

DRUGS

Acting on Your Suspicions

Instructions

- **STEP 1:** Ask your child what has been going on, both in school and out, and explore what could be going on in his or her emotional or social life that might be causing drug use.
- **STEP 2:** Show your love for your child by being firm and enforcing whatever discipline you have established for breaking house rules.
- **STEP 3:** Work together to come up with ways that your child can avoid using drugs and alcohol in the future.
- **STEP 4:** Discuss possible ways that your child could regain the family's trust, such as calling in, spending evenings at home and raising school grades.

Tips & Warnings

- Wait to confront your child when he or she is sober and you are calm.
- Express your suspicions openly, but avoid direct accusations.
- Avoid denial or self-blame. The truth is that drug abuse can occur in families of any socioeconomic background, and in both happy and unhappy homes.
- The faster you act, the faster you can help your child on the road to recovery.
- If your child is reluctant to talk to you, seek outside help: the school guidance counselor, the family physician or a local drug treatment referral center. They may be able to get a better response from your child.

Key Agencies

Department of Counselling Services
The Wellness Centre
Terry Delaney

949-8789
949-9355
526-1378

Early intervention is the best way to help your child. Be aware of signs of drug use by following these guidelines, based on the recommendations of the National Drug Council.

Noticing Signs of Drug Abuse

Instructions

- **STEP 1:** Observe your child's relationships. Have relations deteriorated? Does your child have a new group of friends?
- **STEP 2:** Take note of changes in your child's eating and/or sleeping habits, and look for signs of depression or withdrawal.
- **STEP 3:** Notice if your child has suddenly lost interest in his or her favorite activities.
- **STEP 4:** Be wary of irregular school attendance or a slip in your child's grades.
- **STEP 5:** Note any increased hostility in your child's behavior.
- **STEP 6:** Check to see if your child has become more careless about grooming.
- **STEP 7:** Pay attention to clues around the house. Has money been disappearing? Be sure to note the presence of small medicine bottles, eye drops or butane lighters in the house, as well as more obvious items such as homemade pipes and bongs made from soda cans or plastic beverage containers.

Tips & Warnings

- The unpredictable behavior that is typical among preteens and teenagers can make it difficult for parents to determine signs of drug or alcohol abuse. But if your child exhibits one or more of the above signs, consider the possibility that he or she is using drugs.

How to Determine if Your Child Is Using Drugs