

# Teen Substance Use & Abuse

[Substance Use & Abuse in Teens | Free Family Webinar  
with Hays CISD & Daybreak Health](#)

Passcode: uv@j+4b9

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**Our Mission:**  
A world where every young person benefits from mental health support

**Our Services:**  
Online counseling, designed for teens

# Learning Objectives

- Learn about the prevalence of teen alcohol and drug use
- Understand the differences in use, abuse, and dependence
- Recognize warning signs
- Learn how to talk about alcohol, drugs, and harm reduction
- Connecting to available resources
- Q&A



# Commonly Used Substances

# Teen Substance Use Statistics

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, in 2022:

- Teens who reported **alcohol** use in the past year:
  - *8th graders: 15.2%* | *10th graders: 31.3%* | *12 graders: 51.9%*
- Teens who reported **marijuana** use in the past year:
  - *8th graders: 8.3%* | *10th graders: 19.5%* | *12 graders: 30.7%*
- Teens who reported **nicotine vaping** use in the past year:
  - *8th graders: 12%* | *10th graders: 20.5%* | *12 graders: 27.3%*
- Teens who reported **illicit drug use** (*other than marijuana*) in the past year:
  - *8th graders: 4.9%* | *10th graders: 5.7%* | *12 graders: 8.0%*

[National Institute of Drug Abuse 2022](#)

# Teen Substance Use Statistics

**6.34% of youth in the U.S. reported a substance use disorder in the past year.**

That is equivalent to over *1.5 million* youth in the U.S. who meet the criteria for an illicit drug or alcohol use disorder.

[Mental Health America](#)

# Alcohol Use

## **What are the short term effects?**

Alcohol is a depressant, which slows down central nervous system activity like breathing and heart rate. It can be appealing to teens due to the potential effects: increases in energy and confidence, lower inhibitions and stress. May also cause loss of coordination and impaired decision making, and a risk of alcohol poisoning from drinking too much at once.

## **What are the long term effects?**

Long term use of alcohol can cause changes in the brain, and increased risk of chronic health problems such as heart and liver diseases.

## **Can you get addicted?**

Yes; [Research](#) shows that teens who use alcohol before age 15 are six times more likely to become alcohol dependent than adults who begin drinking at age 21.

## **Is it legal?**

Alcohol is legal for people over the age of 21.

# Marijuana Use

## **What are the short term effects?**

This substance can be appealing to teens due to the effects: creates a high sensation, feeling altered sensations/sense of time, relaxation, and good mood. Marijuana may also cause anxiety/panic, and slowed reactions.

## **What are the long term effects?**

Marijuana impacts memory, learning, problem solving, concentration, and how the brain builds connections important for these functions

## **Can you get addicted?**

Yes; CDC [studies](#) estimate that people who use cannabis have about a 10% likelihood of becoming addicted. The risk is greater for those who start using marijuana during youth or adolescence, or who use marijuana more frequently.

## **Is it legal?**

Twenty-one states have legalized recreational or medical marijuana, with individual restrictions. Marijuana is illegal at the federal level.



# Nicotine & Vaping

## **What are the short term effects?**

Increases stimulation in the Central Nervous System. This substance can be appealing to teens due to the effects: increases in energy and stress relief.

## **What are the long term effects?**

Increased risks of cancers and diseases of the heart and lungs. Long term use of nicotine may interfere with normal development and function of attention-related regions in the brain, resulting in attentional deficits. Long term effects of vaping aren't clear due to recent popularity/increase in use.

## **Can you get addicted?**

Nicotine is highly addictive in both cigarettes and vaping products. Flavored vaping products may seem less dangerous + more appealing, but carry the same addiction risks.

## **Is it legal?**

Nicotine is legal for people over the age of 18.

# Opioids

Includes pain relievers available legally by prescription: oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), codeine, morphine; heroin & synthetic opioids such as fentanyl

## **What are the short term effects?**

Slows breathing & heart rate; release of endorphins which dulls pain and activates reward center in the brain; risk of respiratory distress or death from overdose. *Fentanyl is ~50X stronger than Morphine; may be used intentionally, or be exposed unknowingly*

## **What are the long term effects?**

Withdrawal effects, including: muscle and bone pain, sleep problems, diarrhea and vomiting, uncontrollable movements, severe cravings. Slowed breathing can cause brain damage.

## **Can you get addicted?**

Yes; continued use builds a tolerance, which creates a constant need to consume more, which increases the risk of overdose.

## **Is it legal?**

Can be used legally for some conditions/procedures when prescribed, but can be misused.

# SIGNS OF OVERDOSE

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Recognizing the signs of opioid overdose can save a life. Here are some things to look for:

- Small, constricted “pinpoint pupils”
- Falling asleep or losing consciousness
- Slow, weak, or no breathing
- Choking or gurgling sounds
- Limp body
- Cold, clammy, and/or discolored skin

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK SOMEONE IS OVERDOSING

It may be hard to tell whether a person is high or experiencing an overdose. If you aren't sure, it's best to treat the situation like an overdose—you could save a life.

1

Call 911 immediately.\*

2

Administer naloxone,\*\* if available.

3

Try to keep the person awake and breathing.

4

Lay the person on their side to prevent choking.

5

Stay with them until emergency workers arrive.

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# Narcan (Naloxone)

**Narcan** is a life-saving medication that can reverse the effects of **opioid overdose** (from fentanyl, heroin, or prescription opioid medication). It is a nasal spray that is easy to administer, and it is available in all 50 states and can be purchased from a local pharmacy without a prescription in most states.

