



Empowering Parents To Raise Their Children To Be Substance-Free

Talk early and often about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Even when it gets tough.



Click here to print a PDF of this article so you can start a conversation with your child

Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.

Learn more at: DrugFreeActionAlliance.org

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Know! January 25-31 is National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week

When it comes to alcohol and other drugs, there are opinions and then there are facts. It's hard enough for us adults to distinguish between the two; it is likely even more challenging for our youth, who get much of their information from the internet, TV, movies, music or from friends. With that in mind, parents and other caregivers are encouraged to participate in this year's National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week (NDAFW). There will be school and community-hosted youth events across the country, as well as a live web chat where students will connect with drug scientists and other experts to get answers to their questions on alcohol and other drugs. Parents and other caregivers can take part in this week-long national health observance by initiating conversations with your children each day. While any time is a good time to talk with them about the dangers of substance use, this week provides an opportunity to dispel the myths and provide the facts for young people.

Wondering what to talk about? Here's a few ideas. According to the Monitoring the Future (MTF) Survey, which examines the drug use and attitudes of American 8th, 10th, and 12th graders, when asked about past-year substance use, these ranked as the top four:

#1 Alcohol #2 Marijuana/Hashish #3 Tobacco #4 Prescription Drugs

A great deal of attention is currently being focused on our nation's prescription drug epidemic (and rightfully so). According to the CDC, prescription drug-related overdose deaths have reached an all-time high in the United States.

We're also talking (a lot) about **marijuana** and the recent changes in policies and attitudes surrounding it. The MTF Survey shows that daily use of marijuana among teens has now surpassed that of cigarette smoking, and young people's attitudes on the drug are continuing to soften.

It seems most people (young and old) are aware of how devastating and dangerous **cigarette smoking** is, thanks, in part, to all those anti-smoking ads. In fact, the MTF Survey revealed that teen cigarette smoking is at its lowest rate in the survey's history.



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But what about **alcohol**? Why don't we hear more about it in the news? Why aren't we seeing more television commercials on the destruction and death it brings about for so many individuals and their families? Alcohol has long been and remains the #1 drug of choice among young people, yet it seems to have been out of the spotlight.

The good news: Alcohol use is continuing its gradual downward trend among teens, with significant changes seen in the past five years in nearly all measures, according to the MTF survey.

The bad news: Underage drinking is still unacceptably high, with 38% of 12th graders reporting having been drunk in the past year, and 17% of them saying they binge drink (consuming five or more drinks in a row, in a short period of time).

Research shows that children whose parents talk with them often about the dangers of substances are 50% less likely to try them in the first place. In observance of National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week, and as you continue throughout the New Year, you are encouraged to make talking with your sons and daughters about the dangers of drinking and using other substances a priority.

For information and resources on alcohol and other drugs, for local event information or to register for the live web chat, please visit the National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week website at: <http://teens.drugabuse.gov/national-drug-facts-week>.

Sources: [National Institute on Drug Abuse \(NIDA\): National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week](#). [NIDA: Monitoring The Future \(MTF\) Survey, Overview of Findings 2015](#).

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