



Teenagers: alcohol and other drugs

- Alcohol and drugs are dangerous and easy for students to buy.
- Every child is at risk: substance abuse does not discriminate.
- **5%** of Middle School students and **14%** of High School students in Montgomery County report ever having used prescription drugs without a doctor's order.



Risk factors for teen alcohol and other drug abuse

- Youth misconceptions:
 - *Parents approve of their alcohol or drug use.
 - *Substances are not dangerous.
 - *"Everyone else is using."
- Unlocked alcohol and medicines make them easy for students to access.
- Basic trust between adults and children involves monitoring to keep students safe.
- Teenagers take risks and make mistakes because their brains do not develop fully until they are 25 years of age.
- The earlier substance use begins, the greater the chance that addiction will develop.
- Times of transition (e.g., moving, changing schools, changing grade levels).



Join the Many Voices for Smart Choices Prevention Alliance. Contact: MVSC@collaborationcouncil.org.

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What can I do to keep my child healthy?

Resources:

- Continue to learn: www.drugabuse.gov
- Talk and listen; have conversations, not confrontations. www.drugfree.org; Parent Help Line 855-DRUGFREE. Start early, seize teachable moments, and stay engaged in your child's life.
- Engage in positive youth activities and family time together: www.infomontgomery.org or www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec.
- Seek professional help at the first sign that your child is exhibiting symptoms of an underlying mental health issue or substance use (e.g., drop in attendance/performance at school, change in appetite, irritability, angry outbursts). If there are signs of substance use, early intervention is critical. Call **Pathway to Services, 301-354-4905**.
- Lock up your alcohol and prescription medications: www.drugfree.org
- Start productive *conversations with medical providers*. Visit Pathways to Safer Opioid Use: health.gov/hcq/trainings/pathways/.
- Dispose of old or unwanted medicines to avoid harm to others: www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/default.htm.

For the complete **Fast Facts for Parents**, visit www.manyvoicessmartchoices.org