

HOW CAN I TELL IF MY CHILD IS USING ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUGS?

As you answer these questions, be aware that one symptom may not necessarily signal a drug or alcohol problem. Don't be afraid to contact a professional in the alcohol or drug abuse field if you would like to discuss symptoms or behaviors you are not sure about. For referral to a local resource, call (314) 962-3456.

Does your child seem to be changing?

Is he/she becoming more:

- irritable
- uncooperative
- violent
- depressed

Are you finding it more difficult to communicate with your child?

Does your child refuse to talk about:

- alcohol and drugs
- activities with friends

Does he/she become defensive when someone talks about the negative effects of alcohol or other drugs?

Is he/she becoming less responsible about:

- doing chores
- coming home on time
- personal cleanliness

Has your child:

- been in constant need of money
- stolen money or property from family members
- dropped out of school
- insisted that the drugs or alcohol you found were someone else's
- been coming home with strange stains on his or her clothing

Has your child recently:

- adopted the style of new friends whom he/she doesn't want to talk about
- become less interested in school, sports, and other activities which used to be important
- refused to go to school
- talked of dropping out of school
- been coming home with alcohol on his/her breath
- been making demands to consume alcohol in the house
- hidden liquor, wine or beer containers in his or her room
- left drug paraphernalia around the house

Does your child show any of these physical symptoms:

- more sensitivity to smell, touch or taste
- extra large or small pupils of the eyes
- excessive giggling
- disorientation
- red eyes
- excessive coughing
- severe headaches

Be alert to the tell-tale signs of early addiction. Changes may occur over varying periods of time, from a few months to well over a year. If you do not notice subtle changes, more blatant ones will begin to appear over time. If your child is becoming drug dependent, you may notice any one or a combination of signs. Children are often unaware that their changing behavior and attitudes are apparent. Talk with your children about alcohol and other drug use. Let your children know that you love them and that you care about how they feel and what they do.

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