

# what's trending?

ALCOHOL & DRUGS IN GREAT FALLS & CASCADE COUNTY

July 2025, Issue 7

## It Takes a Village: Supporting Teens Affected by a Loved One's Substance Use

When teens are impacted by substance use in their families, they need more than just care—they need all of us working together. Whether you're a teacher, a faith leader, a healthcare worker, a neighbor or someone who just wants to help, you play a part. It takes a team—caregivers, community members, school staff, tribal leaders and others—to really support these teens in a meaningful way. That's why we've pulled together this library of resources. It's here to give you practical tools, useful knowledge and real strategies to help you make a difference. If you're wondering how teens are affected, how they cope or how to support a teen who has a loved one struggling with substance use, the resources below are a great place to start.

How Teens  
May Be  
Impacted

How Teens  
May Cope

How To  
Support a  
Teen

## Just When You Thought the Candy Aisle Was Safe: Haribo Recalls Gummies Over Cannabis Contamination



Haribo has recalled a batch of its cola-flavored gummies in the Netherlands after cannabis was found in the product, causing some people, including children, to feel unwell and prompting an investigation.

Since Haribo specializes in traditional gelatin-based candies like gummy bears and cola bottles—not cannabis gummies—this recall comes as a surprise.

The presence of cannabis suggests either intentional tampering, a major contamination error or possibly counterfeit products. However, **authorities have confirmed that the affected batch is genuine Haribo.** It remains unclear how the cannabis ended up in the candy. This incident certainly raises eyebrows, especially given that Haribo is not involved in the cannabis edibles market. [READ MORE](#).

## Bayou Bans Kratom: Louisiana Legislature Closes

# the Door on Controversial Herb



On June 13, 2025, the Louisiana Legislature took a decisive and responsible step by passing Senate Bill 154, effectively banning the possession, distribution and production of Kratom statewide. Set to take effect on August 1, 2025, the law classifies Kratom's active components as Schedule I substances under the Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substances Law, reflecting the serious health risks tied to its use, including potential for abuse and liver toxicity.

This ban comes on the heels of important discussions and education about Kratom during the 2025 Montana Legislature, underscoring the necessity of such measures. Let's hope lawmakers everywhere are paying close attention and prioritize public safety as Louisiana has done. [READ MORE.](#)

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## Bad News for Big Marijuana



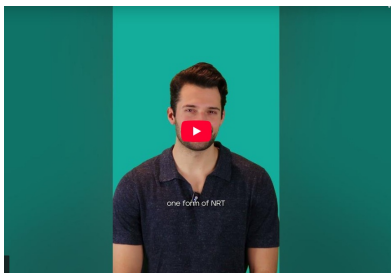
The biggest pot ETF (Exchange-Traded Fund) is getting absolutely hammered—down from a crazy high of \$55 back in early 2021 to less than \$2.50 now. The industry was riding high on the hope that federal legalization was just around the corner when Biden took office, but that never really panned out.

On top of that, more and more data about health risks is coming out, which is making officials pretty uneasy. The FDA's clearly not in a rush to give the green light and talk of rescheduling marijuana is basically going up in smoke. Communities are pushing back hard, too, which isn't helping the industry's case.

So while investors are facing a harsh wake-up call, it feels like the rest of us are getting a chance to see the situation with a bit more clarity—no more hype, just the reality of where things stand.

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## The JUUL Generation Can Quit—Here's How



Vape or e-cigarette use remains widespread among 18- to 24-year-olds, many of whom also smoke cigarettes, making them “dual users.” Despite a strong desire to quit, most young adults attempt to do so without support or FDA-approved methods, relying instead on unassisted quitting, which is often ineffective and emotionally and physically challenging. This resource from Truth Initiative highlights how nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) can offer much-needed support, increasing the chances of successful quitting and easing the discomfort that often comes with trying to stop nicotine use

alone. [READ MORE.](#)

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## Tips For Talking to Preschoolers

Young kids ask lots of questions—your honest answers help build trust.

- Don't worry that talking about drugs will make them curious to try.
- Early conversations help kids make healthier choices later.
- Kids copy adults, so share your views on substance use often.
- Teach them to only take medicine from a trusted adult.
- Keep answers short and clear—they have short attention spans.
- Help them make good choices by letting them make small decisions.
- Link healthy habits to people they admire, like athletes or characters.



## HOW DO I TALK TO MY CHILD ABOUT DRUGS? – CONVERSATION STARTERS





Some parents find it difficult to talk with their children about alcohol and other drugs. But it is important to teach them about these substances and about your expectations if they are offered drugs.

These conversations are not a one-time event. Start talking with your children when they are young; continue as they grow older and their level of interest and understanding changes. Your willingness to talk (and listen) tells them you care about what they are interested in, and it provides you with insight into their world.

