



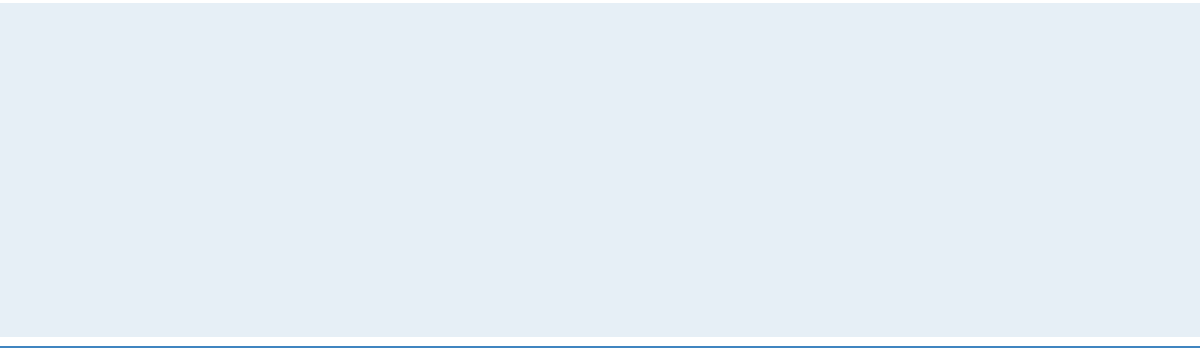
**7 WAYS**

**TO PROTECT  
YOUR TEEN**

**FROM**

**ALCOHOL AND  
OTHER DRUGS**

**A Parent's Guide**



# WHAT EVERY PARENT NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT TEENS, ALCOHOL, AND OTHER DRUGS

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- 4 7 ways to protect your teen from alcohol and other drugs
  - 14 Good kids, bad choices
  - 16 Safeguard your teen
  - 18 Suburban teens are at risk, just like city teens
  - 20 Alcohol's damaging effects on your teen's brain
  - 22 Your teen's biggest protection: you!
  - 24 Misuse of marijuana: some surprising findings
  - 25 How to talk to your teen
  - 27 Preventing prescription drug misuse
-

# 7 WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR TEEN FROM ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

1

## BE A ROLE MODEL



### FACT

Teens watch their parents. Your example helps to guide their choices.



### ACT

#### How to be a role model:

- ▶ If you drink, do so in moderation.
  - ▶ Never drive after drinking or using marijuana.
  - ▶ Do not use illegal drugs.
  - ▶ Do not ask your child to bring you alcohol.
- ▶ Be very careful with products that could be misused. Examples include solvents, gases, fuels, and anything in an aerosol can. Use them in a ventilated area according to directions. See *A Parent's Guide: Preventing Inhalant Abuse Among Children and Teens* at [massclearinghouse.ehs.state.ma.us/PROG-BSAS-YTH/SAI034.html](http://massclearinghouse.ehs.state.ma.us/PROG-BSAS-YTH/SAI034.html) for more information.

If you think you may have an alcohol or drug problem, find out how to get help. Alcohol and other drug treatment services are usually covered by insurance. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Addiction Services also funds services for individuals who are uninsured or cannot afford care.

To get help for people of all ages, call the Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline toll-free: **1-800-327-5050** | TTY: Use **MassRelay at 711** or **1-800-720-3480**. Or visit **HelplineMA.org**.

“ My parents drank and used drugs in front of us. . . . I love my mom and dad, but I don’t want my kids to have the same childhood memories that I have. . . .”

– Father of teens

2

## BE CLEAR ABOUT YOUR EXPECTATIONS



### FACT

The most common reason young people give for not using alcohol and drugs is not wanting to harm their relationship with adults in their lives.

As a parent, you have a huge influence over what your teen does. Sometimes parents have a hard time figuring out exactly what to say. Set a clear “no use” policy for your family.



### ACT

You can say “You mean so much to me that I am planning both a reward for living up to the ‘no use’ policy and consequences if you choose not to.” Here are some reasons you can discuss for “no use” policy:

- ▶ You’re still growing and your brain is still developing. Alcohol and other substances can interfere with your development.
- ▶ If you start using marijuana when you are young, you are much more likely to become addicted. I don’t want anything to get in the way of your dreams.

