

# How to Recognize Drug Use

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The effects of drug abuse on the life of the user can be devastating. If you are worried about a peer or family member declining due to substance abuse, it can help to know the signs of drug use. Recognizing a likely case of drug abuse may help someone who is heading toward addiction. When the physical and behavioral signs of drug use are overlooked, drug abusers can end up in very serious situations. Those can include financial ruin, illegal activities, legal problems, driving while under the influence, job loss, failing in school, and other bad outcomes.

## How to Recognize Warning Signs of Drug Use

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General signs of drug abuse are common across most forms of drug abuse. People who are exhibiting one or more signs in one or more of these observable areas of their persona may be abusing drugs. Signs that drug users tend to have in common include:

- Behavioral changes
- Physical changes
- Cognitive changes
- Psychosocial changes

## Depressants

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Depressants, including prescription drugs, are often misused by people to self-medicate in attempts to control depression, grief, feelings of guilt, or cope with external circumstances. Examples of frequently abused stimulant drugs include Vicodin, GBH, Xanax, Valium, and many others. Signs of using drugs, including depressant drugs, may include:

- Poor concentration
- Pupils contracted
- Seeming intoxicated
- Poor balance
- Poor judgment
- Speech slurred
- Excessive sleep

## Stimulants

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Stimulant drugs are commonly used to produce an exaggerated sense of happiness and excitement. Examples of frequently abused stimulant drugs include cocaine, amphetamines, and others. Key signs that can help you recognize signs of stimulant drug use may include:

- Hyperactive
- Euphoric
- Pupils dilated
- Irritable
- Trouble sleeping
- Lack of appetite
- Excessive weight loss
- Dry mouth and nose
- Anxiety

## Hallucinogens

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Examples of popular hallucinogenic drugs include LSD, PCP, THC, and others. Key signs that can help you recognize abuse of stimulant drugs may include:

- Confusion
- Aggression
- Dilated pupils
- Hallucinations
- Slurred speech
- Paranoia
- Mood swings

## Marijuana

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Marijuana stays in the body for a relatively long time. Recognizing these signs of marijuana abuse can help you be aware of times when someone at work, school, or home may be under the influence:

- Lethargy
- Lack of coordination

- Memory impairment
- Inability to focus
- Weakened sensory perceptions
- Slowed reaction time
- Poor decision-making
  
- Loss of interest in activities
- Withdrawal and self-isolation

## Cocaine

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The majority of emergency room visits involving illicit drug misuse are due to cocaine use (reportedly about 40%), Key signs that can help you recognize cocaine abuse may include:

- Hyperactive
- Pupils dilated
- Mood swings
- Social self-isolation
- Reckless behaviors
- Nose running
- Nosebleeds
- Talkativeness
- Sleep changes
- Loss of appetite

## Heroin

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Heroin and other opioid drugs are very popular street drugs for recreational use. Key signs that can help you recognize heroin abuse may include:

- Pupils contracted
- Pupils nonresponsive to light
- Coughing and/or sinus problem
- Needle marks on the body
- Sweating
- Sleeping at odd times
- Vomiting
- Twitching
- Loss of appetite

## Common Signs of Most Types of Illicit Drug Abuse

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You may have noticed that some or all of the drug classes and individual drugs listed above share some behavioral and physical signs of drug use in common. These are some of the most common signs of substance abuse that are common to misuse of drugs across various drug types:

- Declining personal hygiene
- Risky or reckless behavior
  
- Poor performance at school or work
- Glassy or bloodshot eyes
- Poor physical coordination
  
- Poor concentration
- Delayed reactions
- Making poor decisions
- Lying or hiding personal information
- Excessive unexplained absences

## **Drug Addiction Treatment – Renaissance Recovery Center**

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Renaissance provides state-of-the-art personalized outpatient treatment for substance use disorder (SUD). We offer rehab programs for adults who are struggling SUD and those with the co-occurring disorders of drug addiction and mental illness. Our therapeutic strategies help our clients overcome self-defeating habits in thinking and behaviors. We help people improve their physical and mental health and strengthen the particular skills and abilities needed to live free from drug dependency.

**For more information on the signs and symptoms of drug use and treatment for SUD, call Renaissance Recovery Center at (480) 526-7738, or contact us here online!**

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