



Parents' Guide to Navigating the Teenage Drug World

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If you have any contact with media outlets, you are aware that the illicit drug world is changing rapidly. Synthetic designer drugs, high potency marijuana, binge drinking, and an increase in prescription drug abuse have come on the scene causing fear and anxiety for many parents.

At times it may feel overwhelming to try and keep up with the latest drug trends. We must remember that alcohol, tobacco and marijuana are still the drug of choice among our adolescents. Statistically, accidents associated with alcohol use are more likely to injure or kill than all the illegal drugs combined. Tobacco is highly addictive and is associated with numerous health risks. Nationally each year there are over 100,000 individuals who seek treatment due to marijuana addiction.

What are some of the signs and symptoms of student's chemical use?

At School:

- Absenteeism and or chronic tardiness
- Suspension
- Student at school but not in class
- Physical Signs:
- Disorientation, impaired judgment, incoherence, lack of coordination, drowsiness, hyperactivity. (Cont. pg. 2)

Teens who fight with their parents say "no" to drugs

Victoria Pynchon, Contributor

Have teens who are driving you crazy? Teach (or model) productive conflict resolution skills and the experts say they'll be better able to resist peer pressure when it comes time to say "yes" or "no" to their friends who offer drugs or alcohol.

Researchers suggest that parents should see disputes [with their teens] not as a nuisance, but as a 'critical training ground' where their offspring can learn life lessons in how to disagree.

A study conducted at the University of Virginia in the U.S found that those teenagers who were encouraged to express their point of view calmly and confidently were also able to do so with their friends.

As such, those that did so were 40 per cent more likely to say 'no' when offered drugs or alcohol by their peers than those who didn't answer back.

Conversely, those children who backed down from a row because they felt it was pointless to take issue with their parents were more likely to accept the harmful offerings from their mates.

So, if your teen is testing you, take the opportunity to pick up some negotiation or dispute resolution skills.



Email us at: mcleodmeada@yahoo.com

Parents' Guide cont.

- Smell of drugs/chemicals on clothing or breath., Glassy, blood shot eyes, pupils may be dilated
- Vomiting physical complaints, Crying or inappropriate outbursts Emotional Signs
- Depression, withdrawal, avoidance
- Defensiveness, hyperactivity, loud talking
- Sudden mood swings Irritable, argumentative
- Nervousness, difficulty sitting still
- Behavioral Signs
- Drop in grades from passing to failing work
- Loss of interest in extra-curricular activities
- Change of friends
- Criminal/legal problems/court petitions
- Weight loss, overall physical appearance

What should you do if you suspect drug use?

The first step is to find a quiet, uninterrupted time to inform the drug user of your suspicion. There is one common downfall when most parents do this. That is they fail to tell the drug user the precise reasons drug use is suspected. In other words, don't simply say; "I think you are using drugs." Say, here is a list of specific reasons that we think you are using. Then read the list. Be specific and include all the behavioral and physical symptoms that make you suspicious.

What if your child denies drug use? If this occurs, do two things:

1. Tell them all the behaviors you want changed so you won't be suspicious anymore.
2. Tell them you are happy they deny drug use, but let them know you will need a urine test to relieve your mind.

What is recommended or suggested to eliminate future drug use?

1. Stop all allowances and only provide money for specific purchases.
2. Set a curfew and enforce it.
3. Restrict automobile use for specific errands.
4. Make sure school is attended and home work is completed.
5. Random urine drug test.

Strategies if drug use continues:

1. Stop all money and car support.
2. Mandate treatment.
3. Get assistance from a professional who specializes in chemical health assessments and treatment.
4. Make urine test mandatory.
5. Make the adolescent leave home if over 18, if he does not comply with the rules.

The worst thing to do is to do nothing.

There is good news; the majority of our children do not use chemicals. The trend is showing chemical use is on the decline, with more students choosing to lead a drug free lifestyle.

1 in 6 adults binge drink

New numbers show binge drinking is a bigger problem than previously thought nationwide, including the Midwest.

One in six American adults binge drinks about four times a month, and on average, the largest number of drinks they have at a time is eight, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). And that's likely an underestimate: Alcohol sales figures suggest people are buying a lot more alcohol than they say they are consuming. Health officials estimate that about half of the beer, wine and liquor consumed in the United States by adults each year is downed during binge drinking.

Binge drinking is generally defined as four drinks for women and five for men in a period of a few hours. Binge drinkers ages 18 to 24 reported nine drinks, or one more than the national average of eight drinks. People who are 65 and older actually binge drink the most often.

Some say that overloading on alcohol has become the norm in American society. Binge drinking may be considered socially acceptable - to many, a fun night out at the bar. And many don't see it as a sign of a serious drinking problem. Indeed, experts say fewer than 20 percent of binge drinkers would be medically diagnosed as alcoholics.

Binge drinking has become a problem in all states. The upper Midwest continues to

report the highest prevalence of binge drinking. Wisconsin has the largest number of binge drinkers with 25.6 percent of adults. They also have the most drinks at once, 9. Minnesota is also in the top tier of binge drinking states at 20.1 percent of adults. On average, they put down more than 7.4 drinks at a time.

The CDC says binge drinking costs everyone a \$1.90 every drink or \$746 per person in the United States in 2006. Costs include health care expenses, crime and lost productivity; drinking too much contributes to more than 54 different injuries and diseases.

Experts worry the stress binge drinking is putting on society will continue to grow.

Minneapolis (WCCO), St. Paul Pioneer Press



Happy Valentines Day!

PARENT THE POWER OF PARENTS YOUR CHILD



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MEDICATION DISPOSAL PROGRAM

FREE

Take It to THE BOX

Safe Use • Safe Storage • Safe Disposal

McLeod County **MEDICATION** Safety Program

SHARPS OR NEEDLES (with a red prohibition sign)

The **Take it to the Box** collection boxes will accept both over-the-counter and prescribed medications from households. Disposal boxes will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. **How to Prepare:** Leave the medicine in its original container, with the name of the medication visible and cross off any personal information.

Take It To The Box Locations:

- McLeod County Sheriff's Office
801 East 10th St.
Glencoe
- Hutchinson Police Dept.
10 Franklin St. South
Hutchinson
- Winsted Police Dept.
201 1st St. North
Winsted

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CAN YOU TELL THE DIFFERENCE?

Medicine or Candy?

Hard to tell sometimes... So here are some tips to reduce the risks associated with medicines in the home.

- Store out of reach, preferably in a locked cabinet.
- Dispense or sort medications over a bowl or plate to catch any that may fall or roll away if dropped.
- Take inventory-know what you have and how much.
- Properly dispose of unused or expired medications at a Take it to the Box location-don't stockpile.
- Child resistant caps are not "Child Proof", experiments have found that kids (as young as 4 & 5) figure these caps out quickly.

What do you think your children or grandchildren will see?

**UNDERAGE DRINKING PARTY?
CONSIDER US INVITED!**

Law enforcement officers throughout McLeod County are committed to preventing underage drinking and to identifying those who provide alcohol to youth.

Methamphetamine Education and Drug Awareness Coalition of McLeod County (MEADA)

Funded in part by ONDCP/SAMHSA SP12409-8

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