

be placed in an intensive care unit where the surroundings are strange and frightening. Despite the need for emergency intervention, the nurse must be sensitive to the family's psychological needs and prepare them for each procedure even if this is a brief statement, such as "The IV infusion is necessary to replace fluid that the child is losing." Because recovery within 24 hours is often dramatic, the nurse should keep the parents apprised of the child's condition, emphasizing signs of improvement, such as a lowered temperature and elevated blood pressure.

## **Chronic Adrenocortical Insufficiency (Addison Disease)**

Chronic adrenocortical insufficiency is rare in children. Causes include infection, a destructive lesion of the adrenal gland, and autoimmune processes, but they may also be idiopathic. Because 90% of adrenal tissue must be nonfunctional before signs of insufficiency are manifested, onset of symptoms is often gradual. However, during periods of stress, when demands for additional cortisol are increased, symptoms of acute insufficiency may appear in a previously well child ([Box 28-11](#)).

### **Box 28-11**

## **Clinical Manifestations of Chronic Adrenocortical Insufficiency**

### **Neurologic Symptoms**

Muscular weakness

Mental fatigue

Irritability, apathy, and negativism

Increased sleeping, listlessness

### **Pigmentary Changes**

Previous scars