



Youth Behavioral Health

Resources for Students & Families



Facts & Data

According to Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) results from 2023, 18.4% of Washington 12th grade students reported drinking alcohol in the month prior. Of those students, only 3.1% drink alcohol if their parents/caregivers or friends think it's wrong.

Of Washington 12th grade students, 34% have used marijuana at least once and 73% believe there's no or low risk from trying marijuana once or twice, according to 2023 HYS results.

Vapor products are the most common nicotine product used by youth. In 2023, 13.6% of Washington 12th grade students reported on the HYS that they had used vapor products in the month prior.

Washington state had a 21% increase in fentanyl deaths from February 2022 to February 2023 - the biggest increase in the nation. According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), 7 out of 10 fentanyl-laced pills contain a potentially lethal

Action Items

- Make it difficult for youth to access alcohol or substances. Store alcohol and substances in secure locations like cabinets, drawers, lock boxes or bags.
- If you smoke or use vapor products, avoid doing so around children and consider trying to quit.
- Help your child create an "exit plan" in case they are offered alcohol or substances.
- Be aware of the signs of alcohol and substance use. These signs include mood changes, trouble concentrating, changes in school attendance, changes in friendships, bloodshot eyes, and changes in appetite, weight, and sleep patterns.
- Have frequent conversations about alcohol and/or substance use and make it clear that you do not think it's okay to use alcohol or substances.
- Support resilience in children and teens. We build resilience by learning to be flexible and adapt to change, having strong connections and relationships with others, and feeling a sense of purpose and hope for the future.
- Talk to the caregivers of your child's friends about access to alcohol and substances.
- Contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Helpline to get information and referrals for treatment: (800) 662-4357. The service is free, confidential, and available 24/7.

Conversation Starters

- What does being healthy mean to you? What does it feel like to be healthy?
- What do you know about alcohol, nicotine, marijuana, and other substances?
- Why do you think some people use alcohol or substances?
- I have heard some other caregivers talk about a few situations of kids experimenting with drugs and alcohol. Have your friends been talking about that at all?
- What would you say to a friend who offered you alcohol or any other substance?
- I have noticed a change in your behavior. Can you tell me more about what's happening? How are you feeling?
- Do you feel like you want to talk to someone else about your problem?

Additional Resources

- 5 Conversation Goals: SAMHSA provides information about how to start talking to your children about alcohol and substances.
- Parent & Caregiver Resources: This SAMHSA webpage includes fact sheets and brochures about alcohol, marijuana, opioids, and vaping.
- Know the Risks: This website, operated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, presents facts about the risks of using e-cigarettes and resources for prevention.
- Underage Drinking: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides statistics about underage drinking and information about the dangers of underage drinking.
- Early Warning Signs of Teen Substance Use: This resource from the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation details the behavioral and physical signs that could indicate a teen is using substances.
- Friends for Life: Washington State Health Care Authority provides facts and resources about fentanyl.
- Start Talking Now: This resource, funded by Washington State Health Care Authority, provides information on preventing alcohol and marijuana use in children and teens.

