



# Growing Up Drug-Free

Guide your child  
away from harm

Your voice as a parent is one of the most powerful tools in preventing drug abuse. **9 in 10 youths** were deterred from drug abuse after having conversations with their parents.

## Understanding why youths abuse drugs

### Coping

to manage or escape from various forms of distress, including negative emotions, life stressors or physical symptoms

### Enhancement

to gain energy or elevate experiences

### Socialisation

to bond with others or improve social interactions

### Expansion

to alter perception or gain new insights

### Conformity

to gain the approval of others

Youths who have healthy relationships with those around them and engage in meaningful activities are less likely to turn to drugs. Help your children stay drug-free by guiding them in building strong relationships.

1

### Build your child's self-esteem

Offer praise and encouragement that focuses on their effort, persistence, and learning process rather than just the outcomes and results. Show affection and engage in regular conversations to understand their thoughts and feelings better. Be there with them to journey through their struggles and successes.

2

### Share interests and nurture talents

Sports, games, or music can promote bonding whilst helping your child spend time meaningfully. Support your child in discovering their strengths and interests, then encourage them to develop these into passions through consistent practice and exploration.

3

### Develop open communication and coping skills

Lead by example and practise healthy emotional regulation with your child. Create a safe, non-judgemental space where your child can openly express their feelings. Listen to what your child has to say and withhold criticism. Validate their emotions to build trust and teach them that their feelings matter.

## Talk to your child, and never assume that they would know better.

The National Drug Perception Survey found that 9 in 10 youths were deterred from abusing drugs after having had conversations with their parents about the harms of drugs. However, only 6 in 10 youths have actually had such conversations with their parents.

As parents, you are one of the most influential figures in your child's life. With the worrying trend of new drug abusers getting younger, conversations about drugs should start earlier.

Here are some **conversation starters** to help you along:

"Have you heard of drugs?"

"What can you do when someone offers you drugs or unknown substances?"

"What are the harmful effects of drugs?"



For 7-12 years old

"Why do some people abuse drugs?"

"How are drugs different from medicine?"

"Apart from the physical harms of drug abuse, how else will drugs affect your life?"



For 13 years old and above

"What would become of our society if drugs were legalised in Singapore?"

"Why does Singapore adopt a zero-tolerance stance against drugs?"

"How will abusing drugs affect your loved ones and the people around you?"

## Teaching your child what to do when offered drugs

### Practise saying 'No'

Role-play different scenarios where your child might be offered drugs. Teach them to keep the conversation brief with firm responses like "No thanks, I'm not interested" or "That's illegal, I don't want to get into trouble."

### Choose friends wisely

Discuss the importance of surrounding themselves with peers who share similar values. Help them understand that real friends will not pressure them into harmful, illegal activities. Encourage them to build friendships with classmates involved in positive, healthy activities like sports, clubs or volunteer work.

### Suggest an alternative activity

Many youths wind up doing things they should not because they lack options. Teach your child to counter drug offers with fun healthy alternatives like sports or games, redirecting the group's energy towards positive activities.

### Ignore or change the subject

Your child can pretend not to hear the suggestion and change the topic. Act like the matter is not even worth discussing.