It is still against the law for youth under the age of 21 to use marijuana for non-medical reasons. Visit [www.mass.gov/service-details/prevention-tips-for-your-high-school-aged-adolescent](http://www.mass.gov/service-details/prevention-tips-for-your-high-school-aged-adolescent). This should not be taken as legal advice.

Inhalants are extremely dangerous and can cause permanent brain damage or death, even the first time they are used.



## ACT

When your kids get older, be more explicit about the dangers of alcohol and other drugs. You can tell them these facts:

- ▶ **Drinking affects your decisionmaking.** You are more likely to make a bad decision and end up in the wrong place at the wrong time. Being in the wrong place at the wrong time is not necessarily a matter of luck.
- ▶ **Teens who drink are more likely to drive drunk, or get in a car where the driver is drunk.**
- ▶ **Teens who drink are more likely to try other drugs.**
- ▶ **Misusing prescription drugs can lead to addiction, and to heroin use.** Heroin is highly addictive any way it is used.



“ Keep talking about the dangers. Look for stories in the newspaper. If there is an alcohol-related car crash, put it in front of your child and say, ‘I hope this never happens to you.’ Look for stories on TV, or things that happen to their friends. If your kids are not complaining, ‘Oh, not this talk again!’ then you’re not doing it enough.”

– Dr. John Knight, Director, Center for Adolescent Substance Abuse Research at Boston Children’s Hospital



## FACT

Teens whose parents set clear rules and follow through with consequences are less likely to use alcohol and other drugs.

# SET LIMITS AND FOLLOW THROUGH



## ACT

### Establish rules.

- ▶ Think about why you don't want your kids using alcohol or other drugs and clearly explain your reasons to them.
- ▶ You might need separate rules for alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. For example, your family rule for alcohol might be that only a sip of wine at a religious service is allowed. Make sure to discuss your rules with your kids and ask if they have any questions.
- ▶ Give them a chance to talk about the rules, and then enforce them.
- ▶ Allow your teen to build trust. Reward good behavior. Praise him or her often for staying away from substances.
- ▶ Tighten the reins when rules are broken.
- ▶ Follow through with consequences. Uphold limits set in school or in the community. If your child is suspended for violating a rule, help him or her learn from the experience.

“ I think a lot. . . of why I was so wild (as a teen) was that I was starved for discipline. I wanted some order in my life — some security. Those were lonely times. I don't want [my son] to ever think I don't care about him or how he acts. That's why I sit down with him and tell him why I have these rules, why I don't want him to do certain things. He knows that if he makes a bad choice he needs to be prepared for the consequences.”

– Father of a teen boy

“ When my son and his friends were caught drinking right before April vacation, I cancelled his (plans). . . . He got the message.”

– Mother of a high school senior



## FACT

Teens who are exposed to alcohol use in movies and TV are more likely to drink.



## ACT

### Monitor what your teen watches.

- ▶ Talk to your teen about consequences that may or may not be shown in films or television programs. For example, after characters drink heavily in one scene, wouldn't they really feel worse in the next?

### Social Media Guidelines:

- ▶ Consider making a rule that they can't download an app or sign up for an online account without asking you first. Find out how to limit social media time at this site from the American Academy of Pediatrics: [www.HealthyChildren.org/MediaUsePlan](http://www.HealthyChildren.org/MediaUsePlan)







## FACT

Teens are much less likely to use drugs when parents are involved in their lives.

4

## BE INVOLVED IN YOUR KID'S LIFE



## ACT

### Ways to stay involved:

- ▶ Listen — even when your teen is talking about things that may not seem interesting to you. Don't judge.
- ▶ Be warm and responsive: Start conversations with an observation like "You seem happy." or "You seem stressed."
- ▶ Get to know your teen's friends and their parents.
- ▶ When your teen wants to go to someone's house, check to see if an adult will be home. Tell the parent or guardian the rules you have for your teen, and see if they are comfortable with them.
- ▶ Encourage your child to call you if he or she ever feels uneasy or unsafe. Is there a code word he or she can use to let you know your child wants to leave a risky situation?



