



PARTNERS IN CRIME PREVENTION

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PREVENTING YOUTH ADDICTION - SOME FACTS

Parents have been concerned about their children becoming involved with drugs for many decades. Whether it be the LSD or marijuana of the 60's, cocaine, heroin or methamphetamine of later decades.

The concern is heightened with the fact that adolescent brains do not stop developing until age 25. So most concerned parents will be more motivated to keep their children off of drugs.

86.5% of Snohomish County 12th graders say that they perceive a moderate to great risk of using prescription drugs that has not been prescribed to them in the 2018 Healthy Youth Survey.

In 2018, 3.1% of Snohomish County 12th graders reported to the survey that they had used heroin at least once in their lifetime, about the same percentage as reported in 2016.

The survey found a reduction in the percentage of 12th graders who used pain killers to get high from 5% in 2016 to 3.6% in 2018.

Almost 50% of young people who use heroin started with prescription drug abuse, and over 40% of teens who misused a prescription drug got it from their parent's medicine cabinet.

And while the focus of attention has been on opioid and heroin misuse, marijuana use by teens remains a concern.

In 2018, the survey reported that 24.6% of 12th graders reported using marijuana in the past 30 days as opposed to 26.7% in 2016.

The survey also reported a declining perception of risk of regular use of marijuana among 12th graders, from 49.8% in 2016 to 25.6% in 2018.

While the 2018 survey showed 12th grader misuse of heroin and prescription drugs remains in the single digits, parents probably should not be complacent about the opportunities for their child to misuse.

The best strategy for parents is to keep engaged with their children. Talking with them, being aware of their activities, who their friends are, and watching for any dramatic changes in behavior.

With teens it may be difficult to tell if they are experimenting with drugs. But while overreaction is not a good idea, neither is indifference. Stay engaged with your teens. Point out the hazards of illegal drugs, alcohol and marijuana use and the misuse of prescription drugs.



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HIDING PLACES- SEARCH THEIR ROOM?

Teens usually want privacy in their rooms. However, if you notice changes in behavior, odors such as marijuana/ cigarette smoke, or masking smells from incense or air fresheners, you might want to make an inspection of your teen’s room.

Some common hiding places include,

- Dresser drawers beneath or between clothes.
- CD/DVD/Tape/ Video cases.
- Small boxes.
- In a plant, in the dirt.
- In between books on a bookshelf.
- Inside books with pages cut out.
- Makeup cases.
- Inside over-the-counter medicine.
- Inside empty candy bags such as M&Ms or Skittles.

PREVENTING YOUTH ADDICTION- WHAT TO LOOK FOR

While most teens will never become involved with drugs it is a good idea for parents to look for signs of potential use and to take steps to educate their children about the dangers of drug misuse. Some signs of drug use might also be signs of other activity such as involvement in gangs. So doing some investigation could help in deciding what course to take.

Common Risk Factors. While not guaranteeing that any one individual will become addicted to drugs or alcohol, risk factors can help you to know what to pay attention to. Some common risk factors include,

- **Family History.** A history of dependence or addiction by parents or more distant relatives can heighten risk that your child will also become dependent or addicted.
- **Mental Health or Behavioral Issues.** Conditions such as depression, anxiety, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) can also increase risk.
- **Trauma.** Experiencing a traumatic event such as a car accident, natural disaster, or being a victim of physical or sexual abuse can increase drug abuse risk.
- **Impulse Control Problems.** Taking frequent risks or having difficulty controlling impulses can increase

risk of drug abuse.

Other factors leading to drug abuse.

- **Other people.** Sometimes friends urge one another to drink or take drugs.
- **Popular Culture.** 45% of teens agree with the Statement “Movies and TV shows make drugs seem like an okay thing to do.”
- **Escape ad Self-Medication.** Unhappy teens may look to drugs for solace.
- **Lack of Confidence.** Shy teens might use alcohol or drugs to boost their courage.
- **Misinformation.** Your teen might have friends who claim to be experts and assure that drugs and alcohol are not dangerous.

Warning Signs. Some warning signs that your teen might be using drugs might include,

- Poor school grades
- Missing classes
- Losing interest in activities such as sports.
- Avoids eye contact.
- Locks doors.
- Has the “munchies” or sudden appetite.

PREVENTING YOUTH ADDICTION- TAKING ACTION

As a parent you have a great influence on your child to stay away from harmful drugs.

