Adolescents who are experiencing depression may be at increased risk for health problems. However, there is little information on whether respiratory illnesses, such as bronchitis and pneumonia, are more common among adolescents with depression. Data from the 2005 to 2014 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) shows that about 1 in 11 adolescents aged 12 to 17 had a major depressive episode (MDE) in the past year. MDE among adolescents is defined a period of at least 2 weeks during which they had either depressed mood or loss of interest in usual activities and also experienced a change in functioning, such as problems with sleep, eating, energy, concentration, and self-worth. NSDUH data indicate adolescents with a past year MDE were more likely to have had bronchitis and pneumonia in the past year compared to those without MDE. About 4.5 percent of adolescents with MDE had past year bronchitis, whereas 2.9 percent of adolescents without MDE had past year bronchitis. About 1.3 percent of adolescents with MDE had past year pneumonia, compared with 0.8 percent of those without MDE.

Assessing the relationship between bronchitis and pneumonia and depression is complicated because NSDUH data do not identify which health concern came first. Addressing the well-being of adolescents may be improved by considering both physical health and mental health. SAMHSA resources to help parents, teachers, and caregivers recognize the signs and symptoms of adolescent depression and locate mental health services are available at: https://www.samhsa.gov/disorders/mental and https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov.

2. MDE is based on diagnostic criteria from Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV. For more information, see the 2014 NSDUH mental health detailed tables available at http://samhsa.gov/data/