It's amazing what you can learn about what's going on in their lives by listening to them talk to their friends in the car."

– Father of high school students

# 5

## HELP YOUR TEEN BECOME WELL-ROUNDED



### FACT

Teens who participate in community service and extracurricular activities are less likely to be involved with drugs and alcohol.



### ACT

Encourage your child to spend several hours a week on a combination of...

- ▶ Community Service
- ▶ Sports
- ▶ Art, music, drama and/or
- ▶ Clubs, etc.



It's important for kids to see beyond themselves, to get a sense that they are responsible for helping other people. Whether they're baking pies for homeless persons or doing holiday shopping for kids whose mothers have AIDS, it's about teaching them to be responsible and compassionate people."

– Parent of teens in a youth group

For help finding opportunities for your teen, talk to your child's school or call toll-free: **2-1-1** or **1-877-211-6277** |

**TTY: 1-508-370-4890.** Or visit **[www.mass211help.org](http://www.mass211help.org)**.



## FACT

Teens who perform well in school are less likely to become involved with alcohol and drugs.

6

## ENCOURAGE YOUR TEEN TO TRY HARD IN SCHOOL



## ACT

Help your child to see how school can help them to reach their goals. Check in on homework. If needed, talk to teachers, guidance counselors, or social workers to find tutoring or other help for your teen.



We limit all screen time — Internet, TV, video games.”

– Mother of teens



My son has a learning disability, so good grades are hard to get, even when he tries. I encourage every improvement, like, ‘You went from a C+ to a B- in English. Great!’.”

– Mother of high school student



Parents who stay connected to their teens’ lives can help them to find ways to do something well, even if they are not A students.”

– Alcohol and other drug misuse prevention specialist

You can help children to set goals for the future. If college seems out of reach for financial reasons, you can learn about the many scholarship monies available at [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com). Sharing information with your teen about resources available to help with tuition may help to motivate them to try hard in school.

**FACT**

**It takes a village.  
Teens who have support from a variety of adults are less likely to use alcohol and other drugs.**

Sometimes the job of parenting a teen can be overwhelming. Supportive, caring adults in the community can make a big difference in your teen's development.

**ACT**

**Seek and give ongoing support.**

- ▶ Spend time with close family members or friends.
- ▶ Join activities in your community.
- ▶ Talk to parents in similar situations.
- ▶ Share your rules for your teen with parents of their friends and your relatives.

““ When our family had serious problems, the principal suggested a social worker. I didn't even realize the school had social workers. I never thought we'd need one. They have helped enormously.”

– Mother in a family in crisis

## PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP GUIDE YOUR CHILD OR HELP YOU FIND COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

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Pediatrician or  
health care provider



Guidance counselor



Social worker



Teacher



Religious leader



Call 2-1-1 to be directed  
to local programs

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If you have questions or need referrals to alcohol and other drug services, call the Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline toll-free: **1-800-327-5050** | TTY: Use MassRelay at 711 or 1-800-720-3480. Or visit **HelplineMA.org**.

# GOOD KIDS, BAD CHOICES



## FACT

**Good kids can make bad decisions — their brains are still developing.**

Our brains do not finish developing until we're in our mid-twenties, at the earliest. Drinking alcohol during adolescence can damage the parts of the brain responsible for decision-making, self-control, memory, and learning.



## ACT

**Provide guidelines. Remember that critical areas of the brain are still forming.**



The areas of the teen brain that are still developing are those that control impulses, planning, and anticipating consequences. So there is a reason teenagers often act impulsively and can fail to think through their decisions.”

– Dr. John Knight, Director, Center for Adolescent Substance Abuse Research at Boston Children’s Hospital



Once parents see what alcohol does to a teen brain, I think they will understand the dangers.”

– Dr. John Knight, Director, Center for Adolescent Substance Abuse Research at Boston Children’s Hospital

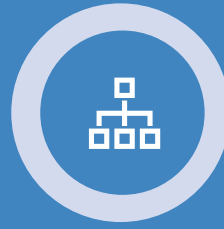
# DEVELOPING FUNCTIONS IN THE TEEN BRAIN



Planning



Judgment



Organization



Impulse control



Thinking through consequences



Understanding other people's feelings



## FACT

Parents have a huge influence on their child's decisions, but you may not know the decisions youth are facing.

