

# Do YOU really know?

Identifying signs of early alcohol and other drug use in children can be difficult, even with careful monitoring.

Being aware of the signs, however, is an important way to reduce your teens' risk.

One sign that your child is experimenting, or considering doing so, could be a casual mention that one or more of their friends are drinking. Or, your child may say that one of their friend's parents lets their teen drink. This could be your child testing you to see how you react to underage drinking.

Does your teen joke about alcohol advertisements or other alcohol-related scenes in TV shows or movies?

Has your teen started buying alcohol or other drug-related promotional items such as T-shirts, mugs, stickers, etc? If so, your teen may be thinking about experimenting with alcohol or other drugs — or already doing so.

Reduce your  
teens' risk of  
alcohol use

Find out *More*

*Do More*

[www.MaineParents.net](http://www.MaineParents.net)



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## Your Teen, Alcohol and Other Drugs

# Signs to Watch for



Find out *More* *Do More*

# Signs of adolescence— or signs of a problem?

Some of the signs that indicate a teen may be using could also be “normal” adolescent behavior. The most effective approach to reduce teen alcohol and other drug use is for parents to monitor their teens. Here are some signs to watch for and what you can do.

## Signs to Watch For:

**Family** – Deteriorating relationships with family, behavior changes such as anger or withdrawal

**School** – Truancy, drop in grades, behavior problems

**Social life** – Deteriorating relationships with old friends, developing a network of friends who are using alcohol or loss of interest in sports or other favorite activities

**Behavior/emotion** – Noticeable personality changes, unexplained and sudden mood changes, decreased appetite or continually hungry, memory problems, delayed response time, fatigue or hyperactive behavior, sleep disturbances, apathy

**Appearance** – Red or blood-shot eyes, carelessness with grooming, weight loss or gain, circles under eyes, slurred or rapid speech, smell of alcohol on breath, sudden, frequent use of breath mints

**Circumstantial evidence** – Disappearance of beer or alcohol supply, money or valuables missing

There are many resources available to help you. Visit [www.MaineParents.net/Using](http://www.MaineParents.net/Using) or call the Information & Resource Center at 1-800-499-0027

## What You Can Do:

If you have a concern, or think there may be a problem, talk with your child. Believe in your power to help, but don't be afraid to seek support if you feel overwhelmed, uncertain, or simply want more information.

If you think your child may be using drugs or alcohol:

- **Keep Communicating.** It is critical to talk to your child and to listen. Don't give up even if your child doesn't want to talk.
- **Keep Watching.** Continue to monitor your child, watching for signs of use. Enforce and reinforce rules that limit their opportunity to use.
- **Share Information.** Reach out to others in your community for help and support. Work to build a partnership with your child's school – they can be a very helpful resource. Learn as much as you can about use and addiction.
- **Seek Help.** Talk to your child's doctor or other professionals, and seek help for yourself. There are many resources available to help parents both understand and cope with a teen's use.

If you are sure that your child is using alcohol or other drugs, you also may want to encourage them to have a professional evaluation. This step can begin the process of treatment, if needed.

