

5 Signs Your Teen May Be Abusing Medicine



Teens will be teens. They sleep late, fail a test here and there or get uncharacteristically moody. But what if these behaviors are happening more often than usual, or all at the same time? You know your teen better than anyone, but it is important to know what to look for if you suspect he or she may be abusing medicine. Here are 5 signs to look for that may indicate medicine abuse.

1. Health concerns. Keep an eye out for changes in your teen's physical health, like constricted pupils, nausea or vomiting, flushed skin or dizziness. Look further into anything that seems strange.
2. Changes in behavior. The signs of medicine abuse aren't always physical. Look for changes in behavior – like sudden changes in relationships with their family or friends, anxiety, erratic mood swings or decreased motivation. It's no secret that teens can be moody, but be on the lookout for drastic differences in the way your child behaves.
3. Home-related signs. If you've noticed belongings disappearing around the house, or found some unusual objects appearing – like straws, burnt spoons, aluminum foil or medicine bottles – this could be a sign of medicine abuse. Count – and lock up – the medicine you have in your home and safely dispose of any expired medicine.
4. Trouble in school. Take note of how your teen is doing in school, including any change in homework habits and grades. A rapid drop in grades, loss of interest in schoolwork and complaints from teachers could be indicators that there's a problem.
5. Things just seem off. You know your child better than anyone and you know when something's not right. Trust your gut, and talk to your teen about your concerns.

With one in four kids reporting abuse of prescription drugs in their lifetime, it's important to take action right away if you do suspect medicine abuse. Don't be afraid to talk – and listen – to your teen, work through things together and get help if necessary.



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