

*Thank you for Stas Novitsky for this list. From VCAM (Virginia Center for Addiction Medicine) in Henrico County, a clinic designed to offer comprehensive addiction treatment including outpatient services.*

Keep in mind that it's a combination of many of these signs that illustrate a drug habit. This is not a complete list as substances to abuse are all over the place and around your house.

## Signs of drug use

1. Missing money and jewelry
2. Asking for "gas/grocery" money at unreasonable rates (going through a lot of money quickly to satisfy the drug craving and ignoring basic needs)
3. Eating a lot of food at odd hours of the night
4. Being overly protective and not letting you see their "personal" belongings (purse, backpack, gym bag, phone or computer)
5. Trouble getting up in the mornings and waking up in the afternoon for a continued period
6. Burn holes in clothes (Cigarette holes in clothes are often the result of "the nod")
7. Withdrawing from family /friends into their room/themselves
8. Saying they'll be home at a certain time and then staying out much later or not coming home at all
9. Ignoring calls/texts from family – (Check phone records and if you see 2-3 texts to same number then a break in communication with a follow up text or call that lasts less than a minute that's usually a setup for a drug deal)
10. Weight loss/weight gain
11. Dilated pupils/use of eye drops
12. Multiple car accidents at odd times
13. Loss of interest in hobbies
14. Lack of motivation
15. Truancy (stop going to school)
16. Missing silverware and coins
17. Say they're going to "store/restaurant" and then come back in 5-10 minutes or stay out over a reasonable amount of time
18. Lack of self-care (no showering, no brushing teeth, stop taking care of themselves)
19. Being overly defensive of what they're doing -"Hey what are you doing this weekend?" ... "I don't know GOD! Leave me alone"
20. Being overly detailed of what they're doing, making up stories of where they're going
21. Emotionless or overly emotional (things that used to make them happy don't make them happy anymore, responding acutely to things that shouldn't be of much concern)
22. Getting cash back on debit cards
23. Overly large purchases on credit cards/debit cards at unusual places like \$300 at wawa/walmart/target/other stores (typically buying gift cards to pawn at other locations)
24. Transferring money from one account to another account
25. Not shaving for a while/lack of hygiene
26. Scabs and scars
27. Air freshener, incense, odor spray in their room – Usually to cover up smoking smells

28. Detachment into room as soon as they walk into house, don't interact with anyone unless they need food, money, etc ...
29. Leaving house at odd hours, leaving for short bursts of time to walk down the street and back (picking up drug deliveries)
30. Blood on their clothes
31. Screen off bedroom window for sneaking out
32. Engaging in secretive or suspicious behaviors
33. Bags under eyes
34. Tremors, slurred speech, or impaired coordination
35. Mood swings, irritability, or angry outbursts
36. Always going somewhere at the last minute or showing up late for things despite reminders
37. Dropping one group of friends from another
38. Demanding more privacy – locking doors, avoiding eye contact
39. Black on their teeth from smoking pills
40. Runny nose in the summer time, sniffing
41. Alcohol is missing from house
42. Using lots of mouthwash to get rid of alcohol smell on breath
43. Missing mouthwash or vanilla- products with alcohol
44. Air duster cans missing – Huffing
45. Whipped cream is flat – Addicts suck the gas from the Redi-whip can making it flat or order/buy whip-its
46. Unexplained accidents/bruises/cuts/etc. ...
47. Unexplainable sweating
48. It may be hot outside and they're shivering or wrapped up in a sweater
49. Excessive smoking of cigarettes
50. Stash of plastic zip lock bags or a scale (objects use to sell marijuana to support a drug habit)
51. Always wanting or deal only in cash
52. Seizures due to synthetic party drugs, inhalants or an overdose

## Marijuana

- Missing socket wrench pieces
- Loud talking, inappropriate laughter followed by sleepiness, lots of motivation
- Weight gain or weight loss
- Glassy red eyes
- Overly upbeat followed by overly anxious
- Lots of water bottles that look funky and smoky or smell funny (water bottles also used to disguise vodka)

## Depressants

(including Xanax, Valium, GHB)