### TO LEARN MORE:

- ▶ Visit the Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse to order free publications that can help you learn more about teen alcohol and other drug use: [mass.gov/MAClearinghouse](http://mass.gov/MAClearinghouse) or call toll-free: 1-800-952-6637 | TTY: Use MassRelay at 711 or 1-800-720-3480.

# SAFEGUARD YOUR TEENS



## FACT

**The younger kids are when they start drinking, the more likely they are to become addicted.**

Youth who start drinking before age 21 are more likely to become addicted to alcohol. Alcohol can have long-term effects on their brain development. While most youth are not drinking or using other drugs, some are.



## ACT

Tell your child that drinking at a young age can make a person more likely to be dependent on alcohol later.

“Some kids are binge drinking in 7th grade; smoking (marijuana) in 7th grade.”

– Substance misuse counselor



“ Many of the drugs adolescents experiment with are the most dangerous ones. Inhalants, for example, are among the most dangerous substances. When kids use inhalants, they can just drop to the ground or fall down stairs and break their necks or suffer skull fractures. Inhalants are found in common household products, like cleaners and spray cans, which are in most homes.”

– Dr. John Knight, Director, Center for Adolescent Substance Abuse Research at Boston Children’s Hospital



## FACT

Trying drugs can have devastating effects.



## ACT

- ▶ Teach kids to read labels on household products, woodshop supplies, and school supplies, and treat inhalants as poisons.
- ▶ Tell kids that certain products can cause permanent brain damage or death when used the wrong way, even the first time.
- ▶ Supervise the use of household, woodshop, and art products.

### TO LEARN MORE:

- ▶ For more information about inhalants, see A Parent’s Guide: Preventing Inhalant Abuse Among Children and Teens at [massclearinghouse.ehs.state.ma.us/PROG-BSAS-YTH/SA1034.html](http://massclearinghouse.ehs.state.ma.us/PROG-BSAS-YTH/SA1034.html), or call toll-free and mention your teen’s age: 1-800-952-6637 | TTY: Use MassRelay at 711 or 1-800-720-3480.

# SUBURBAN TEENS ARE AT RISK, JUST LIKE CITY TEENS



## FACT

Drugs are a problem for both urban and suburban youth.



## ACT

If your child takes Ritalin, Adderall, or another drug that could be misused, monitor its use. While it is helpful for your child, it could be harmful to another child. It is best if you always give him or her any medications rather than let your child take medicine to school. If your child has to have meds during school, speak to your child's school nurse.



“

A lot of kids in the city see the devastating effects of drugs and decide, ‘That’s not going to happen to me.’ In the suburbs, kids have access to the three ingredients needed for drug use — money, cell phones, and transportation. The first thing we do in treatment is remove access to those three things so that the teenager doesn’t have the money to buy, the phone to arrange a purchase, or a car to go get it.”

– Dr. John Knight, Director, Center for Adolescent Substance Abuse Research at Children’s Hospital Boston



## FACT

You can tell your teen that staying away from alcohol and other drugs will help them keep their freedom to do things that they enjoy.



## ACT

Teach your teen that such things as cell phones and cars are privileges that come with responsibilities. Set rules for their use and ask your teen to check in regularly.

# ALCOHOL'S DAMAGING EFFECTS ON YOUR TEEN'S BRAIN



## FACT

Alcohol can damage the developing teenage brain.

Teens who drink alcohol may not understand how dangerous it can be. Dr. Susan Tapert and colleagues at the University of California, San Diego used MRIs to compare the brains of 15- and 16-year-olds who drank heavily with those of teens who had no history of alcohol abuse.

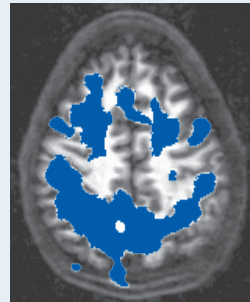


## ACT

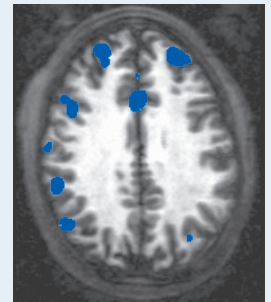
Show your teen this picture.

