

Signs of Drug and Alcohol Abuse

It is important to bear in mind that if a person shows any of the following symptoms, it does not automatically mean that he or she is using drugs. Look for a series of changes, not isolated behaviors or incidents. These behaviors may indicate alcohol or drug use.

Physical Signs

Loss of appetite, increase in appetite, any changes in eating habits, unexplained weight loss or gain.

Slowed or staggering walk; poor physical coordination.

Inability to sleep, awake at unusual times, unusual laziness.

Red, watery eyes; pupils larger or smaller than usual; blank stare.

Cold, sweaty palms; shaking hands.

Puffy face, blushing or paleness.

Smell of substance on breath, body or clothes.

Extreme hyperactivity; excessive talkativeness.

Runny nose; hacking cough.

Needle marks on lower arm, leg or bottom of feet.

Nausea, vomiting or excessive sweating.

Tremors or shakes of hands, feet or head.

Irregular heartbeat.

Behavioral Signs

Change in overall attitude/personality with no other identifiable cause.

Changes in friends; new hang-outs; sudden avoidance of old crowd; doesn't want to talk about new friends; friends are known drug users.

Change in activities or hobbies.

Drop in grades at school or performance at work; skips school or is late for school.

Change in habits at home; loss of interest in family and family activities.

Difficulty in paying attention; forgetfulness.

General lack of motivation, energy, self-esteem, "I don't care" attitude.

Sudden oversensitivity, temper tantrums, or resentful behavior.

Moodiness, irritability, or nervousness.

Silliness or giddiness.

Paranoia

Excessive need for privacy; unreachable.

Secretive or suspicious behavior.

Car accidents.

Chronic dishonesty.

Unexplained need for money, stealing money or items.

Change in personal grooming habits.

Possession of drug paraphernalia.