



**Need
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5 KEY WARNING SIGNS OF DRUG ABUSE IN TEENS

Although it's sometimes easy to think of these changes as "normal teen behavior," they can be some of the earliest signs of substance abuse.

1. Changes in behavior

An early warning sign that predicts teen drug use is any change in behavior or mannerisms. This could include a sudden change of friends, withdrawal from family and friends, isolation, lack of communication or disinterest in activities they previously enjoyed. Another warning sign is missing money or other household items, which could be used to buy drugs.

2. Mood changes

You may notice your child becoming more irritable, verbally abusive or even violent with you or other children in the household. Some children threaten to drop out of school, run away from home or destroy property. Alternately, depression, mood instability, and apathy can also be a warning sign of potential drug abuse.

3. Changes in personality

Parents should worry if your teen begins to show apathy, poor morale, low productivity, a lack of self-control, aggressive behavior, or poor interactions with family members, friends, classmates, and teachers. Sudden poor performance or behavior in the classroom can be another warning sign.

4. Physical changes

Drugs can take a physical toll on the body – some signs to look for include:

- Bloodshot eyes
- Widely dilated pupils
- Sudden weight loss (or weight gain)
- Poor hygiene
- Frequent nosebleeds
- Shakes or tremors
- Red, flushed cheeks
- Bruises or other unexplained injuries
- Drowsiness or fatigue

5. Possession of drug paraphernalia

Possession of items such as weight scales, smoking pipes, butane torches, bongos, cigarette lighters, small porcelain bowls, hypodermic needles, balloons, and vials are all definite signs of drug use.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR FAMILIES:

If you need assistance or support over the summer, the APS website page "In Crisis – Need Help Now" (www.apsva.us/in-crisis/) provides local and national resources as well as contact information for local mental health and substance abuse counselors.