- Narcan is safe and easy to use, works almost immediately, and is not addictive. Naloxone has very few negative effects, and has no effect if opioids are not in a person's system.
- Narcan is only a temporary solution, lasting ~20 minutes. You can administer Narcan more than once, but it is not a replacement for additional medical services.
- Most states have laws that may **protect** a person who is overdosing or the person who called for help from legal trouble - [Read about the Jessica Sosa Act in Texas here.](#)

# Narcan (Naloxone)

- [Hays CISD Safety & Security / Fentanyl Tips & Links](#)
- [KVUE: New Narcan vending machine installed outside Cenote on East Cesar Chavez](#)
- [Narcan.com - How to Get Narcan](#)
- [End Overdose: How to Get Naloxone & Testing Strips](#)
- [Next Distro: How to Get Naloxone in Texas](#)
- [NPR: \*The FDA approves the overdose-reversing drug Narcan for over-the-counter sales\*](#)

# Substances & Teen Mental Health

# Self-Reported Reasons for Teen Use

- To experiment
- To have a good time with friends
- To relax and relieve tension
- To feel good or get high
- Boredom
- It looks “cool”
- Because they’re “hooked”
- To help quit cigarettes (vaping)
- Liking the flavor (vaping)
- Regular cigarette use not permitted (vaping)

## Teen Substance Use

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- Teen substance use can be a result of **curiosity** to experiment related to developmental stage
- Can relate to **novelty-seeking**, **impulsivity**, and **reward sensitivity** which are part of the adolescent stage
- Low level experimentation **may not** impact life functioning in major ways

## Teen Substance Abuse/Addiction

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- Abuse or addiction may impact quality of life and functioning in major ways
- Involves a complex interaction between **dependence**, **tolerance** and **withdrawal** and can create an addiction
- An **earlier age** of onset of use is associated with a higher risk of developing a **substance use disorder**



# Mental Health Considerations

## Diagnosis of a **Substance Use Disorder** includes:

- Assessment of symptoms over the past **12 months**
- Use affects **judgement**; one may start to build a tolerance and notice withdrawal symptoms
- Use feels out of the person's **control**; may include using too much, cravings, wanting to cut down but not being able to
- Use impacts one's general **functioning** (work, school home), person continues to use despite the substance causing problems

# Warning Signs & Symptoms

- Drastic changes in behavior and emotions, increased anger, changes in appearance or eating habits
- Takes **higher amounts** of a substance than originally intended.
- Uses substances in **high-risk situations** such as driving.
- Increased interpersonal **conflict** over the use of substances.
- **Neglects responsibilities** at home/school due to using substances; declining grades and truancy
- **Gives up** hobbies or other interests; hanging out with friends who use drugs and alcohol, or isolating from others
- Has **cravings** to use, or trying unsuccessfully to stop using/cut back.

# Prevention & Treatment

# Talking to Your Child

- **Ask your teen's views.** Listen open-mindedly to your teen's opinions and questions about drugs, try to avoid “lectures”
- **Discuss reasons not to use drugs.** Discuss how drug use can affect the things that are *important to your teen* — such as sports, driving, health, appearance.
- **Encourage resilience, optimism, & self-worth.** Help your child understand their value, feel confident they can handle challenging situations without the use of drugs & alcohol.
- **Talk about messages in media.** Social media, television programs, movies and songs can glamorize or trivialize drug use.
- **Help them prepare for uncomfortable or unexpected situations.** Brainstorm with your teen about how to turn down offers of drugs, discuss their peer pressure experiences. Have an “escape” plan if they are in an uncomfortable situation. Offer praise and encouragement when your teen succeeds.

# Harm Reduction

Harm reduction is all about keeping people safe in a practical way. If someone is using, simple tips to stay safe are:

- Test Your Drugs & Carry Naloxone
- Never Use Alone (*use with trusted people, not strangers*)
- Go Slow & Be Safe (*don't drink & drive, don't mix substances*)

Studies have shown that youth respond better to harm-reduction messaging rather than abstinence or zero-tolerance policies, as this approach gives them the tools to make informed choices.

# Protective Factors as Prevention

Preventative strategies in addiction and substance use have been shown to be as effective as they are from chronic conditions.

- **Establish rules collaboratively.** Create family rules together and come up with back-up plans.
- **Know your teen's activities.** Pay attention to your teen's whereabouts. Ask questions, get to know friends, parents and places your child likes to frequent.
- **Keep track of prescription drugs.** Take an inventory of all prescription and over-the-counter medications in your home or keep in a safe place.
- **Set a good example.** Think about how substance use is modeled at home. Think about how you'll respond if your teen asks about your own drug use or lack thereof.

# How to Support Quitting Substances

- **Acknowledge** + **validate** that processes involved with stopping substance use are challenging and complex
- **Support** their motivation to change.
- **Talking** about how seeking some form of **professional help** for addiction is a positive step towards recovery.
- Discuss potential **therapeutic options**: *CBT for triggers, Motivational interviewing, Family/Individual Therapy, 12 step programs, medication/other physical interventions*
- Take it **one day at a time**

# Resources



# NIDA Mind Matters Series

*[Mind Matters](#) invites young teens to take a scientific journey to learn about the brain's complex responses to specific drugs, with teen booklets in both English & Spanish, as well as an accompanying [Teacher's Guide](#).*

- [Drugs & The Brain](#)
- [Cocaine](#)
- [Inhalants](#)
- [K2/Spice & Bath Salts](#)
- [Marijuana](#)
- [Methamphetamine](#)
- [Nicotine, Tobacco, & Vaping](#)
- [Opioids](#)
- [Prescription Stimulants](#)

# Hays CISD Resources



- [Hays CISD Guidance & Counseling Resources](#)
- [Hays CISD Community Resources 23-24](#)

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# Thank You!

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