

# MAKE A DIFFERENCE....



## Talk to Your Child About the Dangers of Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drugs.

Here are some reasons to start the conversation early:

- Many kids start using tobacco by age 11 and are addicted by age 14.
- Between ages 9 and 13, children start to think that using alcohol is okay.
- At age 12 or 13, some kids are already abusing drugs like marijuana or prescription pain relievers.

For senior high school students in the Capital Area region, findings about past month substance use from the 2010 Louisiana Caring Communities Youth Survey included:

- 4 out of 10 students reported use of alcohol, and 1 out of 5 reported binge drinking (5 or more drinks in a row).
- 17% of students reported smoking cigarettes and 14% reported smoking marijuana.
- Use of sedatives and narcotics without a doctor's prescription was reported by about 3% of students.
- Being drunk or high at school was reported by 16% of students.
- 3 out of 10 students reported riding with a drinking driver.

Knowing the facts about drugs will help your child make healthy choices.

### What do I need to say?

When you talk about tobacco, alcohol, and drugs:

- Teach your child the facts.
- Give your child clear rules.
- Find out what your child already knows.
- Be prepared to answer your child's questions.
- Talk with your child about how to say "no."

Get more information on keeping kids healthy and drug free. <http://www.drugabuse.gov/family-checkup>

### When should I start talking with my child?

Start early. By preschool, most children have seen adults smoking cigarettes or drinking alcohol, either in real life, on TV, or on the Internet. Make sure your child knows right from the start that you think it's important to stay safe and avoid drugs.

### What if my child is older?

It's never too late to start the conversation about avoiding drugs. Even if your teen may have tried tobacco, alcohol, or drugs, you can still talk about making healthy choices and how to say "no" next time.

Get more tips to help your teen stay away from drugs. <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/teen-drug-abuse/MY01099/METHOD=print>

## What do I need to know about prescriptions and other medicines?

When you talk to your child about the dangers of drugs, don't forget about drugs that may already be in your home. Prescription or over-the-counter (OTC) drug abuse is when a person:

- Takes too much of a prescription or OTC drug
- Takes a prescription drug prescribed to someone else
- Uses a prescription or OTC drug to get high

When not taken safely, prescription and OTC medicines can be just as addictive and dangerous as other drugs. Make sure to talk to your kids about these dangers, and store medicines in a locked cabinet. Set a good example for your kids. Never take someone else's prescription medicine or give yours to anyone else.

Share this Web site about prescription and OTC drug abuse you're your kids. <http://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/prescription-drugs>

## Why do I need to talk to my child?

Research shows that kids do listen to their parents. Children who learn about drug risks from their parents are less likely to start using drugs. When kids choose **not** to use alcohol or drugs, they are also **less likely** to:

- Have serious trouble in school
- Get hurt in a car accident
- Be a victim of crime
- Have a problem with addiction as an adult

If you say nothing, your child may think it's okay to use alcohol and other drugs.

**Take Action!** Talk with your child about tobacco, alcohol, and drugs today – and keep the conversation going.

## Talk with your child early and often.

Start conversations about your values and expectations while your child is young. Your child will get used to sharing information and opinions with you. This will make it easier for you to continue talking as your child gets older. Here are some tips:

- Use everyday events to start a conversation. For example, if you see a group of kids smoking, talk about how tobacco hurts the body.
- Give your child your full attention. Turn off the TV, radio, cell phone, and computer, and really listen.
- Try not to "talk at" your child. Encourage your child to ask questions. If you don't know the answer to a question, look it up together.

Get more tips on how to have a conversation with your child. <http://theparenttoolkit.org/article/how-to-talk-with-your-teenager>

## Teach your child the facts.

Your child needs to know how using tobacco, alcohol, and drugs can hurt the body and cause problems at home and in school. Kids who know the facts are more likely to make good choices.

- **Get the facts on tobacco** [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/youth/information\\_sheet/](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/youth/information_sheet/) If your child likes sports, focus on how smoking can affect athletic performance. Or you can say that tobacco causes bad breath and yellow teeth.
- **Get the facts on alcohol** [http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/MakeADiff\\_HTML/makediff.htm#Talkingwith](http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/MakeADiff_HTML/makediff.htm#Talkingwith) Remind your child that alcohol is a powerful drug that slows down the body and brain.
- **Get the facts on other drugs** <http://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts> Find out how steroids, marijuana, and prescription drugs affect the body.

Take this quiz about drug facts with your child. <http://teens.drugabuse.gov/activities/test-your-knowledge>

## Set clear rules for your child.

Not wanting to upset their parents is the number one reason kids give for not using drugs. Your child will be less tempted to use tobacco, alcohol, and drugs if you explain your rules clearly.

