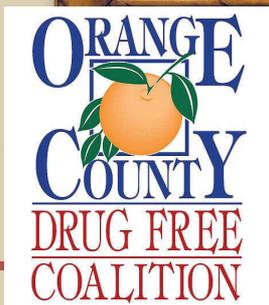


the Parent

# Resource

Information for Parents  
of Teens & Preteens

# Family





ORANGE COUNTY MAYOR

**Jerry L. Demings**

P.O. BOX 1393, 201 SOUTH ROSALIND AVENUE, ORLANDO, FL 32802-1393  
PHONE: 407-836-7370 • FAX: 407-836-7360 • EMAIL: MAYOR@OCFL.NET

Hello Orange County Parents,

Welcome to the sixth edition of our parent resource guide. The guide is to assist in educating and developing healthy and drug-free youth. As a father and grandfather, my family's safety and well-being are one of my top priorities. As Mayor of Orange County, this same priority holds true for the residents we serve.

Raising children in today's society does not come without challenges. This Resource Guide is intended to assist families who are willing to communicate with their children regarding alcohol and drug use. The Office of National Drug Control Policy has published various studies proving that two-thirds of children between ages 13 and 17 do not smoke marijuana or use other drugs because of the fear of losing their parents' respect. By being proactive and educating them on the risks of drug and alcohol use, children become less likely to use drugs.

With electronic cigarette use on the rise amongst youth and young adults, the need to educate adolescents about the harmful risks of experimenting with tobacco and other drugs at a young age is critical. According to the US Department of Health and Human Services, e-cigarettes are the most commonly used form of tobacco among middle and high school children in the United States.

Staying involved in your child's life is imperative during their formative years. The facts and information on alcohol and other drugs presented in this guide are only a portion of what is available to the public. I encourage you to engage your children daily regarding alcohol and drug-related issues in order to prevent substance abuse. For more information, please visit the Orange County Drug Free Office website at [www.drugfreecoalition.org](http://www.drugfreecoalition.org)

Sincerely,

Jerry L. Demings  
Orange County Mayor

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- Most parents talk to their kids about drinking two years too late. Age 8 is not too early.
- What parents may not realize is that children say parental disapproval of underage drinking is the key reason they have chosen not to drink.

# Teen Brain Development and Alcohol

**R**ESearch shows that alcohol affects a developing teen brain differently than an adult brain. "The brain goes through dynamic changes during adolescence, and alcohol can seriously damage long- and short-term growth processes" (American Medical Association *Fact Sheet*, 2003).

Alcohol use may impair memory, learning, decision-making and impulse control; and it greatly increases the risk of addiction. In addition, alcohol use can cause young people to develop social problems, have poor judgment, get into trouble, do poorly in school and experience failure in achieving lifelong goals.

To compound this problem, research shows that parents generally underestimate the extent of teen drinking and its negative consequences. Thirty-one percent of youths who said they had been drunk in the past year were said by their parents to be non-drinkers. Others may view underage drinking as inevitable, but it isn't. To be alcohol-free, a teen needs parents who are trained in **BONDING** (creating a warm, loving relationship), setting **BOUNDARIES** (clear, firm rules about no-underage alcohol use) and **MONITORING** (knowing where your kids are and making sure they stay in an alcohol- and drug-free social environment at all times).

## Alcohol affects a teen brain differently than an adult brain.

- The brain's hippocampus (responsible for learning and memory) can be **10% smaller** in underage drinkers.
- It can actually cause serious damage to the still-developing adolescent brain (10-21 years).

