

How to keep your teens off drugs

Information provided by:
Brookland Out of the Dark
students

Preparing to talk to your teen

*Teens who learn anti-drug messages at home are 42% less likely to use drugs!

Parents—YOU are the first line of defense when it comes to your teen's drug use or drinking. And you DO make a difference! Nearly two-thirds of teenagers see great risk of upsetting their parents or losing the respect of family and friends if they use drugs.

YOU can influence your teenager's behavior, particularly if you are armed with the facts about drugs. Having a clear understanding about the risks of illicit drugs and knowing the signs to watch for in your teenager is a critical first step.

Parents should state clearly to their pre-teens and teens that they would be very disappointed if they started to use drugs. Parents can

explain that it can interfere with their concentration, memory, motor skills, motivation, leads to poorer school performance, and can cause users to disappoint the people most important to them. All of this can be communicated in a loving way: "I love you and I want the best for you, so I hope you won't try drugs."

Parents remain one of the strongest moral influences on kids, and they need to send a clear antidrug message. Studies show that parents ambivalence-ignoring the topic- increases a child's risk for drug use.

Don't ignore the warning signs

If you are suspicious your child may be using drugs, don't ignore the warning signs. Children seldom grasp the concepts of addiction. Most view themselves as 'nothing will happen to me'. For some teens, the stress of

adolescence and pressure from their peers is overwhelming, and drugs become an enticing escape from their real world.

Warning Signs of Drug Use

Signs in the Home:

- Loss of interest in family activities
- Disrespect for family rules
- Withdrawal from responsibilities
- Verbally or physically abusive
- Sudden increase or decrease in appetite
- Disappearance of valuable items or money
- Not coming home on time
- Not telling you where they are going
- Constant excuses for behavior
- Spending a lot of time in their rooms
- Lies about activities
- Finding drug related items
- Possessing unexplained valuables

Signs at School:

- Sudden drop in grades
- Truancy (skipping school or class)
- Loss of interest in learning
- Sleeping in class
- Poor work performance
- Not doing homework
- Defiant of authority
- Poor attitude towards sports or other extracurricular activities
- Reduced memory and attention span

Physical and Emotional Signs:

- Changes friends
- Smell of chemicals on breath
- Unexplainable mood swings & behavior
- Negative, argumentative, paranoid, confused, anxious, destructive
- Sharing few, if any, personal problems
- Overly tired or hyperactive
- Unhappy and depressed
- Always needs money, or has excessive amounts of money
- Sloppiness in appearance-neglects hygiene/appearance
- Frequent use of eyedrops; red or glassy eyes
- Poor self image
- Slurred speech
- Cheats or steals
- Overreacts to criticism; acts rebellious
- Doesn't seem as happy as they used to be
- Drastic weight loss or gain

Prescription Drug Abuse

According to the 2007 and 2008 statewide student surveys Craighead County is ABOVE STATE AVERAGE in just about every drug use. Don't believe it? We didn't want to either, but you can see for yourself. Download complete copies of all the Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment (APNA) Student Surveys at <http://www.arkansas.pridesurveys.com>

If you are raising a teen in today's culture you should better educate yourself about teen prescription drug use before addiction attacks your family and loved ones. Below are some current facts you should know:

Many parents are not aware of teen prescription drug abuse. Teens say their parents are not discussing these dangers with them, even though research shows that parental disapproval is a powerful way to keep teens from using drugs.

Studies reveal that more teens are trying prescription medications in order to "get high" than marijuana. Every day, 2,500 youths (age 12 to 17) abuse a prescription pain reliever for the first time. Among teens who have abused painkillers, nearly one-fifth (18%) used them at least weekly in the past year. Pain relievers such as Vicodin® and OxyContin®, stimulants such as Adderall® and Ritalin®, and tranquilizers such as Xanax® and Valium® are the

prescription medications most frequently abused by teenagers.

Teens think that using prescription medications to manage stress or get high is safer than using street drugs. Prescription medications are more easily available to teens than illicit drugs. Teens obtain medications from the medicine cabinet at home, through friends, or at friends' or family members' homes.

Parents—Keep your medicines locked up where your teens cannot get to them!!!!

OTC Cough Medications—the new 'drug of choice'

Kids have code names for cough preparations. The most common nicknames are "Skittles, Syrup, Tussin, Triple-C or CCC, Vitamin D." Popular expressions for abusing OTC cough medicines are Robo-tripping, Dex-ing, Robo-fizzing, Smurfing (buying cough medicines from multiple retail stores), and Skittling." Users are sometimes called "syrup heads or robotards."

This is the latest practice among young people to get high by taking dangerously large doses of OTC cough medications. These are the same remedies that families commonly have in their medicine cabinets, and are readily available

in retail stores everywhere.

The cough medicine "high" is caused by dextromethorphan (DXM). There are well over 100 OTC medicines that contain DXM. Examples include Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold & Cough Formula, Coricidin HBP Cough and Cold, some Delsym products, Dimetapp® DM, some Mucinex® products, PediaCare cough medicines, certain Robitussin® cough products, Sudafed cough products, TheraFlu® Cough products, Triaminic® cough products, Tylenol Cough and Tylenol Cold products, Vicks 44 Cough Relief products, certain Vicks DayQuil and NyQuil LiquiCaps, and Zicam.

DXM abusers say that a cough medicine high is similar to an ecstasy-like high. They may experience mild distortions of color and sound, strong visual hallucinations, "out-of-body" sensations, confusion, slurred speech, and the loss of motor control. Serious side effects can include: delusions, Panic attacks, Memory problems, blurred vision, stomach pain,, nausea, and vomiting ,high blood pressure and rapid heart beat, numbness of fingers and toes, drowsiness and dizziness, fever and headaches, rashes and itchy skin, loss of consciousness

Where to go for help

St. Bernard's Medical Center – Jonesboro AR - Intensive Outpatient Counseling Contact: 870.930.9090

Families, Inc. Counseling Services – NEA & NCA - (therapeutic services including mental illness and addiction – 9 locations) Contact: (toll free) 1.877.595.8869

Mid-South Health Systems - Jonesboro AR - Counseling services are provided for a wide range of problems from simple life adjustments to more serious forms of depression and anxiety as well as drug and alcohol diagnoses. Contact: (870) 972-4000 – Emergency calls (800) 356-3035

Out of the Dark—community based organization fight the drug problem in Northeast Arkansas. www.outofthedark.org