

Teen Substance Use & Abuse

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A group of diverse young people, including a young man with curly hair, a young woman with braids, a young man with short hair, a young woman with curly hair, and a young man with curly hair, are sitting together and talking. They are all smiling and looking at each other. The background is a light blue wall.

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 basics of the most commonly used substances by teens
- Understand how substance use relates to and impacts teen mental health
- Recognize warning signs of substance use in teens
- Learn strategies to talk about alcohol, drugs, and harm reduction
- Learn about available resources
- Q&A



Substances & Teen Mental Health

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%*

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.

Self-Reported Reasons for Teen Use

- To experiment, out of a sense of curiosity or impulsivity
- To have a good time with friends
- To feel good, relax, and relieve tension
- To manage or numb difficult feelings
- Out of boredom
- It looks “cool”
- Because they’re “hooked”
- To help quit cigarettes (*vaping*)
- Liking the flavor (*vaping*)
- Regular cigarette use not permitted (*vaping*)

Addiction

Alcohol: [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.

Marijuana: 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.

Nicotine: 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. Teens who vape are [4x more likely to smoke tobacco](#)

Opioids: [Opioids are highly addictive](#). They trigger powerful reward centers in your brain to release endorphins, which make you feel good and numb pain for a short time. Over time, your body won't make as many endorphins, the same dose of doesn't make you feel as good (tolerance) - leading to higher doses, higher risk of overdose

Why are Teens so Susceptible to Substances

The teenage brain is under construction and has an overactive pleasure response

Adolescent (and Young Adult) Brain



Adult Brain



- Adolescent Neurodevelopment or Brain changes
- Dopamine sensitivity – Reward systems run the show, Dopamine drives rewarding experiences in adolescence
- Impulsivity

Warning Signs of Addiction

- 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, trying unsuccessfully to stop using/cut back.

SIGNS OF OVERDOSE

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.

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.

Prevention & Treatment

Talking to Your Child

- **Ask your teen's views.** Talk about what they already know, what they're curious about, if their friends have tried substances, what they see on tv or social media, how it makes them feel. 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.
- **Establish rules collaboratively.** Create family rules together, talking about why these rules are important – *"These rules are here because I care about you and want to keep you safe."*
- **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.

Protective Factors as Prevention

- **Help them prepare for uncomfortable or unexpected situations.** Brainstorm with your teen about how to turn down offers of drugs
 - “No thanks, I’m not in the mood for that tonight”
 - “I’m training for [sport or event], I want to feel my best for the game this week.”
 - “I don’t really like the way that makes me feel, so I’m gonna sit this one out.”
 - “I don’t really do that stuff, but I’ll stay sober and make sure we all get home safe.”
- Have an **“escape” plan** if they are in an uncomfortable situation. Offer praise and encouragement when your teen succeeds.
- **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.

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.

How to Support Quitting Substances

- **Acknowledge** + **validate** that processes involved with stopping substance use are challenging and complex
- **Support** their motivation to change.
- **Encourage resilience, optimism, & self-worth.** Help your child know their value, feel confident they can handle challenging situations without drugs
- **Talking** about how seeking some form of **professional help** for addiction is a positive step towards recovery.
 - *CBT for triggers, Motivational interviewing, Family/Individual Therapy, 12 step-programs, medication/other physical interventions*
- Take it **one day at a time**

Resources

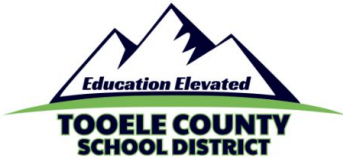
NIDA Mind Matters Series

[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](#)

Narcan (Naloxone)

- UtahNaloxone.org
- [Stop the Opidemic - Utah Dept. of Health & Human Services](#)
- [Tooele County Health Department - Naloxone](#)
- [Narcan.com - How to Get Narcan](#)
- [End Overdose: How to Get Naloxone & Testing Strips](#)
- [Next Distro: How to Get Naloxone](#)
- [NPR: *The FDA approves the overdose-reversing drug Narcan for over-the-counter sales*](#)



Resources

If you are interested in getting a referral to Daybreak counseling for your child, please contact your school counselor for more information.

To find more resources for families in the Tooele CSD Community, please visit:

www.tooeleschools.org/families/family-resources

You can find more community resources using this link:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/19EEj9eTn365mbZ5FHa0ZOsezeY4VOclrCtIcAdzQxew/edit?usp=sharing>

Feedback Survey

Please take a moment to complete this feedback survey.

You can use this [link](#) or scan the QR Code below



Thank You!

CONTACT

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