

Should You Snoop?

How to Spot Drug or Alcohol Use

Many parents struggle with whether to search their child's room for evidence of drug or alcohol use. "Should I snoop?" is a difficult question because there are so many factors to think about:

- ◆ Should you warn your child first?
- ◆ Exactly what should you search?
- ◆ Should you ask him directly if he's using drugs instead of snooping?

Deciding whether to "snoop" is your choice—but it should be a decision that you can defend. If you notice any change in your child's behavior or identify odors such as pot, cigarette smoke or scents to mask other smells (incense or Lysol spray, for example) from his room, you may have a good reason to find out what's going on.

If you snoop and your child finds out, he might hold it against you as a violation of his privacy. Counter this argument by telling him that his behavior is raising questions, and you are concerned there may be a problem.

Consider regularly checking your medicine cabinet. Research shows that teen abuse of prescription and over-the-counter medications to get high is increasing. Many teens view the medicine cabinet—in their own home and at friends' homes—as a convenient source of those medications. Be sure not to leave "leftover" prescription drugs in your medicine cabinet, and keep an eye on the medications you are using.



By St. Pete Prodigy Artist Cierra

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Mood swings and unpredictable behavior are sometimes evidence of teenage "growing pains" but can also point to use of drugs or alcohol. Be aware of any unexplained changes and know the potential warning signs.

- ◆ He's withdrawn, depressed, tired or careless about his personal grooming.
- ◆ He's hostile, uncooperative and frequently breaks curfew.
- ◆ His relationships with family members have gotten worse.
- ◆ He's hanging around with a new group of friends.
- ◆ His grades have slipped and he's missing school.
- ◆ He's lost interest in hobbies, sports and other favorite activities.
- ◆ His eating and sleeping patterns have changed; he's up at night and sleeps during the day.
- ◆ He has a hard time concentrating.
- ◆ His eyes are red-rimmed and her nose is runny, but he doesn't have allergies or a cold.
- ◆ Household money has been disappearing.
- ◆ You have found any of the following in your home: pipes, rolling papers, small medicine bottles, eye drops, butane lighters, homemade pipes or bongs (pipes that use water as a filter) made from soda cans or plastic beverage containers.



National Drug and Alcohol Treatment Referral Service:
1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator:
<http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/TreatmentLocator/faces/addressSearch.jspx?state=FL>

Where to turn in prescription pills:
<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/categories/medications/pages/disposal.htm>

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