

Discussing Marijuana with your Child

In recent years, marijuana use inside the country has grown astronomically. Nationwide, as many as 1 in 3 teens report having taken marijuana, with 1 in 5 reporting that they currently take it. The largest reason for its growing use is that youths incorrectly believe that it is much safer than it truly is. Several factors have aided in the growing social tolerance toward marijuana. Multiple states have decriminalized it, with a few legalizing its manufacture and sale altogether. Even in states where it isn't legal, smoke-shops selling CBD, which is also derived from marijuana, has given a false impression that the substance is benevolent. As well, vaping THC has become an extremely popular using method, which assists in using quickly in public, without much less of an odor.

Because of the positive outlook that the media takes toward marijuana, it's important to discuss this topic with kids, preferably starting around middle school, in order to make sure they've been presented with both sides of the debate. While they may still feel pressured to experiment with THC eventually, knowing the facts may help them to resist peer pressure and show moderation if they do decide to try it. Some important points to cover are:

- There are long-term effects of marijuana that effect brain development, particularly the pats associated with decision-making and impulse control. As well, it can trigger schizophrenia and other similar disorders, particularly if someone has a family history of the illness.

- It can cause chronic cough/bronchitis, as well as worsen asthma. Additionally, vaping THC can cause additional health risks, including VALI, which is Vaping Associated Lung Injury.
- Marijuana use is the most prevalent drug in the blood of those who get in car crashes.
- There is an incorrect belief that one cannot be addicted to marijuana. However, this is untrue. Just like any other drug, frequent and excessive users build tolerances, experience withdrawal, and feel strong urges to use.

While some adults may see THC as relatively harmless, it's important to remember that its potency has increased greatly as compared to even the early 2000's. In addition, vaping marijuana has greater potency still. This, combined with people's newfound trust, makes it easier than ever to form a bad habit.

If you're concerned that your child may already have a problem, having an open, non-judgmental conversation is the first step. It's much more important to understand why they use, as well as discussing the health effects of marijuana, rather than simply punishing them for it. As well, these are a few of the online resources for teens and families of teens that may have an addiction:

- <https://drugfree.org/article/marijuana-what-you-need-to-know/>
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>
- <https://craftt.org/resources/>

References

<https://crafft.org/resources/>

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>

<https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/health-effects/teens.html>

<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/TTHY-Marijuana-Broch-2020.pdf>

<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/TTHY-Vaping-Broch-2020.pdf>

<https://drugfree.org/article/marijuana-what-you-need-to->

[know/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIv5m9_pPF-wIVI_bjBx3YWwcAEAAYASAAEgKLC_D_BwE](https://drugfree.org/article/marijuana-what-you-need-to-know/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIv5m9_pPF-wIVI_bjBx3YWwcAEAAYASAAEgKLC_D_BwE)

<https://drugfree.org/article/understanding-vaping-illness-its-symptoms-and-more/>

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Marijuana-and-Teens-106.aspx

Maladaptive Perfectionism

Recent studies have shown that younger generations experience higher expectations from others and set higher expectations on themselves compared to previous generations (American Psychological Association). In today's hectic world, children and teens are often juggling the demands of academics, sports and other extracurricular activities, friendships, social media and family. The expectation to excel in multiple areas of life can be challenging for children and adolescents, and for youth who strive for perfectionism, these demands can be even more overwhelming. In fact, perfectionism in children and teens has increased by 33 percent over the last three decades. Family pressure to achieve can no doubt affect children, but social influences outside of the home also play a role. Researchers highlight the influence of several contributing factors including increased competition for admission and scholarships to college, the rising cost of education, more controlling parenting styles, and comparisons promoted by social media. It is estimated that 30% of teens and young adults struggle with unhealthy forms of perfectionism.

Experts agree that it is reasonable for kids and teens to have high standards and to work hard to meet personal goals. However, the drive for achievement can become problematic when it results in unhealthy perfectionism that involves a fear of failure and mistakes, unrealistically high standards, and a feeling that performance is part of one's self-worth (Psychology Today). As such, perfectionism can become maladaptive when it interferes with social, emotional, and/or occupational functioning.



Unhealthy perfectionism can result in several adverse outcomes for both children and teens. It is not uncommon for young people who strive for perfectionism to mask their pain and turmoil. They may appear to have it all together on the outside in an effort to appear perfect but silently suffer when problems arise. On the inside, a young person struggling with perfectionism may be fighting a daily battle against nerves, anxiety, and an intense fear of failure. This fear of failure, combined with a desire to avoid mistakes, can result in chronic stress. Additionally, perfectionism may impact a young person's mental health. If left unchecked, perfectionism is a risk factor for clinical depression, anxiety, and in extreme cases, suicidal ideation.

Warning signs of perfectionism vary depending on a child's age, but in general symptoms of perfectionism may include:

- Dissatisfied with a standard of work others view as acceptable (even exceptional)
- Difficulty completing assignments because the work is never "good enough"
- High anxiety around failure (interpreting mistakes as failure)
- High sensitivity to criticism
- Low frustration tolerance when a mistake is made and/or struggles to cope with mistakes

- Self-critical, self-conscious, and easily embarrassed
- Trouble making decisions or prioritizing tasks- always seeking out the perfect solution
- Procrastinating to avoid difficult tasks
- Inability to be happy or satisfied with accomplishments

Parents and other caring adults can help address unhealthy perfectionism in a variety of ways including:

- Focus on efforts, not outcomes- instead of focusing on what a child/teen has achieved, look at the effort they made to get there. Make it clear that achievement isn't the only important thing in life.
- Share stories of your own failures or mistakes- teaching kids how to fail is one way to help curb perfectionism. Share personal examples about a time you didn't get a job or you failed a test and explain how you coped with your failure or what you learned from your mistakes.
- Teach healthy coping skills- while failure can be uncomfortable, it doesn't have to be intolerable. Help kids foster skills to deal with disappointment, rejection, and mistakes in a healthy way.
- Help them stay focused on what they can control. Remind youth that there are things they can control such as their attitude, their effort, and their actions. Help them to understand that there are many aspects of success (and failure) that are outside one's personal control.
- Celebrate growth that comes from mistakes-let kids know that you value their good effort regardless of the outcome. Reinforce to kids that a healthy lifestyle involves being able to learn from the lows as much as celebrating the highs.