DO	DON'T
Explain the dangers using language they understand.	React in anger—even if your child makes statements that shock you.
Explain why you do not want them to use the substance(s). For example, explain that substances can mess up their concentration, memory, and motor skills and can lead to poor grades.	Expect all conversations with your children to be perfect. They won't be.
Be there when your child wants to talk, no matter the time of day or night or other demands on your time.	Assume your children know how to handle temptation. Instead, educate them about risks and alternatives so they can make healthy decisions. Encourage them to practice saying no ahead of time so they're prepared.
Believe in your own power to help your child grow up without using drugs, including alcohol.	Talk without listening.
Praise your children when they deserve it. This builds their self-esteem and makes them feel good without using drugs, including alcohol.	Make stuff up. If your child asks a question you can't answer, promise to find the answer so you can learn together. Then follow up.

### CONVERSATION STARTERS

Talking to your children about alcohol and other drugs does not have to be hard. The following opportunities can serve as teaching moments:

	If you see a young person smoking, talk about the negative effects of tobacco.
	If you see an interesting news story, discuss it with your child. Ask how your child feels about situations and the potential consequences.
	While watching a movie or TV show with your children, ask if they think it makes using drugs, including alcohol, look fun. Talk about what happens to those characters, or what happens in reality.
	If you read, hear about, or know someone affected by substance use, remind your child almost anyone can develop a substance use disorder. Discuss the importance of treatment and supporting people in recovery from their substance use disorder.

For more information, go to Chapter 4 of *Growing Up Drug Free: A Parent's Guide to Substance Use Prevention*.

## Vaping's Dirty Secret: It's Trashing the Environment



A lesser-known downside to vaping is its serious environmental impact, especially from disposable e-cigarettes. Since 2020, single-use vapes have surged in popularity, creating tons of electronic waste made from plastic, metal, lithium batteries and toxic residue. These materials don't break down easily and can harm water, soil, wildlife and even disrupt recycling systems. For anyone thinking about quitting vaping, it's one more reason to stop—not just for your health, but for the planet too. [READ MORE](#).

## Two Numbers, Two Needs: 988 Calms, 911 Responds



Both 988 and 911 offer life-saving support — but they're built to respond to different types of crises.

- Call 988 if you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health, substance use or emotional crisis. Trained counselors are available 24/7 to listen, provide support and help de-escalate intense emotions. Whether it's anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts or just needing someone to talk to, 988 is the number to call.
- Call 911 when there is an immediate risk to life or property — such as accidents, fires, crimes in progress, or medical emergencies that require police, fire or EMS response.

Knowing the difference can help ensure the right kind of help arrives — faster, safer and more effectively.

# Is Your Work Causing You to Drink More?



We're constantly bombarded with messages telling us that alcohol is key to having fun, relaxation, success and celebration, making it harder to see how it might be holding us back. But **how often do we consider the toll alcohol can take—especially when stress, long hours and workplace drinking culture blur the lines?** This Alcohol Awareness Week (July 7–13, 2025), it's time to look at how work might be influencing our drinking. With rising stress, blurred

boundaries between work and home and too many workplaces where booze is the norm, it's clear that alcohol and work are more connected than we think. Join the conversation and explore practical tips on how small changes to your drinking can boost your health, productivity and happiness. [READ MORE.](#)

## Montana Substance Violation Reporting: What to Know & Where to Go

- **Unlawful or Suspicious Alcohol-Related Activities** - Report violations such as underage drinking or serving/selling to someone who is actually, apparently or obviously intoxicated. [CLICK HERE](#)
- **Cannabis-Related Issues**
  - For concerns regarding **medical or adult-use cannabis dispensaries**, [CLICK HERE](#).
  - Report illegal sale or use of **synthetic cannabis** by [CLICKING HERE](#).
  - If you suspect **illegal sale of consumable hemp products** (not authorized as a food or drug by the FDA), report it by [CLICKING HERE](#).
- **Tobacco/Nicotine Product Violation** - Report sales to under the age of 21 to keep nicotine and tobacco out of the hands of youth. [CLICK HERE](#)
- **Clean Indoor Air Act Violations** - Submit violations including vaping, which is now included under the Act. [CLICK HERE](#)



**Reminder:** Vaping is now included in Montana's Clean Indoor Air Act. To help your business or organization comply and reduce enforcement issues, free 5" x 7" "No Smoking, Vaping or Marijuana" signs are available for entrances.

**Order your free signs here:**

<https://mthhs promotions.rocssoft.com/public/login>  
(Quick account setup required)

Listen to the **June 2025** episode of the *What's Trending?* podcast on 89.9 KGPR, proudly supported by [Great Falls/Cascade County Crimestoppers](#). In this episode, we cover the latest trends in drug and alcohol use in our community. [Click here](#) to listen now!







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