

# Substance Use Fact Sheet 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 parts of life, such as school and relationships. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or adult you trust if you have questions.

## Marijuana



### Get the Facts

- **Marijuana affects your brain.** Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the ingredient in marijuana that affects brain cells. It affects learning and memory.
- **Marijuana affects your self-control.** Marijuana can affect your sense of time and coordination. That makes it hard to do things like driving.
- **Most teens don't use marijuana.** Only 6.5% of youth ages 12 to 17 said that they used marijuana in the past month.
- **Marijuana affects your reaction time.** It raises your risk of injury or death from car crashes and other accidents. Using different drugs together increases these risks.

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

## Tobacco and E-Cigarettes



### Get the Facts

- **E-cigarettes and tobacco contain substances that are bad for your health.** Vaping devices can contain heavy metals such as lead. Tobacco and e-cigarette use can lead to heart and lung diseases and cancer.
- **Most teens don't use tobacco or e-cigarettes.** Only 5% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders said they used tobacco in the past month. Less than 14% of teens said they vape. Most teens who do vape are not doing it regularly.
- E-cigarettes and tobacco products contain **nicotine, which affects the brain's reward system, emotions, and other brain functions.**
- **Nicotine increases the risk of addiction to other drugs.**

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

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

<https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/tobacconicotine-vaping>

## Alcohol



### Get the Facts

- **Alcohol can have long-term effects on the brain.** Using alcohol can reduce your memory and attention and slow your reflexes.
- **Most teens don't use alcohol.** About 18% of 12- to 20-year-olds said that they used alcohol in the past month.
- **Teens who use alcohol are more likely to have problems at school, problems with relationships, and poor physical and mental health.** While using alcohol or drugs, teens are more likely to do things like have unprotected sex, drive unsafely, and be aggressive or violent. This increases risk for pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and problems with the law.

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)

## 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/>