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How to Tell If Your Teen Has Been Drinking Alcohol

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Alcohol is the most used drug by teens and the biggest drug problem our teenagers face today. Unfortunately, many parents underestimate the dangers alcohol poses to kids.

The U.S. Surgeon General surmises about 5,000 kids under 21 die every year as a result of underage drinking. Alcohol poisoning, car crashes, homicides, and suicides are among the increased risks teens face when they've been drinking.

While many parents of teens don't think their children would ever drink, the truth is, most teens experiment with alcohol. It's important to know the warning signs that your teen has been drinking.



Signs Before Drinking Happens

Teens who are planning a party or gathering where they will be drinking usually show several telltale signs. Be on the lookout for:

- Your teen carrying a duffel, tote bag, or even a school backpack. They may be transporting alcohol from your home to the party.
- Hushed tones and whispers when your teen uses the phone. Of course, in today's world, many teens are communicating via text or social media as well, so monitor your teen's accounts.
- Evasive answers to questions about their activities. If your teen hesitates when you ask what they're doing, it could be a sign they're trying to think of a good cover story.
- Asking to spend the night. If your teen insists they want to stay over at a friend's house, it may mean they don't want to come home under the influence.

Any of these signals are cause for you to check further by talking to your teen about your suspicions. You can always check with other parents as well.

Signs Your Teen Has Been Drinking

If your teen comes home from a party and you smell alcohol on their breath or clothing, it is a sure sign they've been drinking. They may try to evade you or lie about why they smell like alcohol.

If your teen is stumbling, slurring their speech, or acting out of character, these are also signs that there has been alcohol or drug use.

Be on the lookout for signs a hangover in the morning, too. If your teen suddenly gets the "flu" after being out with friends, they may be trying to disguise a hangover. Here are some signs your teen may have consumed alcohol:

- Lowered inhibitions
- Poor concentration
- Slow reflexes
- Slow reaction time
- Reduced coordination
- Slower brain activity
- Sensations and perceptions that are less clear
- Slurred speech
- Sleepiness
- Altered emotions
- Poor vision
- Sleepiness and disruption of sleeping patterns
- Increased urine production
- More blood flow to skin/s surface
- Lower core body temperature

Serious Signs

According to the Surgeon General, when teens drink, they tend to drink a lot at one time. Teens party with others and socially drink so they drink less often than adults. But when teens do drink, they consume more alcohol than adults.

On average, young people have about five drinks on a single occasion.

This is called binge drinking, a very dangerous way of drinking that can lead to serious problems and even death.

If your teen is showing these signs, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room:

- Vomiting
- Uncontrolled urination
- Uncontrolled defecation
- Breathing difficulties
- Passing out



Signs Your Teen Has a Drinking Problem or Addiction

It's possible for teens to develop serious problems with alcohol. It can happen without you even being aware. While these signs could point to another problem, they could also be indicative of a substance use issue.

Behavioral Changes

- Experiencing school problems, poor attendance, low grades, and/or recent disciplinary action
- Rebelling against family rules
- Lying, breaking curfew, or stealing
- Switching friends, along with a reluctance to let you get to know the new friends
- Having a sloppy appearance
- Lacking involvement in former interests

Emotional Changes

- Exhibiting mood changes, flare-ups, irritability, and defensiveness
- Having a "nothing matters" attitude
- Mental Changes
- Having memory lapses
- Having poor concentration

If you see these signs combined with catching your teen drinking, seek professional help for them immediately. Your teen may need outpatient counseling or perhaps, even residential treatment.

Info from: <https://www.verywellfamily.com/has-my-teenager-been-drinking-alcohol-2609067>

