



Maryland Poison Center
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Poison

Prevention Press

September/October 2011

Volume 4, Issue 5

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Parent Resources

- Programs sponsored by schools, PTSA's or health departments
- www.nida.hih.gov : Provides general information, facts and statistics
- www.theantidrug.com : Provides drug information, parenting advice, and additional resources
- www.inhalants.org : Provides information specific to inhalants
- www.drugfree.org : Provides help for parents to prevent, intervene in and find treatment for drug and alcohol use by their children

Did you know that...

- in 2010, the top 5 exposures reported to the Maryland Poison Center for patients 6-19 years were pain relievers, sleep medicines, antihistamines, cough & cold medicines and antidepressants?
- 64% of youth ages 12-17 who have abused pain relievers say they got them from friends or relatives (SAMHSA, 2008)?

Pre-Teens and Teens: What Parents Need to Know

Are you the parent of a pre-teen or teen? Do you often feel as though you are always one step behind them when it comes to their knowledge of the world they live in? If so, you are not alone. The world in which we live moves quickly. By staying one step ahead of their children, parents can help them make good choices and explain why some choices could have dangerous outcomes. The following information will help give you that edge.

Inhalants: Children start using inhalants as early as elementary school. These are products that are found in the home, are easy to obtain, and are cheap. Products like spray paint, keyboard cleaner, air freshener, gasoline, cooking spray and whipped cream are common products that can be inhaled. The problem: a child can die the first time they use an inhalant; they can have permanent brain and kidney damage from long term use.

Medicine: According to the 2010 Monitoring the Future Survey, 21.6% of the 8th, 10th and 12th graders surveyed admitted to using a prescription medicine without a doctor's order at some time in their life. The survey also found that young people feel it is safer to abuse prescription medicines than drugs like cocaine or heroin since they are approved for a legitimate use. Teens may go to "pharming" parties. Everyone brings something from their home medicine cabinet, adds it to the bowl at the party and the teens help themselves to a handful of "mystery" medicines. Other teens find websites that tell them how they can drink large amounts of cough medicine without vomiting so they get high. It is critical that parents know what medicines are in their home and how much are in the bottles so they are aware if something is missing.

Plants: Mushrooms, salvia and jimson weed are a few plants that can be abused by teens. Some of these can be purchased on the internet, but others can be found in the areas around your home or school. You Tube has videos of teen stars using these plants, making it more appealing to teens.

Alcohol: Although alcohol use continues a long-term decline, 29% of 8th graders, 52% of 10th graders and 65% of 12th graders admit to drinking alcohol in the last year according to the 2010 Monitoring the Future Survey. And the kids are creative about their use of alcohol. Some high schools have banned students from carrying water bottles in school because they were bringing alcohol in them. More recently, teens are soaking gummy candy in vodka in an attempt to hide their alcohol use. Just as with medicine, parents should be aware of the contents of their liquor cabinet and monitor the bottles. Keep in mind, resourceful teens will replace the alcohol with water or other similar colored liquid.

Bath Salts: No, this is not a product you put in your bath. It is a term used to describe a very potent and dangerous drug substance whose effects mimic cocaine and methamphetamine. Effects can be short-lived or they can be prolonged. Maryland and other states have banned "bath salts". The ban includes specific chemicals but it seems as though the street chemists are always one step ahead in creating new drugs that are not included in the ban. Similar chemicals are also known as "plant food".

Marijuana and synthetic marijuana (K2, Spice and others): Marijuana is the most commonly abused drug by teens other than alcohol. Within the past few years, substances have been sold under the names K2, Spice and many others as legal marijuana. They can be bought on the internet or in convenience stores or head shops. As with bath salts, many states have banned these products, but the street chemists stay a step ahead by tweaking the chemicals so they are not included in the ban. The effects of K2 are not similar to marijuana and sometimes teens need to be seen at a hospital.

If you suspect your child is using one of these substances, discuss it with your pediatrician or call the experts at the Maryland Poison Center if you think they are under the influence of a drug, household product or plant.

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