



I CARE

Is your child using?

This list of warning signs for teen substance use is designed to be a general guide for parents. Contact your family doctor or pediatrician for a comprehensive assessment. You can also contact the guidance office at your child's school to speak confidentially with the Substance Abuse Prevention Counselor.

Warning Signs of Teen Substance Abuse

Physical

- Is frequently tired
- Gets sick frequently
- Eyes are red or glazed
- Coughs a lot

Appearance

- Stops taking care of hygiene or grooming
- Not sleeping or sleeping too much
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss or weight gain
- Too hyperactive or too little energy

Emotional

- personality or mood changes
- irritability
- irresponsible behaviors
- low self-esteem, depression or general lack of interest
- poor judgment

School

- drop in grades, negative attitude about school, decreased or loss of interest in school
- discipline problems including sleeping in class, skipping or truancy problems
- problems concentrating or remembering things

Family

- starts arguments
- negative attitude (hostile or irritable)
- break rules (sneaking out, taking car without permission, lying, stealing money or checks, pawning personal or family possessions)
- withdrawing & isolating from family (spending more time alone in room)
- secretiveness (uses "coded" language with friends)

Social problems

- new friends who make poor decisions and are not interested in school or family activities
- problems with the law (curfew violations, driving under the influence, etc.)
- changes to less conventional styles in dress and music

Other indicators

- Physical evidence of drugs and drug paraphernalia (pipes, rolling papers, butane lighters, beer bottles, bong, baggies, roach clip, scales, drug-related books or magazines such as "High Times", small glass vials, small spoons, straws, razor blades, "stash cans" that unscrew at the top or bottom, cardboard toilet paper rolls, rags, paper bags, pills)
- Increased borrowing of money from parents or friends
- Odor of marijuana in room or clothing
- Incense or room deodorizers
- Eye drops (to mask bloodshot or dilated eyes) or mouthwash (to cover up the smell of alcohol)

Risk factors for Adolescent Substance Abuse include:

- a family history of addiction
- impulsiveness
- high sensation seeking
- an attitude of invincibility
- psychological or emotional distress
- difficulty maintaining emotional stability
- perceptions of extensive use by peers
- perceived low harmfulness of use

Top Predictors of Adolescent Substance Use:

1. Friends, parents or siblings use
2. Smoke cigarettes
3. Clothing advertises or glamorizes alcohol, other drugs or partying
4. Negative attitude & moody
5. Lying & stealing