

How can you tell if your child is using drugs or alcohol?

Teens are known to have mood swings. However, some behavior may indicate more serious issues, such as abuse of drugs and alcohol. Here are some of the warning signs of drug use.

Problems at school

- Frequently forgetting homework.
- Missing classes or skipping school.
- Disinterest in school or school activities.
- A drop in grades.

Physical signs

- Lack of energy and motivation.
- Red eyes and cheeks or difficulty focusing - alcohol use.
- Red eyes and constricted pupils - marijuana use.
- A strange burn on your child's mouth or fingers – smoking something (possibly heroin) through a metal or glass pipe.
- Chronic nosebleeds – cocaine abuse.

Neglected appearance

- Lack of interest in clothing, grooming, or appearance is not normal. Teenagers are usually very concerned about how they look.

Changes in behavior

- Teenagers enjoy privacy, but be aware of excessive attempts to be alone.
- Exaggerated efforts not to allow family members into their rooms.
- Not letting you know where they go with friends, or whom they go with.
- Breaking curfew without a good excuse.
- Changes in relationships with family.

Changes in friends

- No longer is friends with childhood friends.
- Seems interested in hanging out with older kids.
- Acts secretive about spending time with new friends.

Money issues

- Sudden requests for money without a good reason.
- Money stolen from your wallet or from safe places at home.
- Items gone from your home. (May be sold to buy drugs.)

Specific smells

- Odor of marijuana, cigarettes, or alcohol on teen's breath, on clothing, in the bedroom, or in the car.

Drug paraphernalia

- Finding items in your child's room, backpack, or car related to drug use.