Explain that the colored areas represent brain activity and that the MRIs were taken when the teens were sober.

Brain Activity Comparison



15-year-old non-drinker brain



15-year-old with a history of heavy drinking

“ The biggest difference we found between the alcohol-dependent and the non-abusing teens had to do with memory functions. Mostly, the alcohol-dependent youth did a poorer job recalling new information.... If students are drinking so heavily that it's affecting their brain functioning, they may not be able to get as much out of educational opportunities. This could significantly disrupt their future choices, chances of going to college, and ability to get a good job.”

– Dr. Susan Tapert, University of California, San Diego

“ Many parents don’t realize the power they have to influence their children.”

– Dean of a large high school

“ I have a file in my office full of newspaper clippings about kids who die — from car accidents, drownings, or just falling down the stairs — after drinking in homes where parents supplied alcohol or ‘looked the other way’ while they drank. It’s often after graduation or prom. . . . Parents need to help teens find ways to celebrate that don’t include drinking.”

– Dr. John Knight, Director, Center for Adolescent Substance Abuse Research at Children’s Hospital Boston



## FACT

Serving alcohol to teenagers is dangerous.



## ACT

Don’t serve alcohol to minors under 21. Remind your teen often that they are not allowed to use alcohol.

### TO LEARN MORE:

- ▶ **“Choose to Keep Your Freedom”** and **“Preventing Underage Drinking ... Priceless** are brochures for youth and parents about the legal implications of serving alcohol to minors, developed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and collaborators. Both of them are available through the Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse at toll-free: **1-800-952-6637** | **TTY: Use MassRelay at 711 or 1-800-720-3480**. Or visit [mass.gov/MAClearinghouse](http://mass.gov/MAClearinghouse) to download or order them.

# YOUR TEEN'S BIGGEST PROTECTION: YOU!



## FACT

Kids whose parents are supportive and set clear limits are less likely to use alcohol and other drugs.

Setting limits helps keep kids safer.



## ACT

### Get to know your teen's friends and their families.

Encourage them to spend time with kids and families who have similar values and rules.

How to set limits:

- ▶ Share your values. Talk about what is important to you and what is important to your child.

- ▶ Clearly state the rules. Explain why you are setting them. Lay out what will happen if your teen breaks them and follow through.
- ▶ Keep discussing why alcohol and drugs are not allowed.
- ▶ Regularly catch your teen “being good” and reward him or her.

“ Teenagers don't want limits but they need them. They don't thrive without limits. It's the job of being a parent. . . . The payoff comes much farther down the road.”

– Dr. John Knight, Director, Center for Adolescent Substance Abuse Research at Children's Hospital Boston

"I didn't know. . ."

"You do now."

"It was my first time. . ."

"Bad things can happen the first time."

## COMMON TEEN DEFENSES ...AND WHAT YOU CAN SAY

"Don't you trust me?"

"My trust meter is low right now. Here's what you can do to raise it."

"That's not fair. You're the only parent who won't let me. . ."

"I am sorry you feel that way, but that is the rule in this house."



### FACT

Frequent criticism can lower a teen's self-esteem and may increase the chance of alcohol and drug use. Constructive criticism should be balanced with support for positive decisions.



### ACT

When you have a conflict, try to work together to find a solution and don't let anger and bad feelings get in the way.

“ There are some things where there is no discussion. There are houses that Anna can't go to because they are totally unsupervised.”

- Mother of a high school student

“ Once e starts driving, always remember you have the ultimate power: the car keys.”

- Father of a high school student

# MISUSE OF MARIJUANA: SOME SURPRISING FINDINGS



## FACT

Marijuana use is related to the following issues:

- ▶ Some studies have shown marijuana to be addictive, especially among those who start using it early or use it regularly.
- ▶ Marijuana affects the ability to drive safely, so teens shouldn't drive or ride with someone who has been using marijuana.
- ▶ Youth who use marijuana regularly are more likely to report symptoms of chronic bronchitis than are nonsmokers.
- ▶ It is still against the law to use marijuana for nonmedical reasons when you are under 21 years of age.