- Contracted pupils
- Drunk-like movements
- Difficulty concentrating
- Clumsiness
- Poor judgment
- Slurred speech
- Sleepiness- Also called the nods (falling asleep in front of you)

## Stimulants

(including amphetamines, cocaine, crystal meth)

- Dilated pupils
- Hyperactivity and euphoria
- Irritability and anxiety
- Excessive talking followed by depression or excessive sleeping at odd times
- May go long periods of time without eating or sleeping
- Weight loss
- Dry mouth and nose
- If prescribed ADD meds, running out too quickly

## Inhalants

(glues, aerosols, vapors)

- Watery eyes
- Impaired vision, memory and thoughts
- Secretions from the nose or rashes around the nose and mouth
- Headaches and nausea
- Appearance of intoxication
- Drowsiness
- Poor muscle control
- Changes in appetite
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Lots of cans/aerosols in the trash

## Hallucinogens

(LSD, PCP)

- Dilated pupils
- Bizarre and irrational behavior including paranoia, aggression
- Hallucinations
- Mood swings
- Detachment from people
- Absorption with self or other objects
- Slurred speech
- Confusion

## Heroin

- Additional information on heroin abuse since that was Charles' drug of choice.
- Missing spoons and pieces of tin foil
- Contracted pupils; no response of pupils to light
- Needle marks (Injected and/or snorted)
- Sleeping at unusual times
- Sweating
- Vomiting
- Coughing and sniffing
- Twitching
- Loss of appetite
- Really runny nose (for those who snort)

- When they wake up they're sick, when they come home they're suddenly not "sick" anymore
- They're throwing up inexplicably to the point you think there is a stomach disease
- Nodding off in front of you. Called "the nod"
- Cigarette holes in their clothing because of nodding off
- Long sleeves in warm weather – To cover up track marks from needles
- Unexplained weight loss

There is a myriad of other drugs that can be abused such as Robitussin characterized by strange robotic movements, and even addiction to sniffing sharpie pens. Many times, those with addictive disorder will also abuse many other substances including their drug of choice.

If you suspect your child or spouse is using, you can insist on a drug test and you can buy them online or in your local drug store. Keep in mind, those who are using have all kinds of methods for hiding it, including using a friend's pee, masking agents or abusing substances that cannot be detected by a drug test. A drug test has never kept anyone from using but it does let you know what they are using if it's detectable which can be handy in case of an emergency and setting your own boundaries.

<p><b>Stimulants</b></p> <p>Used to treat ADHD and narcolepsy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adderall, Dexedrine, ProCentra, Dextrostat, Dexedrine or Zenzedi (Amphetamine/ Dextroamphetamine) Prescribed for your child's ADHD but you need to make sure it's not "skimmed" by other kids that come into your home</li> <li>• Ritalin and Concerta (Methylphenidate)</li> <li>• Metadate CD (methylphenidate hydrochloride)</li> <li>• Focalin (Dexmethylphenidate)</li> <li>• Desoxyn (Methamphetamine)</li> <li>• Vyvanse (Lisdexamfetamine)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Opiates</b></p> <p>Used to treat pain. Sometimes called narcotics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vicodin (acetaminophen and hydrocodone),</li> <li>• Percocet (Oxycodone and Acetaminophen)</li> <li>• OxyContin (oxycodone)</li> <li>• Duramorph, DepoDur, Astramorph, and Infumorph (Morphine)</li> <li>• Suboxone (buprenorphine and naloxone)</li> <li>• Dilaudid (Hydromorphone Hydrochloride)</li> <li>• Codeine cough syrup</li> <li>• Ultram (Tramadol – Also used for canines)</li> <li>• Demerol (Meperidine)</li> <li>• Nucynta (Tapentadol)</li> <li>• Lortab, an opiate in pill form ordered for a cough (Acetaminophen/ Hydrocodone)</li> <li>• Heroin (not an RX but it is an opiate)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Benzodiazepines</b></p> <p>Used to treat anxiety and sleep problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Xanax (Alprazolam)</li> <li>• Valium (diazepam)</li> <li>• Klonopin (Clonazepam)</li> <li>• Librium (chlordiazepoxide)</li> <li>• Ativan (lorazepam)</li> <li>• Restoril (temazepam)</li> </ul>	