Significant Increased Risk of

# Addiction

## FL Law

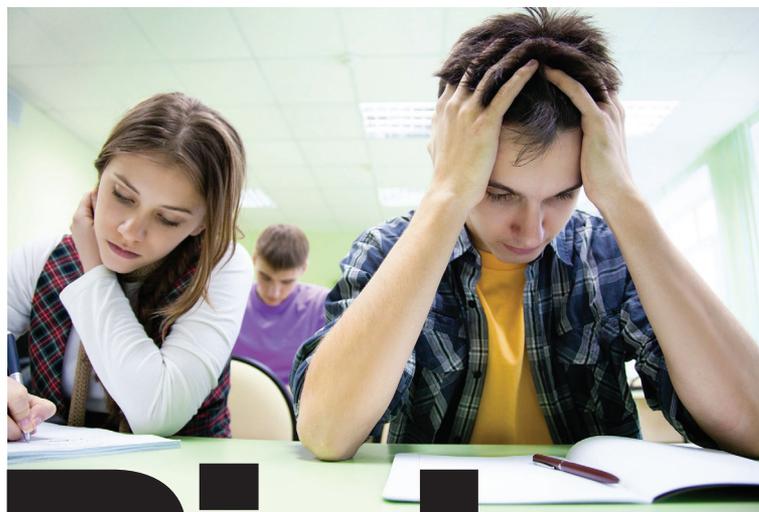
**Possessing, purchasing or drinking alcohol before age 21 is illegal.** The minimum legal drinking age of 21 has saved thousands of lives.

**It is illegal for anyone to sell, serve or give alcohol (including parents) to anyone under the age of 21- punishable by up to a \$500 fine and 60 days in jail**

## Monitoring

Be aware that studies show kids are more at risk for drinking alcohol between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., while many parents are still at work.

Find ways to check on your kids when you are not around, either with phone calls, text messaging or through a neighbor dropping by.



# Risks

associated with underage drinking

## ALCOHOL POISONING CAN CAUSE DEATH

Most kids have not yet developed the “cut-off” switch that makes them go to sleep or pass out from too much drinking. They can consume dangerous amounts of alcohol before they realize it’s too late. This can result in alcohol poisoning, which can cause difficulty breathing, unconsciousness and death. Binge drinking can and does kill – killing as many young people as all other drugs combined. If a young person ever passes out from drinking, 911 should be called for immediate medical attention.

The teenage brain is still developing. Alcohol can impair parts of the brain that control the following:

- Motor Coordination
- Memory
- Impulse Control
- Decision-Making

## Orange County

### START TALKING BEFORE THEY START DRINKING

Most parents talk to their kids about drinking 2 years too late. Age 8 is not too early.

Sharing values and family history regarding alcohol will create an environment of trust and understanding.

### Parents Alcohol Education Program

Learn the latest on alcohol expectancies & the real effects of alcohol. Your kids are worth it! View the parent program at [www.drugfreecoalition.org](http://www.drugfreecoalition.org)

# Parents

## Are The #1 Reason Kids Don't Drink

**E** DUCATION ALONE is not enough to deter teens from drinking as they enter difficult social transitions to adulthood, because there are many pressures and opportunities to drink. Parents who are actively involved can have a powerful influence on their child's decision to remain alcohol-free.

Teen perceptions of parental disapproval are great deterrents. What parents may not realize is that children say parental disapproval of underage drinking is the key reason they have chosen not to drink.

Research indicates that children are less likely to drink when their parents are involved in their lives and when they and their parents report feeling close to each other. Family conflict and lack of bonding are associated with an increased risk of drinking. Mixed messages, and unclear rules and expectations also leave children more vulnerable to underage drinking.



**i**talk

they hear you  
**Dinner Time**  
A perfect moment to talk.