## ACT

You are your child's strongest role model. Doctors and the American Heart Association have published articles saying that children, as well as pregnant women, should be protected from secondhand marijuana smoke. More research was recommended to find out more about how the smoke affects babies and children. Marijuana should be kept in a locked box or cabinet.



# HOW TO TALK TO YOUR TEEN



## FACT

No matter what you did in your past, you can help protect your teen in the present by talking to them about the risks of alcohol and other drugs.

Teens who report that their parents show concern for them and are monitoring their behaviors are less likely to engage in substance abuse. These teens are less likely to use substances if they have learned a lot about the risks of drug use from their parents or from schools.

When most of today's parents were kids, we knew only some of the risks associated with drinking. Now we know much more. You can use examples in the community to explain that any driving after drinking is dangerous.

“ At every party you go to in high school when girls [and guys] drink, there's less respect.”

– Recent graduate of a suburban public high school

“ I worry that if I ask my kids not to drink, they will call me a hypocrite. The truth is, when I was young, I didn't think much about the risks of alcohol and drugs. And there were lots of risks. Now I know the risks are even greater.”

– Parent of teens



## ACT

If your teen asks about your past, ask, “Why do you want to know?” If your teen insists, you can ask, “If I did, would you want to know?” Think about how your child would react. If you decide to tell them, avoid details and stress how you have changed. Ask them to think about how drugs affect family and friends. You can say:

“When I was younger, we didn’t know what we do now about how harmful alcohol can be. Today we are talking about you, because I am worried about you and your safety.”

Advice adapted from: LifeSkills Training Parent Guide: A Guide for Raising Drug-free Youth, by Dr. Gilbert Botvin. National Health Promotion Associates, Inc.

## TEENS WHO DRINK ARE AT RISK FOR:

- + Poor grades in school
- + Fighting
- + Riding with a drunk driver
- + Carrying a weapon
- + Attempting suicide
- + Engaging in risky sexual behavior
- + Using other illegal drugs

- 
- ▶ Teens today face risks like AIDS and exposure to a wide range of prescription drugs that may not have been present when you were their age. When combined with alcohol, these drugs can be deadly.
  - ▶ Teens who drink and cause harm are still held responsible. Drinking is not an excuse and does not change the consequences of a bad decision.

# PREVENTING PRESCRIPTION DRUG MISUSE



## FACT

There is a lot you can do to prevent your teen from engaging in this dangerous behavior.

Many teens do not realize how dangerous prescription drugs can be when they are misused. The misuse of painkillers can lead to heroin addiction. Prescription drugs such as anxiety medications or sleeping aids can be highly addictive and especially damaging when combined with alcohol. As a parent, you can help protect your teen by closely monitoring the prescription drugs in your home and by being aware of the signs and symptoms of misuse.

“ Youth may get dangerous information on the internet. It’s important to keep tabs on the sites that your teen is visiting.”

– Alcohol and other drug abuse prevention specialist

“ We hear stories such as, ‘I went to the local party and did an OC (OxyContin) and then I went the next weekend and did an OC. And then before I knew it, I was doing two. An 80 mg is \$80 and I can’t afford that. So I switched to heroin.’”

– Criminal Case Manager for a juvenile drug court, North Shore



## **FACT**

Most of the prescription drugs misused by teens come from medicine cabinets.



## **ACT**

Protect your teen from prescription drug misuse:

- ▶ Secure your medicines; lock them up or keep them away from your kids.
- ▶ Keep your computer in an open area and monitor your teen's internet use.
- ▶ Talk to your teen about the dangers of prescription drug misuse.
- ▶ Monitor your teen's prescriptions for painkillers, ADHD medication, or other controlled substances. If they must take them during school hours it is safest to administer them at home.
- ▶ If medications must be taken during school hours, give them to the nurse.
- ▶ Properly dispose of unused prescription drugs.



