

Warning Signs of Teenage Drug Abuse

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Please note that even though some of these warning signs of drug abuse may be present in your teen, it does not mean that they are definitely abusing drugs. There are other causes for some of these behaviors. Even the life stage of adolescence is a valid reason for many of them to exist.

On the flip side of that, do not ignore the warning signs of teenage drug abuse. If six of these signs, (not all in the same category), are present for a period of time, you should talk to your teen and seek some professional help.

Signs in the Home

- loss of interest in family activities
- disrespect for family rules
- withdrawal from responsibilities
- verbally or physically abusive
- sudden increase or decrease in appetite
- disappearance of valuable items or money
- not coming home on time
- not telling you where they are going
- constant excuses for behavior
- spending a lot of time in their rooms
- lies about activities
- finding the following: cigarette rolling papers, pipes, roach clips, small glass vials, plastic baggies, remnants of drugs (seeds, etc.)

Signs at School

- sudden drop in grades
- truancy
- loss of interest in learning
- sleeping in class
- poor work performance
- not doing homework
- defiant of authority
- poor attitude toward sports or other extracurricular activities
- reduced memory and attention span
- not informing you of teacher meetings, open houses, etc.

Physical and Emotional Signs

- changes friends
- smell of alcohol or marijuana on breath or body
- unexplainable mood swings and behavior
- negative, argumentative, paranoid or confused, destructive, anxious
- over-reacts to criticism acts rebellious
- sharing few if any of their personal problems
- doesn't seem as happy as they used to be
- overly tired or hyperactive
- drastic weight loss or gain
- unhappy and depressed
- cheats, steals
- always needs money, or has excessive amounts of money
- sloppiness in appearance

Source: CDC.