Here are some things to keep in mind when you talk to your child:

- Explain that you set rules to keep your child safe.
- Tell your child that you expect tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs to not be used.
- Let your child know what will happen if the rules are broken.
- Praise your child for good behavior.

Get advice on how to set rules for your family. <http://bblocks.samhsa.gov/family/rules/tips.aspx>

## Give your child tools to say “no.”

Kids say that they use alcohol and other drugs to “fit in and belong” with other kids. Talk to your child about how to say “no.” Your child can make a plan for when other kids offer tobacco, drugs, or alcohol. Help your child practice saying “no” to drugs. <http://teenbrain.drugfree.org/tools/powerofdrugs/sayno.html>

## Set a good example.

- If you smoke, try to quit. <http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/health-conditions-and-diseases/diabetes/quit-smoking>
- If you drink alcohol, don’t drink too much or too often. <http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/health-conditions-and-diseases/heart-health/drink-alcohol-only-in-moderation>
- If you use drugs, find a treatment program near you. <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/TreatmentLocator/faces/quickSearch.jspx>
- Use prescription and over-the-counter medicines safely. <http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/everyday-healthy-living/safety/use-medicines-safely>
- Never drink or use drugs and drive.

## What if I’ve used drugs in the past?

Be honest with your child, but don’t give a lot of details. Use these tips to talk about your past drug use. <http://www.easyread.drugabuse.gov/talking-about-drugs.php>

## **Get help if you need it.**

If you think your child may have a drug or alcohol problem, get help. Don't wait. Get tips on what to do if you think your child is using drugs or alcohol. <http://timetoact.drugfree.org/think-first-step-ask.html>

## **What about cost?**

Drug and alcohol assessments for teens are now covered under the Affordable Care Act, the health care reform law passed in 2010. Depending on your insurance plan, your child may be able to get an assessment at no cost to you. <https://www.healthcare.gov/how-does-the-affordable-care-act-affect-me> . Check with your insurance provider to find out what's included in your plan. For information about other services for children that are covered by the Affordable Care Act, <https://www.healthcare.gov/what-are-my-preventive-care-benefits#part=3>

## **Local Community Resources**

**Capital Area Human Services District** provides mental health, substance abuse and developmental disability services for the greater Baton Rouge area. See [www.realhelpbr.com](http://www.realhelpbr.com) for more information about clinic/school-based treatment and prevention services or call the clinic access number at 225-925-1906 or 800-768-8824.

Tobacco cessation groups (open to the general public) are offered for adults that include the nicotine patch at no charge. See website (under publications) for program sites and contact information.

**I CARE** provides alcohol, drug abuse, and violence prevention programming in public and non-public schools in the EBR school district. Licensed prevention professionals are available to provide support regarding substance use and violence issues and provide training for parents and educators upon request. On-line training and additional resources are available on a variety of topics at <http://icare.ebrschools.org>

**Magellan MY LIFE Youth Support Group** gives youth a chance to build confidence, positive social supports and leadership skills. Activities are free and open to any youth who is between the ages of 13 and 23 years old and has experience with mental health, substance abuse and/or foster care-related issues. More information is available at <http://www.facebook.com/MYLIFEyouth> or [www.Magellanoflouisiana.com](http://www.Magellanoflouisiana.com).

**Baton Rouge Crisis Intervention Center** provides online emotional support and crisis counseling services at [www.brcic.org](http://www.brcic.org) (click "Online Crisis Help" to be connected with a local crisis counselor through chat counseling). For emotional support or concerns that you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, call The PHONE, a 24-hour Crisis and Suicide Prevention line, at 225-924-3900.

Contact local schools for additional resources.

## **Statewide Tobacco Cessation Resources**

**1-800-Quit Now (1-800-784-8669):** Telephone quitlines are staffed by experienced counselors trained to help smokers quit. Available at no charge for Louisiana residents age 13 and older.

**SmokefreeTXT:** Mobile text messaging service to provide users with encouragement, advice, and tips to help smokers quit smoking. To enroll, by phone: Text the word QUIT to 47848 or online at

<http://teen.smokefree.gov/smokefreetxt.aspx> No charge for the service, but message and data rates may apply. Check with your mobile provider.

## **Websites for Teens**

<http://thecoolspot.gov/> Interactive website for middle schoolers to help youth understand the risks of underage drinking and ways to resist peer pressure.

<http://teens.drugabuse.gov> Interactive website for adolescents age 11-15 years that delivers science-based facts about how drugs affect the brain and body so that kids will be armed with information to make healthy decisions.