

Substance Use Disorder

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

What are the signs and symptoms of substance use disorder?

According to the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, the signs of substance use disorder include:

- Taking the substance in larger amounts and for a longer amount of time than you're meant to if it's a prescription.
- Having a strong desire or urge to use the substance.
- Having unsuccessful efforts to cut down on or control substance use.
- Spending a lot of time obtaining or using the substance or recovering from its effects.
- Having issues fulfilling responsibilities at work, school or home due to substance use.
- Continuing to use the substance, even when it causes problems in relationships.
- Giving up social, occupational or recreational activities because of substance use.
- Using substances again and again, even when it puts you in danger.
- Continuing substance use despite an ongoing physical or psychological problem that's likely caused or worsened by the substance.
- Developing tolerance (need for increased amounts to get the same effect).
- Experiencing withdrawal symptoms, which can be relieved by taking more of the substance.

Seeking medical care as soon as you have signs of substance use disorder is essential.

Other symptoms and behaviors of substance use may include:

- Confusion.
- Neglecting to eat.
- Withdrawing from friends and family.
- Sudden changes in mood and behavior.
- Engaging in risky behaviors.
- Hostility or denial when you're confronted about substance use.
- Not caring about your physical appearance as much as you used to.
- Secretive behavior to hide substance use.
- Using substances even when you're alone.



Scan this code to
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anonymous, online
substance use
screening.

To speak to someone at
Easterseals MORC, call
1.800.75.SEALS
www.EastersealsMORC.org

Recognizing unhealthy drug use in family members

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Sometimes it's difficult to distinguish normal teenage moodiness or anxiety from signs of drug use. Possible signs that your teenager or other family member is using drugs include:

- **Problems at school or work** — frequently missing school or work, a sudden disinterest in school activities or work, or a drop in grades or work performance
- **Physical health issues** — lack of energy and motivation, weight loss or gain, or red eyes
- **Neglected appearance** — lack of interest in clothing, grooming or looks
- **Changes in behavior** — major efforts to bar family members from entering the teenager's room or being secretive about going out with friends; or drastic changes in behavior and in relationships with family and friends
- **Money issues** — sudden requests for money without a reasonable explanation; or your discovery that money is missing or has been stolen or that items have disappeared from your home, indicating maybe they're being sold to support drug use

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Recognizing signs of drug use or intoxication

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Marijuana, hashish and other cannabis-containing substances

Signs and symptoms of recent use can include:

- A sense of euphoria or feeling "high"
- A heightened sense of visual, auditory and taste perception
- Increased blood pressure and heart rate
- Red eyes
- Dry mouth
- Decreased coordination
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering
- Slowed reaction time
- Anxiety or paranoid thinking
- Cannabis odor on clothes or yellow fingertips
- Major cravings for certain foods at unusual times

Long-term use is often associated with:

- Decreased mental sharpness
- Poor performance at school or at work
- Ongoing cough and frequent lung infections

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