

CHEMICAL HEALTH TREND CORNER:

Potentially Lethal Trends Teens are Doing that Every Parent and Educator Must Know

Dr. Michele Borba, Ed.D

Some things never change: teens have always been risk takers, thrill seekers and want to fit in. But oh the "creative" ways adolescents try to get high these days... like soaking tampons with liquor and inserting them, infusing alcohol into gummy bears and popping them anyplace and anytime, and drinking hand sanitizer. They even have clever ways to store their stash these days like in sandals that come with a handy small canteen and bottle opener on the side, in small flashlights or emptied marking pen holders. But some kid crazes are flat-out dangerous: pouring Vodka into your eye (which could burn your cornea or even cause blindness) or even lethal such as mixing Robitussin DM cough syrup with Sprite and a Jolly Rancher. Many items kids use are right in your home from hairspray, whipped cream, deodorant, glue, nail polish remover, and even cleaning spray. Youtube videos are plentiful and not only sensationalize the craze but provide kids with play-by-play directions.

Many of these crazes are not new, some are trending in only certain geographic areas, and a few are just mind-boggling.

Regardless, do let your teen know you're aware of these activities. While there are no guarantees, studies show that when teens know they're being monitored, their risky behaviors often decrease. Meanwhile, keep repeating this mantra to your kid over and over: "Getting high – no matter how you do it – has health risks that could be permanent. There are "no take backs." Here are 14 dangerous ways kids and teens are getting high that every parent and educator needs to know.

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Meth Use Concerns Increase Among McLeod County Teens

While McLeod County parents worried about Prescription Drug Abuse leading to Heroin use, students worried about the increase of Meth use among their friends.



A high school student exclaims, "I hardly ever see heroin use but Meth use I do." Meth is easy to find and more popular."

What is Meth?

Meth is a homemade amphetamine made from common, easily accessible materials: antifreeze, white gas, ether, starting fluids, freon, drain openers, paint thinner, acetone and ephedrine or pseudoephedrine are some of the ingredients used. It can be produced fairly easily in a variety of locations, from homes to inside vehicles.

What are the Effects of Meth?

Short-term effects include: Dilated pupils, diarrhea, vomiting, elevated respiratory rate, anorexia insomnia, skin sores, convulsions, chest pain, brain hemorrhage, organ failure, stroke, and death.

Long-term effects include: Malnutrition, damage to liver, kidneys and lungs, long-term or permanent neurological damage, depression (with headaches for 2-5 years post) and psychiatric problems.

What Are the Symptoms of Teen Depression?

Tara Nelson Mental Health Clinic Services Manager, Hutchinson Health



Do you ever wonder whether your irritable or unhappy adolescent might actually

be experiencing [teen depression](#)? Of course, most [teens](#) feel unhappy at times. And when you add hormone havoc to the many other changes happening in a teen's life, it's easy to see why their moods swing like a pendulum. Yet findings show that one out of every eight adolescents has teen depression. But [depression](#) can be treated as well as the serious problems that come with it.

Often, kids with teen [depression](#) will have a noticeable change in their thinking and behavior. They may have no motivation and even become withdrawn, closing their bedroom door after school and staying in their room for hours. Kids with teen [depression](#) may [sleep](#) excessively, have a change in eating habits, and may even exhibit criminal behaviors such as DUI or shoplifting. Here are more [signs of depression](#) in adolescents even though they may or may not show all signs:

- Apathy
- Complaints of pains, including [headaches](#), stomachaches, low [back pain](#), or [fatigue](#)
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty making decisions
- Excessive or inappropriate guilt
- Irresponsible behavior -- for example, forgetting obligations, being late for classes, skipping school
- Loss of interest in food or [compulsive overeating](#) that results in [rapid weight loss](#) or gain
- [Memory loss](#)
- Preoccupation with death and dying
- Rebellious behavior
- Sadness, [anxiety](#), or a feeling of hopelessness
- Staying awake at night and sleeping during the day
- Sudden drop in grades
- Use of alcohol or drugs and promiscuous sexual activity
- Withdrawal from friends

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So if your teen's unhappiness lasts for more than two weeks and he or she displays other [symptoms of depression](#), it may be time to seek help from a health professional.

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Tools and Scripts to Improve Communication with your College Student



Getting them to college is just the beginning... With **good communication** you will guide them through it. Your child still

needs your guidance to navigate the obstacles standing between them and their diploma. Excessive drinking can be one of the biggest. It is a serious problem that undermines students' health, safety, and academic success, for both themselves and their fellow students. Parents like you can help students avoid such problems... And keeping those lines of communication open is where you start.

