

Substance Use Prevention: Influencers

Parent/Trusted Adult at Home Activity and Survey

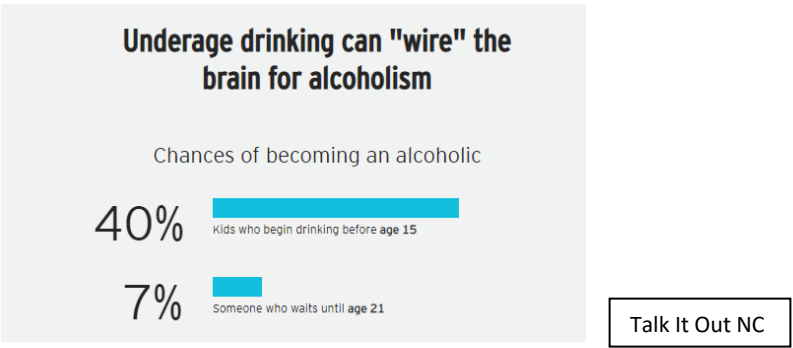


Greetings from Candor Health Education!

Research shows that parents are the number one influence in a child’s life. This is why we want to partner with you to help your child make healthy decisions. This letter contains a review of content from our 6th/7th Grade Substance Use Prevention program, as well as videos to watch and discuss together. We hope this will help you continue the conversation with your child at home. Lastly, please help us keep our program content fresh and relevant by completing the parent survey at the end of this activity.

Alcohol Use and Teens

- Alcohol is the most commonly used substance by young people, but not everyone is using! In fact, only 42% of high school seniors report having used alcohol within the last year (Monitoring the Future, 2024)
- Alcohol has a significant impact on the developing brain. A person’s brain continues to develop until someone is in their mid-twenties. Because the brain is still developing, underage drinking drastically increases the likelihood of developing a use disorder later in life.



Marijuana Use and Teens

According to the 2024 MTF (*Monitoring the Future*) study, 7% of 8th graders, 16% of 10th graders and 26% of 12th graders have used marijuana in the past year. With many states legalizing marijuana for recreational use, teens often perceive that marijuana is a safe drug to use.

What Your Child Learned About Marijuana

- Marijuana contains THC (tetrahydrocannabinol – psychoactive compound) and CBD (cannabidiol – non-psychoactive compound)
- Marijuana can be addictive.
- Marijuana can be smoked, vaped, dabbed or eaten (baked into foods).
- Edibles, THC oils and other extracts (dabs) tend to have higher THC levels and can increase the risk of paranoia, hallucinations and addiction.
- Marijuana can have short term effects on the body such as altered heart rate, mood, poor coordination, distorted perception, and problems with learning and memory.

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Video and Discussion Activity - Marijuana

In the program, students learned several refusal skills to help them say no in peer pressure situations. Below is a video clip about ways to say no that you may wish to use to talk more about this.

[Refusal Skills Video](#)

Here are some questions and topics to discuss about this with your child.

- Have you ever thought about what you would do if offered marijuana? Or have you ever been offered marijuana before?
- What would you do if you were offered marijuana? Do you have a refusal skill that you would use?
- It is helpful for young people to know that they can use their parents as an excuse. You can develop a code word or phrase with your child that they can text you when they want to leave a peer pressure situation. Your child learned more about this during the program.

Nicotine Use and Teens



Vaping remains the most common way young people use nicotine. Nicotine is a highly addictive drug that can affect the development of the brain's reward pathway, priming the brain for addiction to other substances.

Information on Vaping

- 5.9% of middle and high school students (1.63 million) report current use of e-cigarettes (National Youth Tobacco Survey, 2024)
- E-cigarettes expose the lungs to a variety of chemicals
- Flavored products are used by 80% of teen users with the majority using disposable vapes

Video and Discussion Activity – Vaping Nicotine

Below is a video clip that you may wish to use to spark a conversation with your child about an addiction to vaping nicotine. The students watched this during the classroom presentation.

[My Vaping Mistakes: How It Became an Addiction](#)

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Below are some conversation starters for you to begin a discussion with your child.

- Why do some teens start vaping?
- How has nicotine addiction interfered in the lives of these teens? How has vaping impacted them socially, emotionally and physically?
- Do you think people think they will become addicted when they first start vaping?

Information on Nicotine Pouches

- Nicotine pouches are the second most common way that young people use nicotine. 1.8% or 480,000 students report current use of nicotine pouches (National Youth Tobacco Survey, 2024)
- Nicotine pouches are small bags that contain nicotine powder, sweeteners, flavorings and plant-based fibers.
- They dissolve in the mouth releasing nicotine into the bloodstream through the gums or lining of the mouth.

Video and Discussion Activity – Nicotine Pouches

Below is a video clip that you may wish to use to spark a conversation with your child.

[Teen Nicotine Use/Nicotine Pouches](#)

Below are some conversation starters for you to begin a discussion with your child.

- Did you learn anything new about the health effects of nicotine from watching this clip?
- Is there enough research to determine if these pouches are safe?
- Can a person become addicted to these pouches? If so, how would they know they're addicted?

Fentanyl-laced pills – A DEA Public Safety Alert

Over the last several years, The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has issued a series of alerts about fake prescription pills containing lethal amounts of fentanyl as well as the rise of illegal online pharmacies. They are warning of the “alarming increase in the lethality and availability” of counterfeit pills. Increasingly, young people are purchasing pills, often on-line, what they believe to be Xanax or Percocet or OxyContin, only to find the pills are laced with fentanyl – a synthetic opioid that is 100x stronger than morphine. According to DEA statistics, 7 in every 10 pills seized contain a lethal dose of fentanyl. The DEA has launched a “One Pill Can Kill” awareness campaign to help get the word out. Watch “On-line Access to Fentanyl-laced Drugs” to stay informed on this growing issue.

[On-line Access to Fentanyl-laced Drugs](#)

- In class students learned that prescription medication should only come from a licensed pharmacy and be used under the supervision of a trusted adult.

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Below are some tips to talk with your teen about drugs. Remember, you are the most influential person in your child's life. Research shows they are listening.

- **Begin conversations before there is a problem:** Use real life opportunities as teachable moments (TV shows, headlines, news stories, things happening in your community).
- **Use facts:** Your child is exposed to lots of misinformation. Help them determine fact and fiction by getting information from reputable sources.
- **Create a safe and open environment to talk about all issues big and small:** Open dialogue about the small daily occurrences will make larger issues easier to discuss.
- **Set goals for conversations:** It is important to stay focused and calm when talking to your child about drugs. Thinking about what you want to say ahead of time will help you be open to listening to what they have to say.
- **Find healthy coping skills for your family:** Modeling positive ways to deal with stress will give teens tools to use. Find opportunities to do activities as a family for relaxation.
- **Tie drug use to their brain development:** The teen brain is still developing. Decisions they are making now can impact their brain development. 90% of addictions begin from teen use.

Please complete this short, [parent survey](#) . It will take less than two minutes to complete.

Interested in staying up-to-date on health topics impacting youth and young adults? [Register here](#) to receive the monthly Candor Health Education community newsletter.

Don't forget to visit our [newly updated website](#), for up-to-date statistics, videos and additional resources about drug use and other health topics.

Sincerely,
The Candor Health Education Team