**An Addiction Prevention Guide for Worried Parents**

Parents have so much to worry about from the moment their first child is born that it becomes exhausting. As their children age, some fears wane while new worries weigh on parents’ minds as their kids grow into adolescence and adulthood. One of the worst fears that parents have is that their children may become addicted to drugs or alcohol. Sadly, far too many parents’ worst fears become a reality. If you worry that your child may be experimenting with drugs or alcohol, this guide will help you on your prevention mission.

**1. Emergency Resources**

If you suspect that your child needs immediate help for drug or alcohol addiction, there are several [emergency resources](https://www.allaboutcounseling.com/crisis_hotlines.htm) available to you including:

* Parents Hotline: 800-840-6537 – Parent Hotline is dedicated to helping families in crisis and lists behaviors for parents to be aware of. It also includes a questionnaire to help determine whether your child needs an intervention
* National Drug Information Treatment and Referral Hotline: 800-662-HELP (4357) – A hotline offering 24/7 information, support, treatment options, and referrals to local rehabilitation centers for any drug or alcohol problem

Keep in mind that you should call 911 in an emergency, but not if you want to determine whether he is abusing drugs. If, for some reason, you cannot call 911 for assistance, you should get to your nearest emergency room and ask for help. Only as a final resort should you go to a fire station or police station.

**2. Facts/Statistics about Addiction**

Parents have every right to worry about their children becoming addicted to drugs or alcohol; in fact, more teens die from [prescription drugs](http://www.drugrehab.org/the-45-warning-signs-of-prescription-drug-abuse/) than heroin and cocaine combined. The statistics surrounding drug use are astounding:

* By 2013, more high school seniors regularly used marijuana than tobacco cigarettes
* Approximately 33% of teenagers who live in states with medical marijuana laws obtain the substance using other people’s prescriptions
* Despite the fact that the U.S. represents only 5% of the world’s population, 75% of prescription drugs are taken here, and 60% of teens who abuse them get the drugs free from friends and relatives
* By 8th grade, 28% of adolescents have consumed alcohol, while 15% have smoked cigarettes, and 16.5% have used marijuana
* 6.5% of high school seniors smoke pot daily, and less than 20% of them think occasional use is harmful; fewer than 40% view regular use of marijuana as harmful
* Approximately 50% of high school seniors do not think trying crack or cocaine once or twice is harmful, and 40% believe using heroin once or twice is not harmful

**3. Long-Term Prevention Techniques for Parents**

If you want a long-term solution to preventing your child from developing an addiction, you need to understand how to discourage him from using drugs and alcohol. One positive statistic regarding drug and alcohol use among teens is that teens who learn about the risks of drugs from their parents are up to 50% less likely to use drugs than those whose parents do not teach them.

Parents must try techniques to help discourage their children from developing an addiction. For example, as [DrugAbuse.gov](https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/marijuana-facts-parents-need-to-know/talking-to-your-kids-communicating-risks) suggests, parents need to start the conversation with their children as early as possible now that research shows youth addiction may begin as early as age 9. Begin by teaching your children not to take medication with someone else’s name on it.

It’s also a good idea for parents to be educated and involved. First, parents need to know the signs of addiction so they can monitor their children’s behavior. If your child exhibits unusual behavior or starts getting trouble at school, ask him to explain his behavior. If you are not sure whether a particular warning sign indicates substance abuse or addiction, do a drug test, which you can purchase [online](https://www.homehealthtesting.com/home-drug-test-c-21.html) or from certain retailers like [CVS Pharmacy](https://www.cvs.com/gbiSearch/?searchTerm=drug%20test).

It’s also helpful for parents to be involved in their kids’ lives so they can get to know their friends and interests. Parents should reward positive behavior and teach and follow through with doling out consequences for negative behavior.

Parents do have some power in helping to prevent their kids from becoming addicted to drugs and alcohol. Begin by knowing the emergency contact numbers, knowing statistics and facts about drug use among children and teens, and using long-term addiction prevention techniques.

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