

Youth Marijuana Use

SAMHSA's primary website for information on marijuana use, misuse, resources for help, tips for talking to youth about marijuana use (example below) www.samhsa.gov/marijuana

TIPS

Start the Conversation: Talk to your teen about the risks associated with marijuana and other drug use. Be your teen's trusted resource.

Listen: Stay calm and non-judgmental. When you allow youth to be heard, they're more likely to hear what you have to say.

Set Clear Rules: While you may think that your teen knows not to use marijuana, they may be tempted if it is offered to them. Youth with clear family rules about drug use are less likely to use marijuana than those without clear rules. Let them know your expectations and possible consequences.

Focus on the Good: Encourage young people to make healthy decisions that help them achieve their goals. Remind youth that most of their peers choose not to use.

Monitor: Ask Who? What? Where? When? Get to know the parents of your teen's friends.

Count It and Lock It Up: If you have alcohol, marijuana or other substances in your home that are prohibited to minors, track them and lock them up.

TALKING WITH YOUR TEEN ABOUT MARIJUANA: Keeping Your Kids Safe - downloadable brochure
<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/TTHY-Marijuana-Broch-2020.pdf>

Information for parents from Partnership to End Addiction
[Marijuana: What You Need to Know to Protect Children, Teens & Young Adults](#)
[Marijuana Talk Kit](#)

Centers for Disease Control website for parents [Marijuana Use and Teens](#)

Information on marijuana in Spanish: [La marihuana y la salud publica](#)

Youth and Prescription Drugs

Downloadable brochure from SAMHSA [Talking to Your Kids About Prescription Drug Abuse](#)

Downloadable brochure from Parents for Drug Free Kids and the Medicine Abuse Project
[Parent Talk Kit: Tips for talking to and what to say to prevent drug and alcohol abuse](#)

Downloadable brochure from the Iowa Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy [Talking to Kids About Prescription Drug Abuse](#)

TIPS

Talking to children about misusing prescription and over-the-counter drugs is as important as discussing alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Here are talking points by age to get you started:

5-8 years

- Reinforce that your children should only take medicine that's given to them by you or someone to whom you've given permission -- such as a grandparent, babysitter, doctor or school nurse.
- Explain that prescription and over-the-counter medicines are drugs that can be taken when a person is sick or has an injury, and when they are taken properly, they can be very helpful. Explain that they can be harmful when misused.
- Help children learn that it isn't always necessary to take medicine when they don't feel good. If they have a headache, for example, eating something or lying down for a while might make them feel better.

9-11 years

- Practice with them different ways of saying "no" when offered drugs by friends or others.
- Establish clear rules and appropriate consequences regarding the use and misuse of any drug; including alcohol, tobacco and marijuana. Monitor and enforce these rules consistently.
- Remind your children that prescription and over-the-counter medicines are drugs and can be just as harmful as illegal drugs if not taken when needed or as directed.

12-14 years

- Talk with them about how drug use might hurt good friendships or sabotage positive opportunities in their lives.
- Talk about the dangers of misusing over-the-counter and prescription drugs.

Youth and Vaping

SAMHSA brochure for parents and caregivers about the risks associated with vaping for teens and the importance of having conversations with their children to help them avoid substance use.

<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/talk-they-hear-you-talking-with-your-teen-about-vaping-keeping-your-kids-safe-parent-brochure/PEP20-03-01-080>

TIPS

BEFORE THE TALK

Know the facts. Get credible information about e-cigarettes and young people at E-cigarettes.SurgeonGeneral.gov. Be patient and ready to listen. Avoid criticism and encourage an open dialogue. Remember, your goal is to have a conversation, not to deliver a lecture. It's OK for your conversation to take place over time, in bits and pieces. Set a positive example by being tobacco-free. If you use tobacco, it's never too late to quit. For free help, visit smokefree.gov or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

ANSWER THEIR QUESTIONS

Why don't you want me to use e-cigarettes?

Science shows that e-cigarettes contain ingredients that are addictive and could harm different parts of your body. Right now, your brain is still developing, which means you are more vulnerable to addiction. Many e-cigarettes contain nicotine, and using nicotine can change your brain to make you crave more nicotine. It can also affect your memory and concentration. I don't want that for you! E-cigarettes contain chemicals that are harmful. When people use e-cigarettes, they breathe in tiny particles that can harm their lungs. The cloud that people exhale from e-cigarettes can expose you to chemical that are not safe to breathe.

What's the big deal about nicotine?

