

Easy-to-Read Drug Facts

easyread.drugabuse.gov

Prevent Drug Use

Abuse of drugs, including tobacco and alcohol, kills more than half a million Americans each year. They die from overdoses, accidents, illness, and other causes.

Drug abuse keeps people from having the best lives they can. Drug abuse can hurt your health, your ability to work, and your relationships.

Treatment works. It helps people recover from addiction.

But the best protection from the dangers of drugs is to not start in the first place. Parents should watch their kids closely—even good kids will try drugs.

Know the facts about drugs and addiction:

- Visit the Easy-to-Read Drug Facts webpages [Drugs That People Abuse](#) and [What Is Addiction?](#)

Talk with your children:

- Read the following section, "Help Children and Teens Stay Drug-Free," to learn more.

Keep your home safe:

- Put your medicines in a safe place. Make sure they can't be taken by others.
- Keep track of cleaners, spray cans, and other stuff in the house that could be inhaled to get high.

Help Children and Teens Stay Drug-Free

Kids hear about drugs everywhere, it seems: on TV, the radio, and the news; in music and movies; and sometimes even on the street or on the playground. The teen years are the most likely time for someone to start taking drugs. And starting drug use as a teen can lead to drug problems when they grow up.

There are many things you can do to help your children stay away from drugs and make good choices:

- **Talk with your children about drugs.** Explain how taking drugs can hurt their health, their friends and family, and their future. Tell them you don't want them to do drugs.
- **Be a part of their lives.** Spend time together. Even when times are hard, kids can make it when they know that the adults in their life care about them.
- **Know where your children are and what they're doing.** Keeping track of your children helps you protect them. It gives them fewer chances to get into drugs.



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- **Set clear rules and enforce them fairly.** Kids need rules they can count on. That is how they learn for themselves what is safe and what can get them in trouble.
- **Be a good example for your children.** You might not think so, but kids look up to their parents. Show them how you get along with people and deal with stress, so they can learn how to do it.
- **Teach your children how to refuse drugs.** Kids often do drugs just to fit in with the other kids. Help them practice how to say no if someone offers them drugs.
- **Make your home safe.** Do not have people in the house who abuse drugs and alcohol. Keep track of medicines and cleaning products.

For more advice, visit:

- [Family Checkup](#) on the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) website
- [Talk to Your Kids About Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drugs](#) from [healthfinder.gov](#)

Talking to Kids About Drugs: What to Say if You Used Drugs in the Past

If you used drugs at some time in your life, it might feel hard to tell others, especially your kids, not to do drugs. Everyone handles this problem differently.

If you choose to tell your kids about your past:

- Don't give a lot of details about your past drug use.
- Point out the problems your drug use might have caused. For instance, are there things you don't remember because you were on drugs? Did you fight with friends or family because of drugs? Did drug use keep you from saving money, getting better grades, or getting a better job?
- Explain why you wouldn't use drugs now. Tell them that we now know more about the bad effects of drugs.
- Say that you want your kids to avoid making the same mistakes you made.
- Be open to responses that your kids may have to your past drug use.

Parents who used to take drugs often don't talk with their kids about drugs at all. They're afraid the kids will copy what they did. But research shows that:

- when parents **tell** their kids they don't want them to do drugs, the kids are less likely to do drugs
- kids **want** their parents' advice about drugs



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Drug Use Prevention Phone Numbers and Websites

You can find more information on preventing drug use.

By phone:

Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Toll-Free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

On the web:

- [Family Checkup](#) (from the [NIDA](#))
- [Underage Drinking Prevention: Talk. They Hear You](#) (from the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#), SAHMSA)
- [Partnership for Drug-Free Kids](#)
- [Alcohol Use: Conversation Starters](#) (from [healthfinder.gov](#))
- [Alcohol Use and Older Adults](#) (from [NIH Senior Health](#))

These drug use prevention websites are for kids:

- [NIDA for Teens](#)
- [Above the Influence](#)
- [The Cool Spot](#)