

WHAT TO LOOK FOR: Most young people who use substances do not become abusers or addicts in adulthood. But substance use in childhood/adolescence can put their neurodevelopmental, emotional and physical health at risk. Engaging in high-risk behavior under the age of 21 significantly increases a youth's risk of growing up and struggling with ongoing drug abuse and addiction. Although adolescence is a time marked by change, teens who are engaging in substance use may exhibit dramatic changes in appearance, friends, or physical health.

Signs and Symptoms	Possible Causes or Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of drugs and/or drug paraphernalia or hidden clean urine. <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral problems, more-than-usual rule breaking, stealing, constant excuse-making or poor grades in school. <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional distancing, avoiding eye contact, isolation, depression, or fatigue. <input type="checkbox"/> Overly influenced by peers, changes in peers, dropping old friends, and secretive about peers. <input type="checkbox"/> Hostility, irritability, or change in level of cooperation around the house. <input type="checkbox"/> Lying or increased evasiveness about after-school or weekend whereabouts. <input type="checkbox"/> Decrease in interest in personal appearance. Loss of interest in or dropping out of activities previously enjoyed. <input type="checkbox"/> Physical changes, such as bloodshot eyes, runny nose, cold sweats, sweaty palms, hands trembling, frequent sore throats, and rapid weight loss. <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in mood, eating, or sleeping patterns. Unusual apathy or elation. <input type="checkbox"/> Dizziness and memory problems. <input type="checkbox"/> Unusual odor on breath (alcohol, inhalants, marijuana), deterioration in hygiene, unexplained bruises or marks, and hacking cough. <input type="checkbox"/> Widely dilated pupils even in bright light or pinpoint pupils even in dim light. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Too little parental supervision and monitoring <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of communication and interaction between parents and children, family conflict <input type="checkbox"/> Poorly defined and poorly communicated family or home rules and expectations about drug use <input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistent or excessively severe discipline <input type="checkbox"/> Parental permissiveness toward adolescent alcohol and drug use, and/or parental alcoholism or drug use <input type="checkbox"/> Peers and peer pressure, especially if the teen hangs around with at-risk friends <input type="checkbox"/> Self-medicating a diagnosis of ADHD, an anxiety disorder, depression, bipolar disorder or disruptive disorder <input type="checkbox"/> Poor academic achievement <input type="checkbox"/> Having parents who abuse drugs <input type="checkbox"/> High need for sensation seeking or engaging in physically risky or dangerous behaviors <input type="checkbox"/> Impulsiveness <input type="checkbox"/> Psychological distress <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty maintaining emotional stability <input type="checkbox"/> Perception that drug use is harmless <input type="checkbox"/> Low family income, with little access to opportunity for success