Finally, don't be afraid to enlist professional help. Perfectionism can result in a cycle of negative thought patterns that can lead to obsessive thinking, making it more difficult to cope. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is one of the most effective approaches to help a child with perfectionism. Talk to your family doctor or seek out help from a mental health professional to get extra guidance.

References: American Academy of Pediatrics; American Psychological Association; Child Mind Institute; National Institute of Health; Psychology Today; Verywell Family

VAPING

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RESOURCES TO QUIT



Cigarette smoking and chewing tobacco remain serious concerns for teens/adolescents. Fortunately, through education and other prevention efforts, the use of nicotine products continues to decline among youth, with the exception of nicotine vape products.

As a matter of fact, “vaping” has become one of the most popular substance-use trends among adolescents/teens. According to a study released in October of 2022 by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) and the CDC (Centers for Disease Control), more than 2.5 million middle and high school students in the United States reported current (past 30-day) vaping use in 2022.

And while there are new laws and regulations that prohibit refillable vape devices that use flavoring, with the exception of menthol, these laws and regulations don't include disposable vape devices. That's why we are seeing more and more teens using disposable vaping devices. The disposable devices not only have dozens of flavors to choose from, they almost always contain higher levels of nicotine than cigarettes.

School Community Intervention and Prevention

December 2022

SCIP is funded in part by: Lincoln Public Schools, United Way of Lincoln/Lancaster County, Region V Systems, Nebraska DHHS: Division of Behavioral Health and Region 4 Behavioral Health System

Furthermore, the aerosol from vaping is not just water vapor, like many kids and adults believe. It actually contains chemicals such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to serious lung disease, heavy metals and other particles that are hazardous to a person's health. And of course, marijuana or other drugs can also be used in vaping devices.

Below are pictures of a few of the disposable/one-time use vaping devices teens can purchase online.



Here are some of the signs that a teen/adolescent might be vaping:

- **A sweet/flavored scent in the air**...for example the smell of cotton candy in a room where there is no cotton candy
- **Drinking more water**...chemicals in vape aerosols often cause dry mouth
- **Nosebleeds**. ...chemicals in vape aerosols also tend to cause nasal cavities to become dry which can lead to nosebleeds
- **Cough or mouth sores**
- **Other new health issues**...Vaping contains poisonous aerosol chemicals that can impact the lungs and heart
- **Thrown away refillable vaping pods and/or disposable devices**
- **Use of vaping slang**...the use of vaping slang such as “sauce” referring to e-juice; “nicked”, referring to the euphoric feeling with high doses of nicotine and/or “nic sick” referring to heart palpitations, nausea/vomiting and/or lightheadedness from using nicotine vapes.

As we know, nicotine is in most vapes and often at higher nicotine levels than cigarettes. We also know that nicotine is a highly addictive drug.

Here are some signs that a teen/adolescent might have a nicotine vaping addiction:

- **Strong cravings**
- **Failed attempts to quit**
- **Irritable and/or agitated**
- **Difficulty focusing/concentrating**
- **Problem with sleeping/Insomnia**

So, what can you do to help a teen/adolescent that is addicted to nicotine actually quit using/vaping? First, be supportive, encouraging and understanding. Quitting nicotine use is not an easy feat to overcome for anyone. Having support from family and peers is important.

Here are some simple techniques that might be helpful to someone who is addicted to nicotine and wanting to quit:

- **Exercise**...moving around and getting physical exercise can release the same kind of chemicals that your brain is craving from nicotine. This can be as simple as taking a walk, going on a bike ride, playing catch, etc.
- **Small, Simple Distractions**...nicotine/vaping cravings tend to intensify and grow stronger the more a person focuses/thinks about vaping/using nicotine. Take your mind off the temptation through small tasks like drawing/doodling, writing/texting, playing a board or card game, or listening to music.
- **Identify triggers**...Smoking/Vaping is usually centered around certain times and/or particular activities. For instance, waking up and going to bed are common times for someone to use. Other common times people tend to use/vape are just before or after eating or while driving. Understanding and anticipating when cravings are likely to occur can help someone more effectively stave off a craving.

Listed below are some links that focus on helping teens quit vaping/tobacco use:

- <https://teen.smokefree.gov/>
- <https://teen.smokefree.gov/quit-vaping>
- <https://truthinitiative.org/thisisquitting#:~:text=This%20is%20Quitting%20is%20a,successfully%20quit%2C%20e%2Dcigarettes>

In addition to the resource links above, below are additional links to sources referenced for this article that contain more information for parents on teen vaping/tobacco use and prevention.

- <https://truthinitiative.org/curriculum>
- <https://drugfree.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/What-You-Need-to-Know-and-How-to-Talk-to-Your-Kids-About-Vaping-Guide-Partnership-for-Drug-Free-Kids.pdf>
- https://drugfree.org/drugs/vaping/?gclid=Cj0KCQiA4OybBhCzARIsAlcfn9nu6nhne8DOWnwK2g5RR0RNKY6zc1bbAQSfSgPRtG7fnBa40yf2XvQaArGbEALw_wc

- <https://scipnebraska.com>