



# Drugs and Alcohol Information

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## What are the warning signs of dependence on drugs?



### Evidence ratings:

This resource has undergone expert review. See our [Help/Q&A section](#) for more details.

### Year:

**Targeted Drugs:** Alcohol, Cannabis, Drugs (General), Emerging Drugs ("Legal Highs"), "Ice" (Methamphetamine), Methamphetamine, "Party Drugs"/MDMA/Ecstasy

**Tags:** warning signs, behavioural changes

**Origin:** Australian

### Cost:

Free

## What are the warning signs?

The following signs indicate that a person may be dependent on, or addicted to, a drug:

- They say that their drug use is out of control
- They are using more of the drug, or seem to be less affected by the same amount
- The drug is consumed in larger amounts, or over a longer period of time, than intended
- They worry about their drug use
- They tell you they want to stop using the drug or to cut down or control their use
- They find it hard to stop using, or to go without the drug
- Missing an opportunity to use the drug makes them feel anxious or worried
- Much of their time is taken up by drug-related activities (for example, obtaining and using the drug, recovering from its effects)
- Other work, social or recreational activities are reduced or completely given up in order to make more time for the drug
- Their drug use is affecting their relationships with friends, family and their community
- They are unable to carry out normal responsibilities such as school, work, or family time.

It's important to remember that people may not show all the signs listed above and may still be developing **dependence**. See our factsheet for guidance about **starting the conversation when you are concerned about drug use**.

If you're worried that your child may be using alcohol or other drugs, remember that effective support is available. Please see our ["Where to get help"](#) page for services available to young people with drug related issues or for those wanting general information.

## Evidence

This factsheet was developed following expert review at the NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in Mental Health and Substance Use and National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, UNSW Sydney.