

How To **TALK TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT DRUGS**



My child lies to me and I want to test them for drug use. Is this a good idea?

There are several reasons why it is not a good idea to drug test your child at home.

There are many different types of urine drug screens (UDS). Rapid test kits ordered online may lead to inaccurate or misleading results:

- » These tests typically only find a few drugs within each class of drugs (amphetamines, benzodiazepines, cocaine, marijuana, opioids, etc.). That means that there are many other kinds of drugs that do not lead to a positive test result.
- » Prescription and over-the-counter medications can give a “false positive” result on a UDS.

The results of a UDS depend on many factors, including the time since last drug use, drug elimination times and urine concentration.

Home drug tests using your child’s hair, spit or sweat are not recommended. These tests are not easy to do and are often inaccurate.

Even if you ask your child’s healthcare provider about a UDS, these tests may not always be accurate.

I don’t throw away my medications because I might need them later. But recently I’ve noticed that some of my medication is missing. Should I be concerned about my children taking the medications? What can I do about it?

Yes, you should be concerned. Studies have shown that teens commonly take medication that is prescribed for family members or friends.

Taking medications from your medicine cabinets could also be a sign that they are considering suicide.

It is important to store and dispose of medication correctly. Children’s Mercy offers medication storage and disposal resources at:

[childrensmercy.org/Patients_and_Families/Your_Childs_Visit/Pharmacy/Medication_Safety](https://www.childrensmercy.org/Patients_and_Families/Your_Childs_Visit/Pharmacy/Medication_Safety)

TO LEARN MORE VISIT:

- [childrensmercy.org/pharmacy](https://www.childrensmercy.org/pharmacy)
- [drugfree.org](https://www.drugfree.org)
- [fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov)
- [samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov)
- [safeguardmymeds.org](https://www.safeguardmymeds.org)



I found marijuana in my daughter's room. When I talked to her about it, she told me it was not a big deal because "everyone is doing it." I looked online for information, but there are different answers to my questions. Is marijuana addicting? What harm can happen to a teenager who uses it?

A 2022 nationwide survey found that 30% of 12th graders reported marijuana use within the past year, and 6.3% reported using cannabis daily in the past 30 days. Additionally, 20% of high schoolers reported cannabis vaping. Marijuana use by teens is now more common than using alcohol.

Talk openly with your teen about the possible negative effects of marijuana use on their health and life. Some of these effects include:

- Using marijuana while teens' brains are still developing can affect normal brain development, leading to cognitive impairments and a lower IQ.
- Marijuana changes the brain's reward pathway and may increase the likelihood of using other drugs of abuse.
- Teen marijuana use can lead to decreased motivation for school, athletics and extracurricular activities. It can also increase the risk of dropping out of school.
- Some marijuana users develop cravings and withdrawal symptoms that are associated with a substance use disorder. About 9% of all adult marijuana users meet this criteria. This jumps to 17% for those who began using marijuana in their teens.
- Marijuana users can become psychologically dependent on the drug. Users may come to believe that they require marijuana to have fun, relax, manage anxiety, etc.
- Marijuana users can experience problems into adulthood, including more job absences, accidents and injuries than those who don't use marijuana.

My daughter is hanging out with a new set of friends and has started acting differently. I think that she may be using drugs. How can I tell?

It may seem as if teens pay no attention to what we say to them about drugs. However, parents play an important and powerful role in shaping their teen's attitude and behavior toward drugs.

Parents matter to teens more than we realize.

You can have an impact on your teen's potential drug use by:

1. Setting clear and ongoing expectations about the use of alcohol or other drugs
2. Being consistent with consequences when these expectations are not followed

It's important to start and continue to talk with your teen about drug use and to ask for and respect your teen's input.

- Clarify your expectations and consequences.
- Help your child learn about substance use.
- Set clear limits, including driving when using drugs or alcohol or riding with a driver who is impaired.

Strive to be supportive, involved and loving. Monitor your teen's activities while supporting their independence when setting limits.

Teens are at higher risk for drug use during times of transition such as moving, starting high school, obtaining a driver's license, getting a part-time job or parental divorce. During these times teens experience more responsibility, freedom, social pressure, new peers and opportunities. These tend to cause them stress and may increase the risk of alcohol or drug use.

For more information:

cmkc.link/smart-about-drugs or scan the QR code.



childrensmercy.org

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