Your brain is still developing until about age 25. The Surgeon General reported that nicotine is addictive and can harm your brain development. Using nicotine at your age may make it harder for you to concentrate, learn, or control your impulses. Nicotine can even train your brain to be more easily addicted to other drugs like meth and cocaine. I don't say this to scare you, but I want you to have the facts because nothing is more important to me than your health and safety.

Aren't e-cigarettes safer than conventional cigarettes?

Because your brain is still developing, scientific studies show that it isn't safe for your to use any tobacco product that contains nicotine, including e-cigarettes. Whether you get nicotine from an e-cigarette or a cigarette, it's still risky. Some e-cigarette batteries have even exploded and hurt people.

I thought e-cigarettes didn't have nicotine -- just water and flavoring?

I used to think that, too. But many e-cigarettes have nicotine. There are also other chemicals in them that can be harmful

I (or my friends) have tried e-cigarettes and it was no big deal.

I appreciate your honesty. In the future I hope you (or your friends) will stay away from e-cigarettes and other tobacco products, including cigarettes. Science show that e-cigarettes contain ingredients that are addictive and could harm different parts of your body.

Next time we go to the doctor, let's ask about the risks of nicotine, e-cigarettes, and other tobacco products.

You used tobacco, so why shouldn't I?

If I could live my life over again, I never would have started smoking. I learned that people who smoke cigarettes are much more likely to develop, and die from, certain diseases than people who don't smoke. This was really scary, so I quit smoking. Quitting was really hard, and I don't want you to go through that. The best thing is to not start at all.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) information on vaping

https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/Quick-Facts-on-the-Risks-of-E-cigarettes-for-Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults.html

US Surgeon General site on vaping: <https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/>

Youth and ALCOHOL

SAMHSA's youth and alcohol resource hub for parents: "Talk, They Hear You" parent resources

Background on issues related to youth and alcohol:

[How To Tell If Your Child Is Drinking Alcohol](#)

[The Consequences of Underage Drinking](#)

[What You Can Do To Prevent Your Child From Drinking](#)

[Why Small Conversations Make a Big Impression](#)

[Why You Should Talk With Your Child About Alcohol and Other Drugs](#)

[Why Your Child Might Start Drinking](#)

Help for Talking About Alcohol and Other Drugs with Youth:

[5 Conversation Goals](#)

[Answering Your Child's Tough Questions](#)

[Family Agreement Form: Avoiding Alcohol](#)

[Keeping Your Kids Safe Brochures](#)

[Join the #WeTalked Campaign \(PDF | 5.3 MB\)](#)

[Impaired Driving: Talk With Your Kids](#)

DID YOU KNOW? Teens who drink are more likely to:

- have problems with school work and school conduct.
- be victims of violent crime, including rape, aggravated assault, and robbery.
- be sexually active at earlier ages and to have unprotected sex than teens who do not drink.

- be involved in an alcohol-related traffic crash -- a major cause of death among young people. Alcohol use also is linked with teen deaths by drowning, suicide, and homicide.

In addition, a person who begins drinking as a young teen is four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than someone who waits until adulthood to use alcohol. The message is clear: Alcohol use is risky for young people. The longer children delay alcohol use, the less likely they are to develop problems associated with it. That's why it is so important to help children avoid any alcohol use.

Parents and other caring adults have more influence on a child's values and decisions about drinking before he or she begins to use alcohol. Talk to the children in your life and let them know your expectations about not drinking alcohol. *National Institute on Alcohol Abuse & Alcoholism*

Youth BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

DID YOU KNOW?

- The brain reaches its biggest size in early adolescence.
- The brain continues to mature even after it is done growing.
- The teen brain is ready to learn and adapt
- Many mental disorders may begin to appear during adolescence.
- Teen brains may be more vulnerable to stress

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-teen-brain-7-things-to-know/>

BrainFacts.org information and illustrations of how gambling affects the brain

<https://www.brainfacts.org/diseases-and-disorders/addiction/2015/gambling-addiction-and-the-brain>

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry article on youth brain development and risky behaviors https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/The-Teen-Brain-Behavior-Problem-Solving-and-Decision-Making-095.aspx

National Institute on Drug Abuse information on adolescent brain development and substance use <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drug-topics/adolescent-brain>
<https://www.drugabuse.gov/drug-topics/drugs-brain>

National Institute for Mental Health information on youth brain development

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-teen-brain-7-things-to-know/>

Brain Connection (CA) video on gambling and the brain (2020):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wghXyB7ERfs>