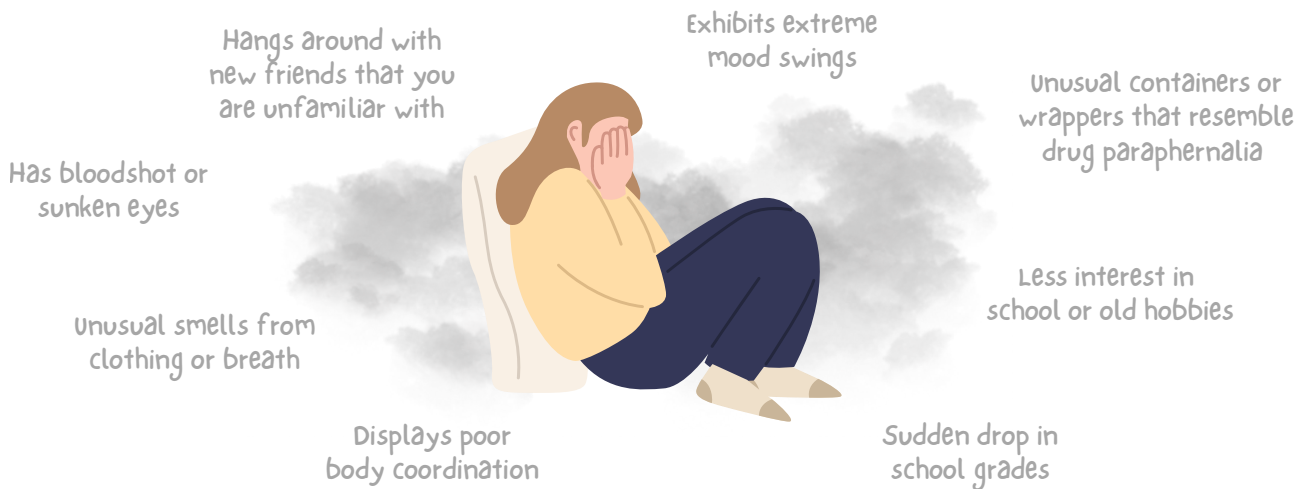
### Avoid or leave the situation

Teach your child to evaluate invitations to outings and avoid situations where they know that people will be abusing drugs. When caught in the situation where someone is offering drugs, your child should turn assertive and leave.

### Inform a trusted adult

Encourage your child to immediately inform a trusted adult such as a parent, teacher, counsellor or family member if someone offers them or pressures them to take drugs. This allows them to receive proper guidance on handling peer pressure and have the support they need to make safe, informed decisions.

## What are some tell-tale signs of drug abuse?



## Be vigilant when overseas

When travelling in countries where drugs are decriminalised, remain vigilant as drugs like cannabis may be laced into common food items such as gummies, chocolate and brownies. Parents should have conversations with their children about these risks before they travel, especially if they are travelling alone or with friends. Singapore citizens and permanent residents caught abusing drugs overseas will be prosecuted as if the offence had been committed in Singapore.

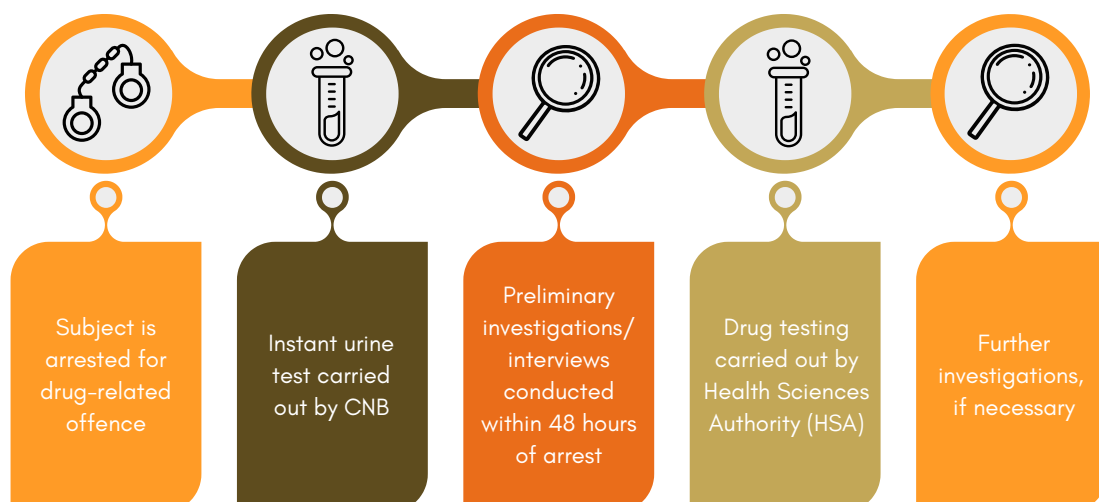


## What happens to my child if they are arrested for drug offences?

Parents of the suspect will be informed as soon as possible of the arrest, and the suspect will be able to contact their parents after an investigative interview with narcotics officers. Suspects are typically released on bail as quickly as possible into the custody of their parent or caregiver.

Family members do not attend police interviews with their child. If the suspect is under the age of 18, an Appropriate Adult (AA) will be activated to observe investigation interviews and provide support to the suspect. AAs are volunteers managed by service providers appointed by the Ministry of Social and Family Development, trained to provide emotional support and facilitate communication between the suspect and officers during the interview.