An alarming number of pre-teens are drinking alcohol which makes it urgent to find every opportunity to talk to your kids about the dangers of underage drinking. For tips on how-and when- to begin the conversation, visit:

[www.drugfreecoalition.org](http://www.drugfreecoalition.org)

### How parents can help their children remain **ALCOHOL-FREE**

- 1 Explain the risks**  
Learn and explain the risks of underage drinking. Emphasize that drinking alcohol is not a "rite of passage" but a dangerous drug for a teen brain.
- 2 Talk early and often**  
Orange County, surveys indicate some youths binge drink in the sixth grade, and a few may start even earlier.
- 3 Set clear rules**  
Set clear rules about no alcohol use. Be specific: "Absolutely no underage drinking in our family."
- 4 Know your children's friends**  
Get to know your children's friends and their parents. Help them choose friends who support your family rules.
- 5 Monitor children's activities**  
Always know where your children are, whom they are with and what they are doing. For example: "If alcohol is at a party, call me and I'll come and get you."
- 6 Make alcohol unavailable**  
Ensure that alcohol is not available to your child at home or from others when your child is away. Ensure that your children's social environment is alcohol-free.
- 7 Be involved**  
Develop close bonding experiences and have daily positive interactions with your child. Express love often.
- 8 Stay in contact**  
Studies show children are more likely to drink between the hours of 3:00-6:00 pm, when unsupervised by parents. Give your kids a call.
- 9 Eat dinner together**  
Studies show that kids who eat dinner with their family 5-7 times per week are 33 percent less likely to drink alcohol underage.

# Brain Research

## and the Effects of Alcohol

### Brain plasticity

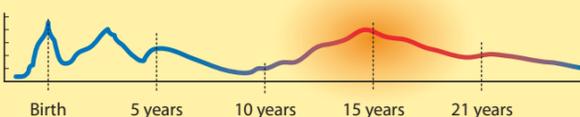
- During adolescence the brain must make key neural connections to wire itself to become a responsible, thoughtful adult.

- Alcohol, a depressant, slows down brain activity and hinders development.
- The brain's hippocampus, responsible for learning and memory, can be 10% smaller in underage drinkers

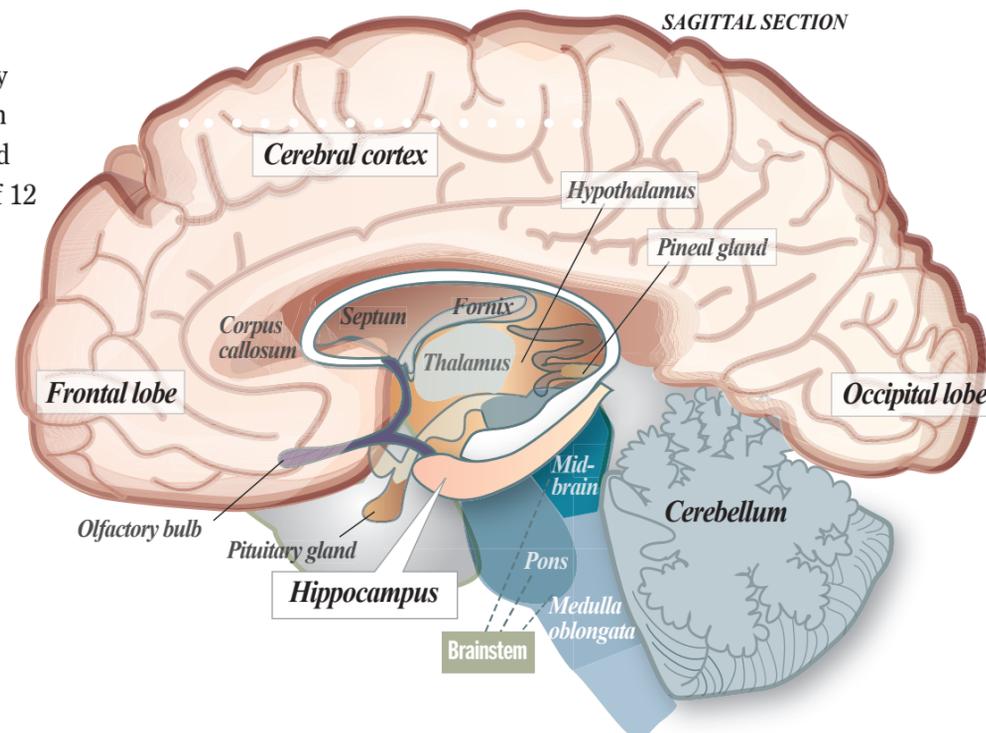
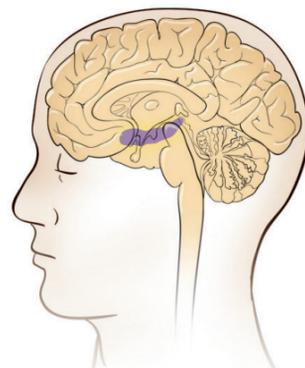
Neural plasticity refers to the ability of circuitry in the brain to physically change and grow new dendrites as a result of new learning and experiences.

