

Urine test can save your child's life

Is your child using drugs? According to Dr Melissa Yssel, a pathologist and member of the National Pathology Group (NPG), a simple urine test can give you the answer.

Dr Yssel receives many phone calls from parents who are concerned their children may have become involved in drugs. She advises them to arrange a full drug screen, which is a simple urine test.

Although it's a more expensive option, a full drug screen is essential. To test for a single drug is unlikely to be accurate because of the nature of street drugs and the habits of drug users. Almost all drugs available on the street today are cut, in other words they've been mixed with other ingredients. Users also mix and match their drugs. If you only test for one

drug, you won't know for certain whether or not your child is mixing crushed Mandrax into cannabis, for example. It's also important to test for drugs as soon as possible, as certain drugs have a very short detection period — sometimes less than 24 hours. Dr Yssel also points out that children involved in the drug scene become very wise about ways of getting around drug tests. Therefore, if you suspect a serious problem, you need to supervise the production of the urine sample. A full drug screen costs approximately R1 000, which is not covered by medical aid. However, the accurate information provided by the test is the first step on the road to recovery.

Details: NPG on 011-482-8212.