For more information, please visit our webpage - [CNB Explains: What happens after a suspect is arrested for a drug offence?](#)

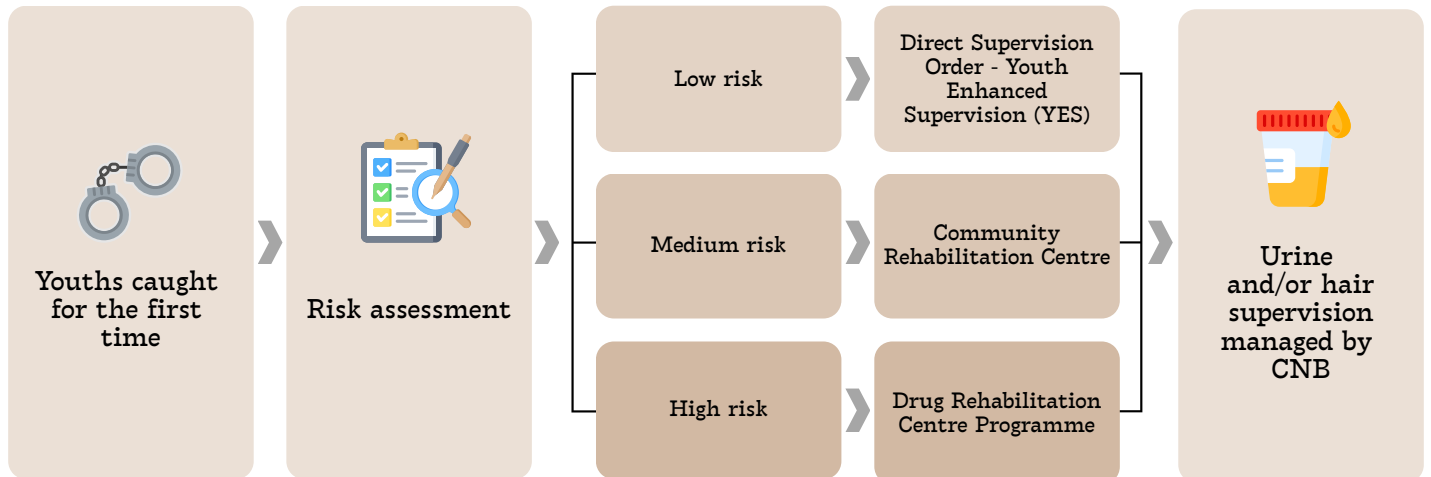


Typical sequence of events for investigation

## Where do youth drug abusers go when caught?

Abusers caught purely for consumption offences are usually sent for treatment and rehabilitation instead of being charged in court, and thus will not hold a criminal record for their offence. Drug abusers could be placed directly on the Drug Supervision Scheme or admitted to the Drug Rehabilitation Centre (DRC) for treatment and rehabilitation. The pathways of recovery depend on the abusers' assessed risk of reoffending.

For more information, please visit our webpage - [CNB Explains: Where do youth drug abusers go when caught?](#)



Abusers who reoffend will subsequently be sent to the DRC. On the other hand, those under investigation for other drug or criminal offences (e.g. drug trafficking) will be charged in court under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1973.

Effective from 16 May 2026, first-time youth abusers who surrender to CNB or a police station will not be sent to the DRC. Instead, they will be placed on drug supervision in the community with compulsory case management. This serves to encourage more first-time abusers to voluntarily surrender and receive the necessary interventions to overcome their drug addiction.

## Helplines and Support

If you suspect that your child is abusing drugs, call the CNB hotline for advice. Early intervention offers the best chance of rehabilitation and reintegration to get your child's life back on track.

**Central Narcotics Bureau**

☎ 1800-325-6666

🌐 [www.cnb.gov.sg](http://www.cnb.gov.sg)

📺 📺 @cnb.drugfreesg

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**National Addictions Management Service (NAMS)**

☎ 6389 2000 (General enquiries)  
6389 2200 (Appointments)

🌐 [www.nams.sg](http://www.nams.sg)


24/7 mental health support by National Mindline:

☎ 1771

💬 6669 1771 (Whatsapp messages only)

**Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA)**

Walk-in rehabilitation support:



Help your child lead a fulfilling life. Have that conversation with your child today.