### Peaks of brain growth

Drinking alcohol during times of peak growth can damage brain wiring.



**A**lcohol affects a teen brain differently than a mature adult brain. The brain goes through rapid development and “wiring” changes during the ages of 12 through the early 20s. Teen alcohol use can damage this brain wiring, which is essential to become a mature, thoughtful, responsible adult.



### Alcohol can damage three key brain areas:

**1** “The **prefrontal** area (responsible for planning, good judgment, decision-making and impulse control) undergoes the most change during adolescence. Researchers found that adolescent drinking could cause severe changes in this area... which plays an important role in forming adult personality and behavior. Damage from alcohol at this time can be long-term and irreversible.”

**2** “The **hippocampus** (involved in learning and memory) suffers the worst alcohol-related brain damage in teens. Those who had been drinking more and for longer had significantly smaller hippocampi (10 percent). In addition, short-term or moderate drinking impairs learning and memory far more in youths than adults. Frequent drinkers may never be able to catch up in adulthood, since alcohol inhibits systems crucial for storing new information.”

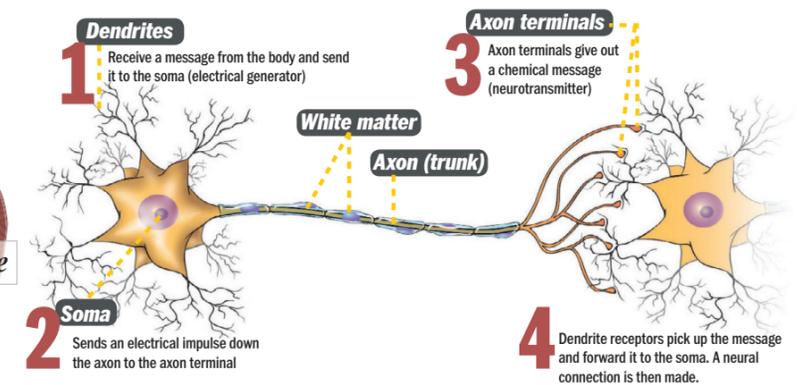
American Medical Association *Fact Sheet*, 2003

**3** **Brain white matter damage**  
The brain is made up of gray matter (neurons) and white matter. Because alcohol suppresses brain activity, it prevents the teen brain from properly developing its essential “white matter” — the fatty-waxy coating which insulates the part of neurons that send electrical signals. Impaired white matter can negatively affect thinking and memory skills. — *Dr. Susan Tapert* (ref: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=122765890>)

The **brain** is the major organ of the central nervous system and the control center for all the body's voluntary and involuntary activities. It is responsible for everything we think, feel, see, say and do.

The **brainstem** controls vital body functions, such as breathing and digestion. The **cerebellum** maintains posture, coordination of body movement and provides long-term storage for memories of how to do things that involve our body — like riding a bike. The **cerebrum**, which consists of the right and left cerebral hemispheres, is the site of most conscious and intelligent activities.

