

Communications with your teenage children need not always be about talking. Sometimes, it is good to observe their behaviour and appearances.

# WATCH OUT FOR THE SIGNS

If you suspect your teenager is abusing drugs, there is a wide range of symptoms you can look out for which could point to drug abuse.

## THE EYES.

Pay attention to your teen's eyes – they can reveal drug abuse. The eyes tend to be red and heavy lidded, with constricted pupils.

## THE TEETH.

Some drugs can cause involuntary teeth clenching while others cause grinding of the teeth. In more serious cases, teeth may turn brown and begin to rot due to corrosive chemicals found in some drugs.

## ODOURS.

Pay attention to the odours surrounding your teen. If your teen has been smoking cannabis, smell can be detected from the breath, clothing and hair. Your teen may claim that their friends were the ones smoking but don't overlook the risk of peer influence. Watch out if he/she smells of mints or freshly applied perfume upon returning home; it could be a cover-up.

## ODD SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS.

If you spot odd looking items like syringes, glass tubes, pieces of aluminium foil, powder or crystal residue, shredded leafy debris, cigarette rolling papers, plastic bottles with holes or pipes lying around your teenager's room, be alarmed. These are common paraphernalia that facilitate drug abuse.

## THE LIPS.

If there are strange burns on the lips or fingers, your teen may be smoking a substance through a hot glass or metal pipe. Sores and spots around the mouth can also indicate drug and/or inhalant abuse.

## INJECTION MARKS.

Intravenous drug abuse leaves marks, usually on the arms and legs where drugs are injected. Regularly wearing long-sleeved attire may be an attempt to hide scars too. These are signs of more serious drug abuse.

## MOOD CHANGES.

Mood swings in teenagers are common but you should look out for strange or extreme behaviour. It is not normal if your teen is always sullen, withdrawn, unusually tired or look deprived of sleep. Also pay attention if your teenager suddenly become silent, angry and non-communicative. If this continues for too long, you should consider the possibility that your teen has formed a habit of drug abuse.

## ALWAYS HAVING NOT ENOUGH MONEY.

If you are worried about your teenager's spending his/her allowance fast and seemingly out of control, it is a valid concern. If he/she frequently asks for extra cash and offers no explanation as to why, it could be that your teenager is spending it on his/her drug habit. Also, look out for any missing cash or valuables around the house but do not be quick to accuse your teenager.

**BE ALERT AND DON'T LET YOUR TEENAGER FALLS PREY TO DRUG ABUSE.**

Keep a look out for the tell-tale signs of drug abuse. Prevention is better than cure. Talk to your teenage child on the dangers of drug abuse.

### References:

<http://www.narconon.org/drug-abuse/signs-symptoms-of-drug-abuse.html>  
<http://sobercollege.com/telltale-signs-of-drug-use/>



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