiety disorder.

The anxiety and stomach aches are real, but their fears of danger are unrealistic. We can help children recognize that their "alarm system" is misfiring. They can learn to calm their fears. What can parents do to help children manage Sunday Night Stomach and Monday Morning Moans?

TIPS INCLUDE:

- **Talk** about school during the weekend (even more so on vacations) in a positive way so it doesn't get so far from us.
- Be sympathetic but **don't burden** an anxious child with our own fearfulness.
- Work with the school to make some kind of Monday morning special event for the child.
- Make Sunday evening **special** and keep busy, but not frantic.
- Do not save all the **homework** for Sunday night – set a goal to have it out of the way earlier in the weekend.
- **Assume** most physical complaints on Sunday night are their "anxiety talking."
- Try to **stay on a schedule** and be sure everyone **gets enough sleep** on the weekend.
- Remember and remind your child – **once you get going it feels better!**
- Above all, **DO NOT give in** and let your child stay home – Monday night will be even worse! Each day missed makes it even tougher to get back on track and in school.