



## How can you tell if a teen is involved with drugs?

*There are no hard and fast rules, but there are warning signs. The main thing to look out for is changes in behavior, attitude, appearance, friends, or activities.*

*Bear in mind that many of the signs and symptoms listed below may also be caused by stress, depression, or other teen problems. Whatever the cause, they may warrant attention, especially if they persist or if they occur in a cluster. Consult your family doctor or a mental health professional — getting help early on can help teens to get back on track and develop more effective coping skills, often preventing further problems.*

### 10 Behavioral Warning Signs

1. **Eating Habits:** Loss of appetite or increase in appetite; noticeable weight loss or gain.
2. **Sleep Patterns:** Teenagers often complain of tiredness. But is your child awake or asleep at unusual times? Constantly tired? Lethargic?
3. **A New Crowd:** New friends or hang-outs; avoiding old friends; unwilling to talk about or introduce new friends.
4. **School / Work Performance:** Drop in grades at school or performance at work; skipping school or work, or arriving late on a regular basis.
5. **Mood Swings:** Oversensitivity, temper tantrums, moodiness, irritability, or nervousness.
6. **Motivation:** General lack of motivation, energy, self-esteem, an "I don't care" attitude. Difficulty paying attention; forgetfulness.
7. **Secretiveness:** Teens are concerned about privacy. But a child who is excessively secretive may really have something to hide.
8. **Dishonesty:** Is your child vague about their evening or weekend plans? Coming up with excuses for being late home? Chronic dishonesty can be a sign of substance abuse.
9. **Cash Flow:** Unexplained need for money; money, alcohol, cigarettes or valuables go missing around the home.
10. **Drug Paraphernalia:** Look out for evidence of drug use. Common items include pipes, bong, cigars, rolling papers, butane lighters, roach clips, syringes, tourniquets, burned tinfoil or spoons; as well as products to cover drug odors such as dryer sheets, air freshener, incense, or towels under the door.