

poison prevention press

Sources of Prescription Drugs

According to the 2011 SAMHSA National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 6.1 million persons aged 12 or older used prescription pain medicine, stimulants and sedatives non-medically in the previous year. Where did they get the medicine?

- 54.2% got it from a friend or relative for free
- 20% had a prescription from a doctor
- 16.6% bought it from a friend or relative
- 3.9% got it from a drug dealer or other stranger
- 0.3% got it from the internet

It is important for parents to keep track of the medicines they keep in the house. Take advantage of drug take back events to remove medicines that are no longer needed or expired.

Did you know that...

- In 2012, pain relievers, stimulants and sleep medicines were the three most common exposures reported to the MPC in children aged 6-19 years.
- In 2012, 33% of calls to the MPC about children and teens aged 6-19 years were intentional exposures.

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Parent Information for Senior Week

Parents may be surprised at some of the ways their teens are spending their free time. These activities could increase when they are away for senior week.

The Cinnamon Challenge

The Cinnamon Challenge is simple. It starts with a dare to swallow a spoonful of powdered or ground cinnamon within 60 seconds without drinking water. This task is almost impossible. It can also be harmful to the teens and young adults who are most often attempting this challenge. Videos of these attempts are posted on the internet, encouraging teens to try the challenge.



The Cinnamon Challenge is dangerous and should not be taken lightly. According to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, local poison centers received 51 calls about the Cinnamon Challenge in 2011. The number of calls jumped to 222 in 2012. This coincided with an increase in Cinnamon Challenge videos on YouTube.

Cinnamon, although used to sweeten foods, is actually a caustic powder composed of cellulose fibers. These fibers can severely dry out the mouth and throat causing severe gagging. Immediately after doing the Cinnamon Challenge, teenagers can experience vomiting, coughing, choking and throat irritation. However, more serious symptoms can occur. Teens and young adults have experienced nose bleeds, chest tightness and pneumonia after the Cinnamon Challenge. In the most serious cases, teens and young adults have required ventilator support for collapsed lungs. The Cinnamon Challenge poses the greatest risk for persons with lung diseases such as asthma or allergies to cinnamon.

The health risks associated with the Cinnamon Challenge are fairly low. However, these risks are unnecessary and avoidable. The challenge is often fueled by peer pressure and competition. Since its popularity is increasing on the internet, discuss the possible harmful effects with your teens.

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Alcohol

According to the 2012 Monitoring the Future Survey, binge drinking rose from 22% to 24% in 12th graders. In other words, one-quarter of 12th grade students surveyed admitted to binge drinking in 2012. Binge drinking is when 5 or more alcohol-containing drinks are consumed in a row. The report also showed that 91% of 12th graders surveyed said it is fairly easy or very easy to get alcohol.

Minor effects from drinking alcohol include drowsiness, difficulty walking, nausea, vomiting and decreased inhibitions. Coma, decreased breathing, and low blood sugar are some of the symptoms seen with larger amounts of alcohol.

Many teens will drink alcohol with energy drinks in to try to prevent some of the unwanted symptoms. While the teen may be more awake, the alcohol will still affect their judgment and slow their reaction time. In addition, the energy drinks contain varying amounts of caffeine which can increase the heart rate and blood pressure.

Parents should discuss the effects of alcohol and energy drinks with their teens. They should monitor the contents of their liquor cabinet and check the bottles. Some teens will replace the alcohol with water or other similar colored liquid.