

EMPOWERED

SUBSTANCE USE EDUCATION



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

When it comes to substance use, the right information can change lives. By understanding the risks and making informed choices, we can break the cycle of substance misuse and build a healthier, stronger future.

MARIJUANA

Marijuana use that starts in adolescence can lower your IQ as much as 8 POINTS and this is IRREVERSIBLE!

CANNABIS USE IN TEENS HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH:

- Difficulty thinking and problem-solving
- Problems with memory and learning
- Reduced coordination
- Difficulty maintaining attention
- Problems with school and social life

CANNABIS CAN NEGATIVELY IMPACT YOUR LIFE:

- Increased risk of mental health issues
 - Depression, anxiety, temporary psychosis, and schizophrenia
- Impaired driving
 - reaction time, coordination, and concentration
- Potential for dependency

www.cdc.gov/cannabis/health-effects/cannabis-and-teens.html

VAPING

The most common reason students give for trying an e-cigarette is because a friend used them.

VAPING CAN NEGATIVELY IMPACT YOUR HEALTH:

- Vapes contain
 - Cancer-causing chemicals
 - Heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead
 - Tiny particles that can be inhaled deep into lungs
 - Volatile organic compounds
 - Chemical flavorings linked to serious lung disease
- Some young vape users have experienced seizures
- Defective e-cigarette batteries have caused fires and explosions, sometimes causing serious injuries

E-CIGARETTES ARE THE MOST COMMONLY USED TOBACCO PRODUCT AMONG U.S. YOUTH

In 2023, 2.1 million (7.7%) students used e-cigarettes

- 550,000 (4.6%) middle school students
- 1.56 million (10.0%) high school students

www.cdc.gov/tobacco/tobacco-features/back-to-school.html
www.cdc.gov/tobacco/e-cigarettes/health-effects.html

One prescription can lead to a lifetime of struggle.

RX DRUGS

PAIN MEDICATION PRESCRIBED BY A DOCTOR CAN STILL BE DANGEROUS

- Use prescribed medications in low doses and in limited quantities to avoid dependency
- Never share prescribed medication because the dose could be fatal to someone else
- Properly dispose of unused and expired medications to prevent the misuse of your prescription by others

Most adolescents misusing prescription opioids obtained them for free from friends or relatives or from a single prescriber.

OPIOIDS ARE A CLASS OF DRUGS USED TO REDUCE PAIN

- Heroin
- Synthetic opioids like Fentanyl
- Prescribed pain medication

OPIOID MISUSE BY THE NUMBERS

- 1 in 7 High school students reported misusing Rx opioids at least once in their lifetime
- 75% of drug overdose deaths in 2022 involved an opioid

www.cdc.gov/museum/education/newsletter/2022/july/index.html

www.justthinktwice.gov/facts/preventing-opioid-misuse-among-high-school-student-athletes-playbook-students

TOBACCO/NICOTINE

Tobacco is a plant and nicotine is a chemical extracted from tobacco.

NICOTINE IS NOT SAFE FOR THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN

- Nicotine is highly addictive
- Nicotine can harm parts of the brain that control:
 - Attention
 - Learning
 - Mood
 - Impulse control
- In 2024 1.8% of high school students used Nicotine pouches

CIGARETTE SMOKING IS AT THE LOWEST LEVELS

- In 2024 cigarette smoking reached the lowest levels ever recorded by the FDA's Annual National Youth Tobacco Survey
 - 1.4% of students reported current use

www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/youth-and-tobacco/results-annual-national-youth-tobacco-survey

www.cdc.gov/tobacco/e-cigarettes/youth.html

ALCOHOL

Alcohol is the most widely used substance among teens.

THE FACTS ABOUT UNDERAGE DRINKING:

- Alcohol is a significant factor in the deaths of people younger than age 21 in the U.S. each year
- Drinking can lead to poor decisions about taking risks like unsafe sexual behavior and driving under the influence
- Binge drinking can increase a person's risk of being physically or sexually assaulted.
- Research shows that people who start drinking before age 15 are at a higher risk of developing Alcohol Use Disorder.
- Alcohol interferes with brain development, potentially affecting both the structure and function which may cause cognitive or learning problems.

BINGE DRINKING EXPLAINED:

- Adult males: 5 or more drinks in 2 hours
- Adult females: 4 or more drinks in 2 hours
- Youth males: 3-5 drinks in 2 hours
- Youth females: 3 drinks in 2 hours

<https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets/underage-drinking>



MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH YOUR MIND MATTERS

Taking care of your mental health is just as important as taking care of your physical health. Stress, anxiety, and depression can be overwhelming, but turning to drugs or alcohol isn't the answer. Substances may offer a quick escape, but they can make things worse in the long run—leading to disordered use, increased anxiety, and even more challenges.

- ✓ **Talk to someone you trust**
- ✓ **Get moving—exercise can boost your mood**
- ✓ **Practice mindfulness and self-care**
- ✓ **Reach out for professional support if needed**

You don't have to face your struggles alone. Help is available, and real healing starts with real solutions—not substances.