




Knowledge is Power


Almost half of all teens will try some type of drug before the age of eighteen. In some cases, the experimentation ends as quickly as it started. In other cases, young people can become addicted to these substances. Making the decision to try a mind-altering drug can lead to many unintended consequences and permanent damage. Protect your children by knowing the signs of substance abuse.


Learn as much as you can about drugs and their dangerous effects:


 **Marijuana** (pot, dope, grass, weed, or reefer) comes from the plant cannabis sativa. It is either smoked in hand rolled cigarettes, pipes or bongs, or cooked into foods like brownies and eaten. It is called a “gateway drug” because it often leads to the abuse of other drugs.


 **Tobacco** contains a highly addictive substance called nicotine. Nicotine belongs to the class of drugs known as stimulants, which speed up the nervous system. Cigarettes, snuff, and chew are the most commonly used forms of tobacco.


 **Cocaine** (coke, snow, or blow) is a white powder that is sniffed or “freebased” through heating and mixing with ether and sodium bicarbonate. Crack, the purified rock form of cocaine, is smoked in tiny chunks. Whatever the form, cocaine is a highly addictive and destructive drug.

 **Amphetamines** (speed or uppers) are pills, tablets, or caplets that stimulate the central nervous system. Diet pills are a commonly abused, mild form of amphetamine.

 **Depressants** (downers, ludes, or barbs) are generally legal, controlled medicines, usually in the form of pills or capsules, which are often prescribed for sedation but can be very dangerous when abused. Ethanol is the commonly abused depressant found in alcohol, like beer, wine, and liquor.

 **Hallucinogens**, or psychedelics, distort thinking, emotions, perceptions, and sensations, and include drugs such as PCP (angel dust), LSD (acid), Psilocybin Mushrooms, Mescaline, and Ecstasy.

 **Inhalants** are breathable substances such as amyl nitrate or rush, bolt, popper or snappers. Inhalants produce mind-altering effects and include many household items such as fingernail polish remover, hair spray, insecticide, cleaning fluid, ether, and nitrous oxide.

 **Synthetic Drugs**, also known as designer drugs, are a growing threat to young people. Synthetic drugs come in many forms like fake marijuana and fake cocaine, and some are available legally. These drugs are usually sold as bath salts, screen cleaner, or incense. Effects of these drugs are unknown and are potentially deadly.

RESOURCES

Parents - The Antidrug:

800-662-HELP

www.theantidrug.com

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids:

www.tobaccofreekids.org

National Institute on Drug Abuse - Parenting Resources:

www.drugabuse.gov/parents/

>INFOCUS

HOW TO TELL IF A
KID IS ON DRUGS
(AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT!)

*If you suspect that your child is
using drugs, question everything.*

*Make sure you monitor what your
child is doing as much as possible.*

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Know Your Children

One of the best ways to detect if your child is using drugs is to know your child. Be familiar with your child's appearance, their attitude, behavior and activities. When you notice a significant change in your child, you should be concerned and take the steps necessary to discover if drug abuse is responsible. The sooner a drug problem is recognized, the easier it is to stop it.

Look for sudden changes in mood and behavior, such as:

- Unusual hostility, irritability, or secretiveness
- Withdrawal from the family and friends
- Changes in friendship
- Resistance to discipline
- A pattern of dishonesty, stealing and trouble with the police
- The possession of large amounts of cash
- A drop in grades
- A sudden increase in absences, tardiness
- Poor concentration and short-term memory
- Slurred speech

- A loss of motivation and interest in regular activities
- Drug-related messages or symbols on possessions
- A lack of concern for appearance or hygiene

Notice changes in your child's physical well-being, such as:

- An unhealthy appearance
- Bloodshot eyes
- Dilated or shrunken pupils
- A constant runny nose or cough
- A major change in eating or sleeping patterns
- Sudden weight loss
- A lack of energy



It's common for young people to change their moods, attitudes, appearance and behavior as they grow up. You should be on the look out for frequent, uncharacteristic changes and for a combination of different warning signs. This could be an indication that your child is using drugs or has some other problem. Either way, it's a parenting signal that your child needs your attention and assistance.

Be aware that these signs may indicate a problem other than drug use. Drugs, traces of drugs, and drug paraphernalia are more direct evidence of drug use.

Know What to Do (and What Not to Do)

- Don't panic or blame yourself.
- Do self-examine, consider the example you've set.
- Don't be sarcastic, accusatory or sympathy-seeking.
- Do express concern and understanding.
- Don't be swayed by denials if you have hard evidence.
- Do be firm, stick to the established discipline.
- Don't try to sway the child with emotional appeals.
- Do present the evidence calmly and rationally, without giving the child a chance to lie.

Be prepared that your child will probably lie, and you may have to seek outside help.

Know How to Communicate

The best way to prevent a drug problem from ever beginning is to provide an environment of open and honest communication. Try these tips for successful communication:

- Be calm. Anger can cloud your ability to communicate to your child rationally.
- Give your undivided attention. Don't interrupt or pass judgment until the child asks for it.

- Concentrate on understanding rather than always offering advice. Repeat what is said if you need to.
- Be aware of body language, both your child's and your own, and send positive messages.
- Speak for yourself. Emphasize your feelings. Begin sentences with "I" rather than "you."
- Be firm. Family rules, behavioral expectations and likely consequences need to be communicated to children and agreed upon by all family members.



Know Where to Get Help

Among those that can refer you to a drug treatment program in your community are:

- Your doctor
- Your hospital
- The county mental health society
- The school district's substance abuse counselor
- Certain drug abuse hotlines
- Parents of children who have been through such programs
- Religious leaders and institutions