## TO DISPOSE OF UNUSED PRESCRIPTION DRUGS:

The best way to dispose of unneeded medication is to bring them to a temporary or permanent DEA-registered disposal site right away. Check [www.mass.gov/service-details/prescription-dropbox-locations](http://www.mass.gov/service-details/prescription-dropbox-locations) to see if there is a permanent waste medication collection site near your town or city. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) periodically hosts National Prescription Drug Take-Back events where temporary collection sites are set up in communities nationwide for safe disposal of prescriptions. It should be noted, however, that a small number of medicines have specific directions to immediately flush them down the toilet when they are no longer needed and a take-back option is not readily available.



# LIST OF MEDICINES RECOMMENDED FOR DISPOSAL BY FLUSHING WHEN TAKE-BACK OPTIONS ARE NOT READILY AVAILABLE

This list from FDA tells you which medicines you should flush when they are no longer needed and take-back options are not readily available. There are some medicines that, when not disposed of properly, can pose significant risks. For example, patients using fentanyl patches should immediately flush their used or unneeded patches down the toilet. When powerful medicines such as these patches are disposed down the toilet, you help to keep others safe by ensuring these medicines are not misused or accidentally ingested or touched. For those using the online version of this booklet, links in the Brand Name list below direct you to medicine information for consumers that includes specific disposal instructions.\*

ACTIVE INGREDIENT	FOUND IN BRAND NAMES
<b>Benzhydrocodone/ Acetaminophen</b>	Apadaz
<b>Buprenorphine</b>	Belbuca, Bunavail, Butrans, Suboxone, Subutex, Zubsolv
<b>Fentanyl</b>	Abstral, Actiq, Duragesic, Fentora, Onsolis
<b>Diazepam</b>	Diastat/Diastat AcuDial rectal gel
<b>Hydrocodone</b>	Hysingla ER, Norco, Repraxin, Vicodin, Vicoprofen, Zohydro ER
<b>Hydromorphone</b>	Exalgo
<b>Meperidine</b>	Demerol
<b>Methadone</b>	Dolophine, Methadose
<b>Methylphenidate</b>	Daytrana transdermal system
<b>Morphine</b>	Arymo ER, Avinza, Embeda, Kadian, Morphabond ER, MS Contin, Oramorph SR
<b>Oxycodone</b>	Codoxy, Combunox, Oxadydo (formerly Oxecta), Oxyacet, OxyContin, Percocet, Percodan, Roxicet, Roxicodone, Roxilox, Roxybond, Targiniq ER, Troxyca ER, Tylox, Xartemis XR, Xtampza ER
<b>Oxymorphone</b>	Opana, Opana ER
<b>Tapentadol</b>	Nucynta, Nucynta ER
<b>Sodium Oxybate</b>	Xyrem, Xywav

\* For examples of current drugs to flush, check for updates from the Federal Drug Administration (FDA).

FDA believes that the known risk of harm, including death, to humans from accidental exposure to the medicines listed above, especially potent opioid medicines, far outweighs any potential risk to humans or the environment from flushing these medicines. Remember to only flush medicines on the flush list if a take-back option is not readily available. FDA will continue to conduct risk assessments as a part of our larger activities related to the safe use of medicines.

For disposal information specific to another medication you are taking, please visit [Drugs@FDA.gov](mailto:Drugs@FDA.gov).





## DISPOSAL IN THE HOUSEHOLD TRASH\*

If no take-back programs or DEA-registered collectors are available in your area, and there are no specific disposal instructions in the product package insert, such as flushing described above, you can also follow these simple steps to dispose of most medicines in the household trash:

- ▶ Mix medicines (do not crush tablets or capsules) with an unpalatable substance such as dirt, cat litter, or used coffee grounds;
  - ▶ Place the mixture in a container such as a sealed plastic bag;
  - ▶ Throw the container in your household trash; and
  - ▶ Delete all personal information on the prescription label of empty pill bottles or packaging, then trash or recycle the empty bottles or packaging.
  - ▶ For additional information, please see [www.fda.gov/drugs/safe-disposal-medicines/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know#Medicines\\_recommended\\_by\\_the\\_FDA](http://www.fda.gov/drugs/safe-disposal-medicines/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know#Medicines_recommended_by_the_FDA), contact [druginfo@fda.HHS.gov](mailto:druginfo@fda.HHS.gov), or call 1-885-543-3784, 1-301-796-3400, or in an emergency 1-866-300-4374.
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## FACT

Resources are available if you are concerned about prescription drug misuse or the possibility of a future overdose.

