

# Substance Use Factsheet for Youth

There is no safe amount of alcohol or substance use. Alcohol, marijuana, and other substance use can affect physical and mental health, safety, and other aspects of life such as school and relationships. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust if you have question.

## Alcohol



### Get the Facts

- Alcohol use can have lasting **effects on the developing brain**. Adolescent who drink can experience impaired memory and attention, slower reflexes, and reduced cognitive functioning.
- Most youth don't drink**. Almost 82% of 12- to 20-year-olds haven't had a drink in the last month.
- Alcohol and other substance use during adolescence **increases the risk of negative personal, social, physical, and mental health outcomes** such as problems at school, relationship issues, physical and mental health concerns, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, injury and car accidents, and legal problems. While intoxicated, teens are more likely to engage in unsafe behavior such as drinking and driving, unprotected sex, and aggressive or violent actions.

Sources:

[https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/SAMHSA\\_Digital\\_Download/PEP21-03-03-001.pdf](https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/SAMHSA_Digital_Download/PEP21-03-03-001.pdf)

[https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/SAMHSA\\_Digital\\_Download/PEP21-03-10-007.pdf](https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/SAMHSA_Digital_Download/PEP21-03-10-007.pdf)

## Marijuana



### Get the Facts

- Marijuana affects your brain**. Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the chemical responsible for most of marijuana's psychological effects, affects brain cells throughout the brain, including cells in circuits related to learning and memory, coordination, and addiction.
- Marijuana affects your self-control**. Marijuana can seriously affect your sense of time and your coordination, impacting things like driving.
- Most teens aren't smoking marijuana**. In fact, only 6.5% of youth ages 12 to 17 said that they had smoked marijuana in the past month.
- Marijuana affects your **coordination and reaction time**, raising your risk of injury or death from car crashes and other accidents. Co-use of alcohol or other drugs heightens crash risks.

Source:

<https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/piv/pep19-05.pdf>

## E-Cigarettes



### Get the Facts

- E-cigarettes can contain harmful substances that are bad for your health**. The aerosol emitted can contain heavy metals such as lead, volatile organic compounds, and cancer-causing agents. The compounds can also lead to lung diseases such as bronchitis, heart disease, and pneumonia.
- Over 86% of youth don't vape**—and among the minority who do vape, most are not regular users.
- E-cigarette use **harms the developing brain**. E-cigarettes typically deliver nicotine, a harmful drug to the youth brain and body. Teens are particularly vulnerable to the effects of nicotine since the brain is still developing.
- The nicotine in e-cigarettes and other tobacco products can also prime young brains for **addiction** to other drugs, such as cocaine and methamphetamine.

Sources:

<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Tips-for-Teens-The-Truth-About-E-Cigarettes/PEP19-12>

<https://doi.org/10.1093/ntr/ntaa010>

## Crisis & Support Resources

- SAMHSA National Help Line**: Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357): <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>
- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**: Dial 988: <https://988lifeline.org/>
- Crisis Text Line**: Text HOME to 741741: <https://www.crisistextline.org/>
- The Trevor Project**: Text START to 678-678 or call 1-866-488-7386: <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>