

## Resources for keeping your teen healthy

**T**eens need parents to help guide them toward healthy decisions. They need to be steered away from trying—and using—addictive substances. Parenting involves finding the energy to apply skills needed to read a teenager. It takes patience with your child and with yourself. As adults in the household have a strong impact on whether a teenager makes healthy decisions, below are some resources needed for preventive parenting. Helping your child navigate life to become a resilient teen helps all family members better cope with normal stressors. Research shows that teens who regularly talk with their parents are able to balance peer influence better. Studies also show that teens who view their parents as part of their safe and healthy environment, with family behaviors that are substance-free most of the time, are more likely to make substance-free decisions. As parents, the more we educate ourselves, the more we understand and support our children in making healthy choices.

### Topics covered on the [Parent Resources](#) page:

- Vaping and e-cigarettes
- Local laws, ordinances, and liabilities regarding curfew, underage use and hosting parties
- Safely securing, monitoring, and disposing of prescription medications
- Warning signs of teen drug use and drug information
- I think or know my child is using
- Local resources for intervention, treatment and recovery
- Archive of parenting newsletters on topics such as getting your teen to talk, helping teens cope
- Podcasts on prevention for raising healthy, resilient teens



### Parenting Power Tips:

- ⇒ Many families wonder about resources when they're experiencing common challenges. It's not unique that it isn't always easy to cope. If feeling unprepared to manage alone, without support, there are some local community resources to help you. See our [local resources](#) on the Power of Choice [website](#).
- ⇒ Understand, locate and talk to your teen about school and sports team policies, as well as parties. Know the local laws and ordinances regarding underage drinking, tobacco and other drug use. For specific information, see your school's student handbook for school policy and [Guidelines for Hosting Parties and the Laws](#) for local laws and ordinances.

### Secure, Monitor, Dispose—Prescription Medications

- Talk to your teen about safe use of over-the-counter and prescription medications.
- Keep medications in a safe and secure place. Talk to grandparents and relatives about doing the same.
- Monitor all family medications and refills.
- Talk to your family doctors. Ask about other treatment or medication options in place of a narcotic when dealing with pain, injuries, surgery or dental work.
- Safely disposing of expired or unused prescription medication is a critical step we all can take in helping protect our children and environment. Bring unused or expired medications to one of the drop off points listed by the Community Alliance for Prevention. [Email](#) the Community Alliance for Prevention for an up-to-date map of local prescription medication drop off sites.

## COMMUNITY ALLIANCE FOR PREVENTION

**96%** of local high school students have *not* used prescription drugs not prescribed to them in the last 30 days

### Conversation Starter

Ask your teenager: "If you were having challenges, in school or just with life, who could you go to for help (other than parents)?"



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**Stay Healthy: Your Brain Will Thank You**  
*Keep maximizing your developing brain's potential by choosing to be drug-free*

**FACT:** The brain's prefrontal cortex does not reach full maturity until around age 25! The greatest changes to the parts of the brain that are responsible for impulse-control, judgment, decision-making, planning, organization and are involved in other functions like emotion, occur in adolescence.

**Book:** "Welcome to Your Child's Brain: How the Mind Grows from Conception to College"

**FACT:** The teen brain is much more vulnerable to addiction. 1 in 6 teens who try marijuana before age 18 will either abuse it or become addicted to marijuana as compared with 1 in 25 adults.

**Journal Article:** "Adverse health effects of non-medical cannabis use"

**FACT:** Studies show that heavy doses of THC (the mind-altering ingredient in marijuana) during adolescence change the way the brain develops. In particular, marijuana's harmful effects sink the hippocampus, which is critical for learning and memory functioning.

**Journal Article:** "Long-term consequences of adolescent cannabis exposure on the development of cognition, brain structure and function: an overview of animal and human research"

**FACT:** In a study of over 1000 individuals from birth to age 38, those who consistently used marijuana showed a decline in regular brain functions. The most significant declines were noted in individuals who began their marijuana use as adolescents.

**Journal Article:** "A longitudinal study of cannabis use and mental health from adolescence to early adulthood"

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The Power of Choice is a project of 360 Youth Services, Naperville School District 203, Indian Prairie School District 204, Naperville Police Department, KidsMatter and District 203 & 204 parents.

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