



I think my child is using

The following information was provided by Partnership for Drug-Free Kids. This and additional supporting content can be found in its entirety at drugfree.org.

LOOK FOR SIGNS

Knowing what to look for is a huge help in determining whether your child is drinking or using drugs – If you're familiar with the signs of drug use, that knowledge can aid you in gathering evidence and starting the conversation. Here you'll find a comprehensive list of signs and symptoms of drug and alcohol use.

Keep in mind: Many of these signs of drug use or alcohol use – in isolation – may be just normal teen behavior. Mood swings or changes in behavior are a standard part of growing up as teens make the transition from childhood to adulthood. However, as you start to recognize more and more of these signs and symptoms in your teen, a picture of drug or alcohol use may begin to become clear.

CLUE IN TO BEHAVIORAL ISSUES

The signs of substance abuse aren't all physical. Be aware of these behavioral indicators that may be a sign that your teen has been drinking or is using drugs, especially if you've noticed an abrupt change in one of these behaviors.

- Change in relationships with family members or friends (If your teens treats you or other family with blatant disrespect, or has completely ditched certain friends, drugs could be to blame.)
- Loss of inhibitions





- Mood changes or emotional instability
- Loud, obnoxious behavior
- Laughing at nothing
- Unusually clumsy, stumbling, lack of coordination, poor balance
- Sullen, withdrawn, depressed
- Unusually tired
- Silent, uncommunicative
- Hostile, angry, uncooperative
- Deceitful or secretive
- Makes endless excuses
- Decreased Motivation (An overwhelmed teen may just “drop” a class or club, but a general lack of motivation for school, activities and friends could be a sign of substance abuse.)
- Lethargic
- Unable to speak intelligibly, slurred speech, or rapid-fire speech (Barring hearing loss or stroke, slurred speech is usually linked to the influence of some type of drug.)
- Inability to focus
- Hyperactive

- Unusually elated (it’s good to have a happy teen, but if your kid is bizarrely elated for no reason, it is possible he’s high off amphetamines or another drug.)
- Periods of sleeplessness or high energy, followed by long periods of “catch up” sleep

A closer look

Unusually Tired

Studies shows that teenagers can’t truly wind down until at least 11pm – but usually must be up by 6am for high school! In addition, most teens are too busy with homework, sports, and after-school clubs to get the 9 hours of sleep doctors recommend. So it’s no surprise teens are perpetually tired. But if your teenager seems abnormally exhausted, it could be because he has a hangover or is using cocaine, amphetamines or prescription pain relievers, all which disrupt the normal sleep pattern.

LOOK FOR CHANGES IN PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Most drug and alcohol use may cause some change in physical appearance. Few of these in

isolation are definitive proof of teenage alcohol use or drug use, but may fit into a larger pattern of symptoms, or act as a way to open up a conversation with your teen.

- Messy, careless appearance
- Poor hygiene
- Track marks on arms or legs (or long sleeves in warm weather to hide marks) (Track marks are a clear sign of intravenous drug use. They range from small red marks to open sores and bruising.)
- Burns or soot on fingers or lips
- Red, flushed cheeks or face

A closer look at teenage alcohol use

Red, flushed cheeks or face

It could be acne, cold weather or spicy food—or it could be a sign of drinking. If you’re suspicious, other signs of teenage alcohol intoxication include:

- Slurred speech or difficulty expressing thoughts
- Lack of coordination, balance
- Odor of alcohol on breath
- Can’t focus on your eyes
- Red eyes





HAVE PERSONAL HABITS OR ACTIONS CHANGED?

Look for changes in your teenager's behavior or personal habits that might indicate drug or alcohol use. If you notice any of the below, look for some of the other signs, or use them as a way to begin a talk with your teenager.

- Smell of smoke on breath or clothes
- Chewing gum or mints to cover up breath
- Heavy use of over-the-counter preparations to reduce eye reddening (eye drops), nasal irritation, or bad breath (breath mints or gum)
- Frequently breaks curfew
- Cash flow problems
- Reckless driving, car accidents, or unexplained dents in the car (Notice if your teen is driving more recklessly when she returns than when they left.)
- Avoiding eye contact
- Clenching teeth (Both Meth and Ecstasy cause involuntary teeth clenching.)
- Both Meth and Ecstasy cause involuntary teeth clenching.
- Locked bedroom doors
- Going out every night
- Secretive phone calls, texting, instant messages or emails
- "Munchies" or sudden, voracious appetite
- Sudden or increased use of air fresheners, scented candles, or incense

A closer look

Smell of smoke on breath or clothes

If your teen walks in after a night out and smells of smoke, don't immediately jump to conclusions — your teen may have been hanging out with smokers but not doing it herself. If so, tell her you are worried about her choice in friends, but also commend her for not smoking. But if your teen's breath also smells of smoke, it is almost certain she was also using.

Source: Partnership for Drug-Free Kids, <http://www.drugfree.org/think-child-using/look-for-signs-and-symptoms/>.



I think my child is using

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please use a separate answer sheet for each parent completing this training.

Print name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ License #: _____

Please read the enclosed article and answer the following questions for a half-hour training credit. If more than one person wishes to receive credit, he or she must use a separate piece of paper and have his or her own signature and legal name on that page.

To receive credit, please mail your answers in a timely manner to:

**TFI Family Services, Inc., Attn: Gayle Schwarzrock
217 SE 4th St., Topeka, KS 66603**

1. Being familiar with the signs of drug use can assist you in gathering _____ and starting the _____.
2. Name four behavioral indicators that may be a sign your teen has been drinking or is using drugs.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
3. Teens may try to hide track marks by wearing _____ in warm weather.
4. _____, _____ cheeks or face could be acne, cold weather or spicy food — or it could be a sign of drinking.
5. **True or False** If your teen walks in after a night out and smells of smoke, it definitely means they've been smoking.