### How neurons communicate



Our brain is more complex than the world's most powerful computer. It is responsible for everything we think, see, hear, feel, smell or do. It even creates and directs all of our emotions. The brain is divided into different areas that direct different parts of our body. Like a complex computer, all the different parts of the brain work at the same time — like parallel processing.

of one neuron to the “branches” of another. If a thought or action is repeated often, the “roots” of one neuron send more chemical, and the receiving neuron makes more “branches” to receive it. The neural connection is strengthened until it begins to look like a bushy tree instead of a spindly tree. It becomes a dominant neural pathway.

It does this through more than 100 billion brain cells called neurons. A neuron looks sort of like a tree, with “branches” called dendrites, a “trunk” called an axon, and “roots” called axon terminals. The tip of each “root” contains tiny sacks of powerful chemicals called neurotransmitters. At the top of the “trunk” is a tiny electrical generator called a soma.

The brain neurons communicate by sending electrical and chemical messages from the “roots”

Forty percent of our neurons are “wired” at birth. They perform automatic functions such as breathing, heart and lung functions, digestion, etc. The other 60 percent are waiting to be stimulated by our learning and experiences to make connections or “wiring.” When we learn new things, new “NEURAL CONNECTIONS” are made in our brain. This is referred to as “wiring” our brain. It is like loading new software into a computer so it can do more things. The more neural connections we make, the smarter and more capable we become. Alcohol suppresses brain development.

“... it has become clear that, during adolescence... the brain is highly plastic and shaped by experience.... Alcohol appears to interfere with the changes in circuitry that occur during learning.”

—*Dr. Aaron White, Duke University*



## Marijuana is Linked to School Failure

- Marijuana's negative effects on attention, memory and learning can last for days and sometimes weeks.
- Students who smoke marijuana tend to get lower grades and are more likely to drop out of high school, compared with their peers who don't use.
- Research shows possible loss of IQ points when repeated use begins in adolescence.

Source: NIDA Marijuana 2018



## Today's Marijuana is More Potent

- In the early 1990s, average THC content in confiscated samples was roughly 3.7 percent for marijuana; in 2018, it was 13.18 percent. University of Mississippi, Potency Monitoring Program, Quarterly Report 135
- Smoking or eating THC-rich hash oil extracted from the marijuana plant may deliver high levels of THC to the user.

- Average marijuana extract contains over 50 percent THC; some samples exceed 80 percent.

Source: NIDA Marijuana 2018 / DEA Preventing Marijuana Use Among Youth and Young Adults 2018

# Marijuana

**is unsafe if you are behind the wheel**

- Marijuana is the most common illegal drug involved in auto fatalities.
- 43.6 percent of fatally injured drivers in 2016 tested positive for drugs and over half of those drivers were positive for two or more drugs.
- Marijuana affects skills required for safe driving:
  - Alertness
  - Concentration
  - Coordination
  - Reaction Time

Source: NIDA Marijuana 2018



## What is THC?

- The primary mind-altering chemical in marijuana responsible for most of the intoxicating effect people seek is delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).
- The chemical is found in resin produced by the leaves and buds primarily of the female cannabis plant. The plant also contains 500 other chemicals, including more than 100 compounds that are chemically related to THC, called cannabinoids
- Organs in the body have fatty tissues that quickly absorb the THC in marijuana. Standard urine tests can detect traces of THC several days after use. In heavy marijuana users, urine tests can sometime detect THC traces for weeks after use stops.

Source: NIDA Marijuana 2018

# Parents Beat Peer Pressure.

Stay involved with your kids through their teen years.

## Scope of the Issue

### **MARIJUANA USE IN THE UNITED STATES**

In 2018, more than 43.5 million Americans aged 12 or older were current users of marijuana.

(2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health)

- Adolescents aged 12-17: 3.1 million
- Young Adults aged 18-25: 13.2 million
- Adults aged 26 or older 36 million

### **MARIJUANA USE AMONG YOUTH**

- In 2018, 6.5 percent of adolescents aged 12 to 17 were current users of marijuana, which means approximately 3.1 million used marijuana in the past month (2018 NSDUH)
- Orange County Youth Substance Abuse Survey indicated 14.2 percent of high school and 2.3 percent of middle school students used marijuana in the past 30-days.