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Parent Letter Discussing Alcohol Responsibility



Chief Dan Hatten
Hutchinson Police
Department



Carmen Morrow
District 423 Chemical
Health Prevention
Specialist

Dear Parents:

It seems we are always in the midst of celebrating one thing or another – prom, graduation, end of the school year, summer, and more. This is good, but it can also be worrisome. We want to take this opportunity to remind you that as parents you have a particularly important role in shaping these events.

Please help keep your teen and his or her peers stay safe and alcohol-free.

Alcohol use is illegal by those in Minnesota who are under the age of 21 years. The only exception is that parents may provide alcohol to their own children in their own homes. Surveys of teens indicate that adults are teens' primary source of alcohol: at home, in bars and restaurants or on the street. To help reduce underage alcohol use, you can:

- Refuse to supply alcohol to underage young people when you host your own celebration. Do not buy a keg of beer for teens at a high school graduation or other party. This is illegal and it also invites young people to drink illegally. Teen alcohol use is **not** a rite of passage into adulthood. In fact,



alcohol has kept too many teens from becoming adults.

- Make sure that alcohol is not available at events your teen attends. Talk with other parents and party hosts to ensure alcohol-free celebrations. Be proactive. When parents stand together on this issue, they present a united front to teens.
- All law enforcement agencies within McLeod County are participating in the Zero Adult Provider program (ZAP). With this program law enforcement agencies will be actively investigating and prosecuting adults who provide alcohol to underage drinkers. Please take an active role in assisting us in protecting your child.

Remember that as a parent, you play an important role in preventing underage alcohol use. In research studies, teens say that their number one reason for refusing to drink alcohol is centered on worrying about what their parents would think. That is a powerful statement about the importance of your message and role modeling.

The Scary New Health Risk Associated With Smoking E-Cigarettes

Plenty of people think vaping is healthier than smoking actual cigarettes, but a new study shows that e-cigarettes may actually impair your respiratory system's immune



system even more than tobacco. That's scary news for the millions of people putting the gadgets to their lips

on the regular. When you smoke an e-cigarette, you inhale the vapor of a heated-up cartridge of "e-juice" (usually made up of artificial flavors, plus nicotine, propylene glycol, and other chemicals). The lab-made artificial flavorings have been deemed "generally recognized as safe" for consumption—but that's when they're *eaten*, not inhaled. For the most part, no comprehensive study has yet checked for toxic effects when these chemicals are sucked into the lungs. Enter Ilona Jaspers, Ph.D., a professor of pediatrics at the University of North Carolina and the lead researcher behind this study, which was presented at the American Association for the Advancement of Science annual meeting. "The digestive systems and respiratory systems are very different," she said in a statement. "Our stomachs are full of acids and enzymes that break down food and deal with chemicals; this environment is very different than our respiratory systems. We simply don't know what effects, if any, e-cigarettes have on our lungs."

She and her colleagues decided to find out. First, they examined the effects of cinnamon-flavored e-liquids and cinnamaldehyde, the chemical that lends that cinnamon flavor to e-cigarettes. They found that the chemicals significantly impair the immune responses of cells lining

the respiratory airways. Next, they compared tissue samples from the inside of the noses of non-smokers, tobacco smokers, and e-cigarette users (all of them healthy). Their goal was to analyze changes in the expression of about 600 genes that are involved in the immune response—how the body fights off invaders and keeps you from getting sick. Their alarming findings: In tobacco smokers, a number of key immune genes were suppressed—in essence, cigarettes switched off these key immunity responses. E-cigarette users, in contrast, showed all the same genetic changes, *plus* the suppression of additional immunity genes. To put it bluntly: The study showed that e-cigarettes do an even better job of derailing the immune response in the respiratory system than the average cigarette.

"The gene expression changes we're seeing are consistent with a modified immune response," Jaspers told *Ars Technica*. "Any time you change [the immune system], it's probably out of balance." This isn't the first time experts have warned about the dangers of vaping, and it won't be the last. Need help kicking your habit? Talk to your doctor about different ways to quit—whether you're vaping or smoking traditional cigarettes.

Reducing Stigma, Increasing Treatment Options, Saving Lives, via HBO Addiction



The stigma of addiction costs lives. But improved public awareness of the scientific

realities of addiction can powerfully save lives - by encouraging people with alcohol and other drug problems to seek help early in the progression of their illness, when it is most treatable. The fear of being labeled as an addict, fired from a job, denied insurance or ousted from a home keeps thousands of addicted people from coming forward.

"At one point, we had the stigma of leprosy," recalls Dr. Nora Volkow of the National Institute on Drug Abuse. "Nobody spoke about leprosy. We had a stigma of cancer at one point. There's still a significant stigma with some of the mental diseases, but much less so than there used to be. But the one that's lagging behind is addiction."

Recovery is one of the best kept secrets in the country," says Texas recovery advocate Joe Powell, a leader of Faces & Voices and head of a recovery center. "Most people don't know who's in recovery. And we gotta speak loud about that."