

Identifying Drug Use and Taking Action

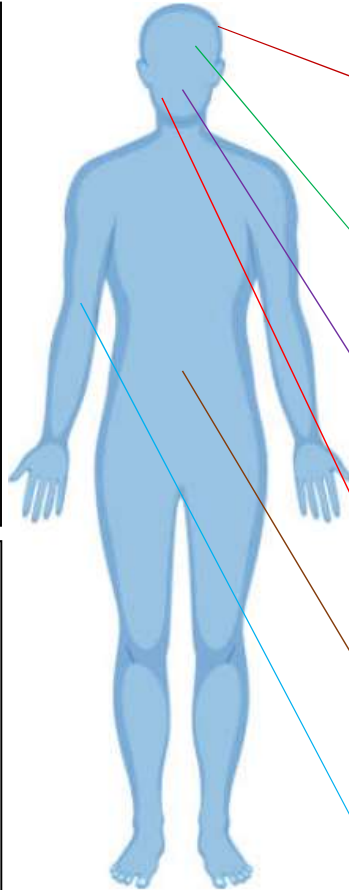
MANY FAMILIES DO NOT RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS OF DRUG USE AND DO NOT KNOW HOW TO RESPOND WHEN THEY SEE THE SIGNS.

Physical Signs

- At beginning, **sick with vague symptoms** 1 – 2 times a week
- **Drastic weight changes** – up or down
- **Changes in eating habits** – amounts, item, times
- Inconsistent **sleeping habits**
- Balance and coordination issues
- **Smells** – more obvious with marijuana and alcohol and less obvious with pills, cocaine, heroine
- Lack of attention to **personal hygiene**
- **Lethargy** – common with downers (Rx painkillers – Oxycontin or Norco, anti-anxiety medications (benzodiazepines – Xanax, Klonopin)

Items to look for

- **Drugs or pills** – that are not prescribed by a doctor
- **Torn, folded scraps of paper** (used to package drugs)
- **Bottle caps or spoons** (used to cook heroin)
- Tiny cotton balls (used to filter heroin)
- **Small pieces of tin foil** (used to smoke heroin)



Mental Issues

- Forgetfulness and memory deficits
 - Short term or Long term
- Mood Swings

Abnormal Pupils

- **Enlarged Pupils** if using ecstasy/MDMA, benzodiazepines
- **Tiny/Pinprick Pupils** if using opioids

Change in Speech Pattern

- Words used
- Rapid or Slurred Speech

Clenching Jaws or Chewing

- Common with use of stimulants (cocaine, Adderall, ecstasy/MDMA)

Stomach Issues:

- Vomiting, Nausea, General Pain
- Common with opioid as they erode the stomach lining
- Common sign of withdrawals

Needle marks / Track marks

- On Arms, Hands, Legs, Neck, in between fingers and toes (or anywhere a vein can be accessed)

Behavioral Signs

- **Spending money** has increased – can be consistent or drastic
- **Valuables or money missing** from home of friends/family
- **New drugs** or items show up
- **Changes in grades, cutting classes, truancy, missing tests and assignments, missing activities**
- **Changes in friends**, hanging out with new people/group
- Distancing self from old or long-term friends
- Unwillingness to introduce you to new friends
- **Lying**
- **Loss of job** or dismissal from other activities (sports team or club)
- Car **accidents**
- Minor arrests
- Having **friends** who are **in substance abuse treatment**
- Complaints of **bullying**
- Feeling like they do not fit in
- Doctor prescribed **medications taken for mental health issues are no longer working**