### **CHANGES IN PERCEIVED RISK**

- 71 percent of high school seniors do not view regular marijuana smoking as being very harmful, but 64.7 percent say they disapprove of regular marijuana smoking. *Monitoring the Future Study 2017*
- 39.8 percent of middle and high school students indicated great risk of harm to use marijuana once or twice which is lower than alcohol (55.4%), cigarettes (69.9) and prescription drugs (66.3). *2018 Orange County Youth Substance Abuse Survey*

### **OTHER RISK**

Marijuana use interferes with judgement, which can mean a greater chance of engaging in risky behaviors and experiencing their negative consequences.

## Know | *the Facts*

### **MARIJUANA CAN BE ADDICTIVE**

Research suggests 30 percent of users may develop some form of problem use, which can lead to dependence and addiction. People who begin using marijuana before age 18 are 4 to 7 times more likely than adults to develop problem use. *NIDA Marijuana 2018*

### **Marijuana has Short-and Long-term Effects on the Brain**

When marijuana is smoked, the mind-altering chemical tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) passes from the lungs to the bloodstream.

Blood then carries the chemical to the brain and other organs throughout the body.

Generally, a person feels the effects after 30 to 60 minutes, including changes in mood, impaired body movement, difficulty with thinking and problem solving and impaired memory.

When people begin using marijuana as teenagers, long-term effects can include reduction in thinking, memory and learning functions.

*NIDA Marijuana 2018*

E-Cigarettes are popular among teens and are now **the most commonly used form of tobacco among youth in the United States.**



**E-cigarettes can resemble traditional tobacco cigarettes, cigars or pipes or even everyday items such as pens or USB memory sticks.**

## What are Electronic Cigarettes?

- Electronic cigarettes, also known as e-cigarettes, e-vaporizers, or electronic nicotine delivery systems, are battery operated devices that people use to inhale an aerosol, which typically contains nicotine, flavorings and other chemicals.
- More than 640 different e-cigarette brands are currently on the market.
- Some common nicknames include: e-cigs, e-hookahs, hookah pens, vapes, vape pens, & mods.

## Health Effects for Teens

The teen years are critical for brain development, which continues into young adulthood. Young people who use nicotine products in any form, including e-cigarettes, are uniquely at risk for long-lasting effects. Because nicotine affects the development of the brain's reward system, continued e-cigarette use can not only lead to nicotine addiction, but it also can make other drugs such as cocaine and methamphetamine more pleasurable to a teen's developing brain.

## What is "JUUL"?



- JUUL is a brand of e-cigarette that is shaped like a USB flash drive.
- All JUUL e-cigarettes have a high level of nicotine. According to the manufacturer, a single JUUL pod contains as much nicotine as a pack of 20 regular cigarettes.
- JUUL's nicotine liquid refills are called "pods." JUUL is available in several flavors such as Cool Cucumber, Fruit Medley, Mango, and Mint.

**E-cigarettes produce an aerosol, commonly called vapor, which users inhale from the device and exhale. The aerosol can contain harmful and potentially harmful substances including:**

- Nicotine
- Ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs
- Flavoring such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to a serious lung disease
- Volatile organic compounds
- Cancer-causing chemicals
- Heavy metals such as nickel, tin and lead



## Talk with Your Kids!

Talk with your teens about vaping and make sure they know it is harmful. Nicotine can damage a teenager's developing brain and lead to addiction. The earlier they start, the harder it is to quit.

Sources: Drug Facts, E-Cigarettes, National Institute on Drug Abuse; National Institutes of Health; US Department of Health and Human Services; E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the US Surgeon General, 2016 and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; E-Cigarettes Shaped Like USB Flash Drives: Information for Parents, Educators and Health Care Providers, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

# Prescription Drugs | Opioids | OTC Medication

**Misuse** of prescription drugs is a serious public health problem in the United States. After alcohol and marijuana, prescription drugs are the most commonly abused substances by Americans age 14 and older.