## EXAMPLES OF SIGNS OF OVERDOSE:

- ▶ Shallow or slow breathing, clammy skin, seizures, convulsions, coma, blue lips or fingernails, slow pulse or heart rate, pinpoint pupils

If you see any of these or any other signs of overdose, call 9-1-1.



## ACT

Prevent prescription drug misuse by seeking help if you see any of these signs.

- ▶ Drugs disappearing
- ▶ Abrupt changes in teen's finances
- ▶ Dramatic mood changes
- ▶ Lower grades, changes in friends, or changes in sleep or appetite
- ▶ Loss of concern about appearance, being dirty, poorly dressed
- ▶ Physical signs such as fatigue, confusion, weight loss, constipation, restlessness, memory loss, slurred speech, dizziness, and sleeplessness

## TO LEARN MORE:

Nasal naloxone (Narcan), which can reverse an opioid overdose, is available free of charge statewide. To find a naloxone (Narcan) site call toll-free: **1-800-327-5050** | **TTY: Use MassRelay at 711** or **1-800-720-3480**. Or visit **<https://www.mass.gov/stop-an-overdose-with-naloxone>**. Some pharmacies also make naloxone available behind the counter.

Learn to Cope, a statewide support group for parents whose children are addicted to opioids or who have other substance misuse problems, provides training on naloxone administration at every meeting. Visit: **[www.learn2cope.org](http://www.learn2cope.org)**.

The resources on page 35 offer helplines and online resources for treatment and other services.

## FOR ADDITIONAL FREE INFORMATION ON PREVENTION:

- ▶ “Choose to Keep Your Freedom” (for youth)
- ▶ “Preventing Substance Use Starts at Home: Safeguarding Your Children”

To download or order these resources or this booklet, contact the Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse at toll-free: **1-800-952-6637** | TTY: Use MassRelay at 711 or **1-800-720-3480**. Or visit [mass.gov/MAClearinghouse](http://mass.gov/MAClearinghouse).

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## FOR HELP IF YOUR CHILD HAS A PROBLEM:

- ▶ **Health Insurance.** Finding out if there is a substance misuse issue, and getting help with it, are usually covered by health insurance. Contacting your health plan is a great place to start. The Bureau of Substance Addiction Services also covers certain types of programs that are not otherwise covered. Don't let the cost of treatment stop you from calling for help.
- ▶ **Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline.** Information and referrals to treatment programs for all ages. Seven days a week. Translators available. Call toll-free: 1-800-327-5050 | TTY: Use MassRelay at 711 or 1-800-720-3480. Or visit [HelplineMA.org](http://HelplineMA.org).
- ▶ **Allies in Recovery.** Through CRAFT (Community Reinforcement and Family Training), you'll learn how to communicate with and guide loved ones who struggle with addiction toward recovery, lessening the power addiction has over your family. Visit [www.alliesinrecovery.net](http://www.alliesinrecovery.net).
- ▶ **Handhold.** A family-friendly website for parents of school-aged children in Massachusetts to guide you through your child's mental health journey. Visit [www.handholdma.org](http://www.handholdma.org). For behavioral health emergencies call 1-877-382-1609.



# PARENT CHECKLIST

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## Does your teen...

- Have strong family support?
- Understand the limits you have set?
- Receive praise for staying free of alcohol and other drugs?
- Have high expectations for his or her future?
- Have a safe environment at home and school?
- Participate in a supportive, caring community?
- Work hard at school and enjoy activities such as sports, art, music, theater, or clubs?
- Learn about values through regular volunteer work or being in a community group?
- Hang out with friends who act responsibly?
- Feel he or she can come to you with a serious problem, as well as an exciting development?

**SEE INSIDE FOR TIPS ON HOW TO REACH THESE GOALS.  
CONGRATULATE YOURSELF FOR WHAT YOU'RE ALREADY  
DOING WELL!**

*Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Addiction Services*

*Special thanks to Dr. John Knight, Director, Center for Adolescent Substance Abuse Research  
at Boston Children's Hospital*

