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Tips to Prevent Drug Addiction in Your Child

Drug and substance abuse have been a challenge in schools and you, as a parent, have a major influence on your child and his ability to say NO to drugs. Keeping a communication channel open with your child will help keep him away from drugs and equip him to handle the situation if he is ever offered drugs.

Here are some tips on how to ensure you keep your child safe from drugs:

- **Talk about the issue:** Talk to your child about the negative effects of drugs, the toll it takes on the human body and the irreparable damage it can cause. Touch upon the legal consequences of possessing and consuming drugs. Also, talk to your child about fiction vs. reality when it comes to the on-screen portrayal of drugs, smoking or alcohol. Help him/her differentiate between the real world and the world of glamour portrayed on screen.
- **Listen to your child:** It is equally important to listen to your child. Be interested in what he is saying and give him your undivided attention.
- **Use videos:** Videos have a larger impact on your child and help him/her retain important information. They offer factual information about drugs and empower children to make the right choice.
- **Set a good example:** 'Monkey see, monkey do!' Children observe parents and try to emulate them. A parent's attitude towards drugs and alcohol consumption has a direct impact on the child's perception of drugs and alcohol. So, make sure you set a good example.
- **Teach your child to say NO:** Help your child handle situations which he/she may encounter at school or outside. The training should be age-appropriate. Role-play or a skit may work for children aged between 4 and 9. For older children, it could be a 'decision-making' multiple choice question quiz or a trivia game night to test knowledge of drugs. Teach him/her how to resist temptation. Most importantly, teach him/her difference between right and wrong. Help him/her to choose friends wisely and teach him/her to have the courage to take the right decisions.

Boost self-esteem: It's an established fact that children who suffer from depression, low self-esteem and loneliness are more susceptible to drug addiction. So, make your child feel special. Praise him/her and spend time with him/her. A child, who feels loved, feels valued.

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