## Commonly Misused Prescription Drugs:

- **Opioids** – used to relieve pain, such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, and codeine. Heroin is an opioid but not a medication.
- **Depressants** – used to relieve anxiety or help a person sleep such as Xanax or Valium.
- **Stimulants** – used for treating attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) such as Adderall and Ritalin.

## Prescription Drug Use and Misuse Side Effects:

- **Opioids** can cause you to feel sleepy, sick to your stomach and constipated. At high doses, opioids can make it hard to breathe properly and can cause overdose and death.
- **Stimulants** can increase a person’s ability to pay attention, as well as increase blood pressure and heart rate, making the heart work harder.
- **Depressants** can cause slurred speech, shallow breathing, and disorientation. At high doses, depressants can cause overdose and death, especially when combined with alcohol.

### Are Opioids Addictive?

Yes. Over time, opioid use can change the brain, leading to addiction. Some people who get addicted to opioid pain relievers switch to heroin because it’s cheaper and easier to get.

**57 percent of 12-17 year olds who misused prescription opioids got them from a friend or relative.**

For more information on prescription drug drop-off locations in Orange County, go to [www.drugfreecoalition.org](http://www.drugfreecoalition.org)

### Over-the-Counter Medications

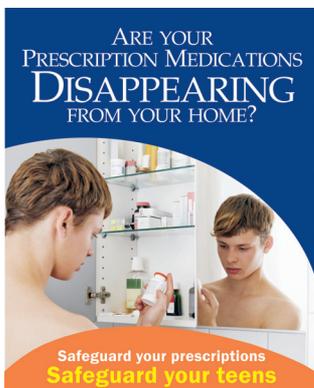
One of the most commonly abused OTC is Dextromethorphan (DXM). Misusing DXM – swallowing large quantities and mixing it with soda for flavor called “robo tripping” or “skittling” which can have detrimental health effects. Health effects from DXM misuse can include: hyperexcitability, poor motor control, stomach pain, vision changes, slurred speech and increased heart rate and blood pressure. Cough and cold medicines are even more dangerous when taken with alcohol or other drugs.

## How Prescription Drugs are Misused?

- Taking a prescription medication in a way other than instructed.
- Taking someone else’s prescription medication.
- Taking a prescription medication to get high.
- Mixing prescription opioids with alcohol or other drugs

**For more information on preventing opioid misuse and heroin use, go to [ocfheroesagainstheroin.org](http://ocfheroesagainstheroin.org)**

Source: National Institute of Drug Abuse; National Institutes of Health; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



### credits

This educational section from the Deseret News’ Newspapers in Education program was designed by Lou Ann Reineke with assistance from Steve Wright and Lisa May, R&R Partners. The project was under the direction of Cindy Richards, Newspapers in Education director, with special thanks to Doug Murakami, Utah Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control; Craig Povey, Utah Division of Substance Abuse & Mental Health; Verne Larsen, Utah State Office of Education/Safe and Drug-Free Schools; Art and Jaynie Brown, Utah Chapter of MADD; and Teri Pectol, Utah Highway Safety Office for their sponsorship of this publication. Special credit to Jill Rhead, LDS Hospital, for the use of her medical illustrations on pages 6 and 7. Stock photos by Shutterstock.com and photodisc.

Funding for the Parent Resource guide was made possible in part by the Orange County Drug Free Communities Support Grant SP014475 from ONDCP and SAMHSA. The views expressed in written conference materials or publications and by speakers and moderators do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Executive Office of the President, the Office of National Drug Control Policy, or the Department of Health and Human Services; nor does mention of trade names, commercial practices or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.



# ***PARENT Involvement It Works!***

Raising Healthy **DRUG FREE** Youth  
[www.drugfreecoalition.org](http://www.drugfreecoalition.org)