Staying involved with your child, knowing their friends, and encouraging positive activities can help you detect any changes in your child.

Health professionals always encourage parents to talk to their children about drugs to educate them on their affects on the human body. Warning children about drugs such as heroin, opioids, meth, etc. may be obvious, but talking about the benefits of prescription drugs and the fact that they can be detrimental to good health if not used according to a doctor's guidance.

Most teens think that misusing prescription drugs can be harmful. However, nearly one in 10 thinks it has little risk.

Talking periodically about the harmful affects of misusing drugs should reinforce the message to stay away from harmful drugs. Also, point out that while alcohol and marijuana may be legal for adults, they are illegal for children/teens and can harm their growth and development.

If your child is prescribed an opiate for pain, after an injury or surgery, insist on no more than a three day supply. Opiates should only be for short term use and only if needed. Monitor your child's use closely.

Secure prescriptions. The Snohomish Health District points out that almost 50% of youth who use heroin started with prescription drug abuse. Over 40% of teen who misused a prescription drug got it

from their parent's medicine cabinet.

Keeping your medications safely stored is important to preventing misuse of your prescriptions by others.

You can use medical lock bags, medicine lock boxes or lock bottles. They may use a key or combination lock.



You can find medical lock boxes such as pictured below at Jssmst, (www.jssmst.com)

You can also get locking bottle caps and boxes at Safer Lock (www.saferlockrx.com),

Dispose of unused prescriptions.

Keeping unused, unwanted and expired prescription drugs in your home poses a risk to you, your family and your community. Improper disposal may lead to illegal use and may also contaminate our waters. Snohomish County has an easy, secure and responsible way to properly dispose of these drugs.

See side bar for more information.

TAKE BACK YOUR MEDS- SAFE DISPOSAL

Taking back your unused medications is easy,

- *Check the package- If there are specific instructions for disposal on the label, package or package insert, please follow those instructions.*
- *Convenient locations- Take expired or unwanted medicines to a convenient, centralized kiosk drop-off site for proper disposal.*
- *Mail back- If you are differently-abled or home bound you can request to mail in your unused medications*

For more information, go to

<https://med-project.org/locations/snohomish/>

PREVENTING YOUTH ADDICTION – RESOURCES THAT CAN HELP

Some actions are simple to take, such as locking prescriptions or taking unneeded drugs in for disposal. Talking to your teen about the downsides of drug use may be more difficult.

You may be confident to talk to your teen about drugs. If you are, then continue to do so at appropriate times in your teen’s life.

However, if you want help there are resources that explain drug abuse in non-judgmental language or can give suggestions on how to approach your child about drug abuse.

Snohomish Overdose Prevention. Locally, the Snohomish Health District sponsors the Snohomish Overdose Prevention web site. It is intended as a one-stop shop as a resource for information about opioids, how to prevent opioid abuse, and provide a resource to find treatment and support.

Snohomish Overdose Prevention-
<https://snohomishoverdoseprevention.com/>

Partnership for Drug-Free Kids. The Partnership for Drug-Free Kids and the Center on Addiction sponsor’s a national web site that provides resources for getting help and support as well as information about

preventing drug abuse. Two sections of the web site that are of interest are,

Heroin and the Opioid Epidemic-
<https://drugfree.org/heroin-opioid-epidemic/>

Talk with your kids-
<https://drugfree.org/article/talk-with-your-kids/>

National Institute on Drug Abuse. The National Institute on Drug Abuse maintains an extensive web site on all aspects of drug abuse. Some pertinent sections include,

Facts on Teen Drug Use-
<https://teens.drugabuse.gov/parents>

Family Checkup-
<https://www.drugabuse.gov/family-checkup>

Opioid Facts for Teens-
<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/opioid-facts-teens/letter-to-teens>

The Science of Addiction-
<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugs-brains-behavior-science-addiction/preface>

OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOODS

MAKING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SAFER

<https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/311/Office-of-Neighborhoods>

Homeless Outreach-
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Community Outreach-
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SHERIFF’S OFFICE CRIME PREVENTION WEB PAGE:

<http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/289/Crime-Prevention>

NEWSLETTER INFO

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If you have questions regarding this newsletter or any articles that appear in it, please contact the editor at neighborhoodwatch@snoco.org



Snohomish County Sheriff’s Office: 425-388-3845

<http://snohomishcountywa.gov/303/Anonymous-Tips>

Crime Stoppers of Puget Sound: 1-800-222-8477