

# Talking to Children and Teens About Drugs

By drugreport    Last modified: March 2, 2020

The world can present plenty of dangers for young people, and one particularly prevalent issue to be concerned about is the abuse of illicit substances. This can include alcohol, illicit drugs, and even prescription drugs. The first step in keeping children and teenagers safe from substance abuse is to talk about the dangers and risks; open communication is crucial. Parents also need to set a positive example where drugs and alcohol are concerned.

## Types of Drugs

### Heroin

Heroin is an opioid that comes from morphine, which comes from the seed pods of opium poppy plants. Heroin might be a white or brown powder, or it can be a thick, black substance. Users might smoke, snort, or inject heroin, which causes a rush of euphoria once the drug hits the system. Heroin is extremely addictive, and long-term effects include liver and kidney disease, lung complications, and mental disorders.

- [What Is Heroin?](#)
- [All About Heroin](#)
- [Heroin Abuse and Addiction: Effects, Withdrawal Symptoms, Risks](#)
- [Heroin Addiction and Abuse](#)

### Cocaine

Cocaine was originally used as an anesthetic during surgeries, but when doctors discovered its strong addictive properties, they discontinued using it for this purpose. Cocaine might be snorted, smoked, or injected, and users tend to abuse it for its stimulating properties. Over the long term, cocaine can change the way the brain is structured, and it can also increase the risk of heart disease.

- [Everything You Need to Know About Cocaine](#)
- [What Is Cocaine, and How Is it Made?](#)
- [What Is Cocaine?](#)

### Alcohol

Alcohol includes beer, wine, malt liquor, and distilled spirits. Using alcohol in moderation doesn't present significant health issues. However, excessive drinking can cause dependency and other health issues. Short-term health issues from excessive drinking may include injuries, alcohol poisoning, risky sexual behavior, and violence. Long-term risks include heart disease, liver disease, digestive problems, some types of cancer, memory problems, mental health problems, and social problems.

- [Alcohol's Effects on the Body](#)
- [Alcohol and Health: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly](#)
- [Alcohol Use and Your Health](#)
- [What Is Alcohol?](#)

## **Marijuana**

Marijuana comes from the hemp or cannabis plant, and it contains THC, which causes a high. Marijuana can be smoked or ingested, and the high may last for several hours. In the short term, marijuana users might experience issues with learning and memory, loss of coordination, anxiety, and increased heart rate. Long-term effects include an elevated risk for respiratory diseases and more serious issues with memory and learning.

- [Marijuana Information](#)
- [Cannabis/Marijuana](#)
- [What Is Cannabis?](#)
- [An Overview of Marijuana Use and Addiction](#)

## **Meth**

Methamphetamine is a mood-altering drug that can be ingested, snorted, or injected. An intense rush occurs quickly after smoking or injecting meth, and a feeling of euphoria happens with snorting or ingesting it. Meth is highly addictive, and it has a powerful effect on the central nervous system. Users will have irregular heart rates, increased blood pressure, loss of appetite, blurred vision, and hot flashes. Over the long term, users will often have severe tooth decay and even brain damage.

- [Meth Addiction](#)
- [Overview of Methamphetamine](#)
- [What Is Meth?](#)
- [The Basics of Meth](#)

## **Miscellaneous Drugs**

Other illicit drugs can also be dangerous. Hallucinogens, also called psychedelics, profoundly change the way a user perceives their surroundings. Hallucinogens affect the senses while also changing a person's thinking process. People struggling with insomnia or anxiety might reach for depressants to relax; these drugs can also be addictive. Synthetic cathinones are a stimulant that at one time were disguised and marketed as bath salts. While these substances have been banned in the United States, they may still be found on the Internet.

- [Speed: Effects and Health Warnings](#)
- [What Are Depressants?](#)
- [Hallucinogens](#)
- [What Are Bath Salts?](#)

## **How Drugs Harm the Body and Affect Development**

Drugs usually have both physical and physiological effects on the body. Short-term effects generally involve some type of relaxation, euphoria, or rush, which fades away after a short time. Users may enjoy these feelings so much that they use the substance again and again to replicate it, which can lead to addiction. Long-term effects depend on the specific drug but generally include issues such as erratic behavior, vitamin deficiencies, skin problems, memory problems, confusion, depression, respiratory disease, and some cancers.

- [Physical and Psychological Effects of Substance Use](#)
- [Drugs: What to Know](#)

- [Health and Behavioral Risks of Alcohol and Drug Use](#)
- [How Do Drugs and Alcohol Impede Students' Academic Progress?](#)
- [Don't Stop Till You Get Enough? Drugs and Their Modifying Effects on the Human Body](#)

## **Saying No to Drugs**

In the 1980s and 1990s, anti-drug campaigns focused on the message, "Just say no." While this message is sound advice, current initiatives are more focused on providing kids with the skills they need to make healthy and responsible decisions regarding drug use. Kids receive guidance on identifying risky situations, communicating, bullying, peer pressure, and stress. The skills learned can help kids immediately and throughout their lives.

- [Saying "No" and Sticking to It](#)
- ["Just Say No" No More](#)
- [Top Ten Reasons to Say No to Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drugs](#)
- [Just Say No Pledge](#)
- [Ways to Say "No"](#)

## **Miscellaneous Drug Information**

A wide variety of drugs exist, and some are available and easily accessible to children and teenagers. That's why it's important for parents and other caregivers to provide guidance that can help children avoid drugs. By talking about drugs and their risks and dangers openly, parents can prepare children for a time when they might encounter drugs. Parents should also set a positive example of responsible alcohol use and avoidance of other drugs.

- [Teen Drug Abuse](#)
- [Five Steps to Stop Drug Addiction Before it Starts](#)
- [Drug Abuse Prevention Starts With Parents](#)
- [How to Prevent Substance Abuse](#)

<https://drugreport.com/talking-to-children-and-teens-about-drugs/> Accessed 3-23-20