

**keep a
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mind**

Parent Newsletter

Vol. 11, No. 1

Dear Parents:

Your child's school has been participating in the parent-child drug education program - Keep A Clear Mind. The program involves students taking home activity booklets and working together with their parents to read material and answer questions related to alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana use, and making good choices. So hopefully, your child has been bringing home the activity booklets, you have been working on them together, and you have seen some benefits in increased parent child communication.

In addition to the four activity booklets, the Keep A Clear Mind program includes five parent newsletters. This is the first of the five newsletters. The parent newsletters are designed to: (1) prompt you to keep talking with your child about drugs, and about other important health issues and 2) provide you with additional important background information. Some of the information we provide may reinforce what you already know. Other information may be new to you, information that may be useful to you as you provide guidance to your child in helping him/her make healthy, informed decisions - about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs - but also about other important decisions that young people face.


"Keep A Clear Mind" is an award-winning, research-based, nationally recognized drug education program for young people and their parents. We hope you and your child have benefited from the Keep A Clear Mind activity booklets, and that you will also benefit from these newsletters. To order additional copies of Keep A Clear Mind or if you have questions or comments, contact us through our website - keepaclearmind.com, email us at evidence_based@yahoo.com or call me at 501-622-9100.

Your Words and Examples Matter:

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keep a CLEAR mind



Parent Newsletter

Vol. 11, No. 1

Keep a Clear Mind These newsletters are designed to give parents practical tools for talking with their children about alcohol, tobacco, and other important health issues. The guidance we share is based on research. If you'd like more detail about the research we'll be glad to send you the references/studies – just email us at evidence_based@yahoo.com.

Why Is Substance Use Prevention Important?

Substance use in young people often leads to serious problems. It can cause failure in school, trouble with the law, family distress, and disease. It can keep young people from reaching their full intellectual, social, and emotional potential. It can damage self-esteem and reputations. It can prevent them from developing healthy coping skills, like learning to deal with conflict and other difficult situations.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, most young people don't move directly from trying drugs to developing an addiction, but even experimentation with drugs is a problem. While I don't mean to be overly dramatic, drug use can become part of a pattern of risky behavior that can pose serious social and health risks. These can include: school failure, problems with family and other relationships, loss of interest in normal healthy activities, impaired memory, mental health problems, and a very real risk of overdose death.

It's Never Too Early to start teaching your children about the dangers of drug, alcohol, and tobacco use. Studies show that attitudes and beliefs about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs are usually formed during childhood. Thus, it is very important that prevention begins early. Research also shows that parent involvement is critical in reducing the chances that kids will use drugs, drink alcohol, smoke, chew tobacco, or participate in other risky behaviors.

What Can I Do To Protect My Kids from Harm?

Research shows that parents who get involved with prevention make a big difference. An open avenue of two-way communication is critical - talk to your kids often, ask questions, including open-ended questions and listen to what they say. Remember, positive feed back is important to kids!

Studies also show that peer pressure is an important factor in introducing kids to drugs and alcohol. Boys are especially susceptible to the influence of their friends. As a parent, make a serious effort to know who your child's friends are and what their lives, families, and values are like!

Kids Learn By Watching Their Parents

Lastly, and most importantly, be a good role model. Research shows that children whose parents smoke are more than twice as likely to become daily smokers than children of non-smokers. The risk for becoming future alcoholics is greater for children raised in alcoholic homes and homes where parents hold permissive attitudes regarding underage drinking. – Not surprisingly children of substance abusing parents begin using drugs at an earlier age and have higher rates of alcohol and drug use disorders. Remember, what has the most impact here is not "do as I say," it is "do as I do."

Facts About Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use

Some 4th, 5th, and 6th graders choose to experiment with smoking, drinking, and other drug use. Studies show early substance use does more damage, causes more severe problems, and makes it harder to quit than use which begins at an older age!

Alcohol and other drugs reduce learning ability, thinking, memory, and concentration. Research even shows that drinking alcohol prior to or during puberty may upset the critical hormonal balance necessary for normal development of organs, muscles, and bones. Young people who smoke, are problem drinkers, or use drugs, sometimes do so in an effort to appear cool. What they, and all our children, need to know is that most other kids and the overwhelming majority of adults do not agree. These behaviors are not cool; they are just dumb.

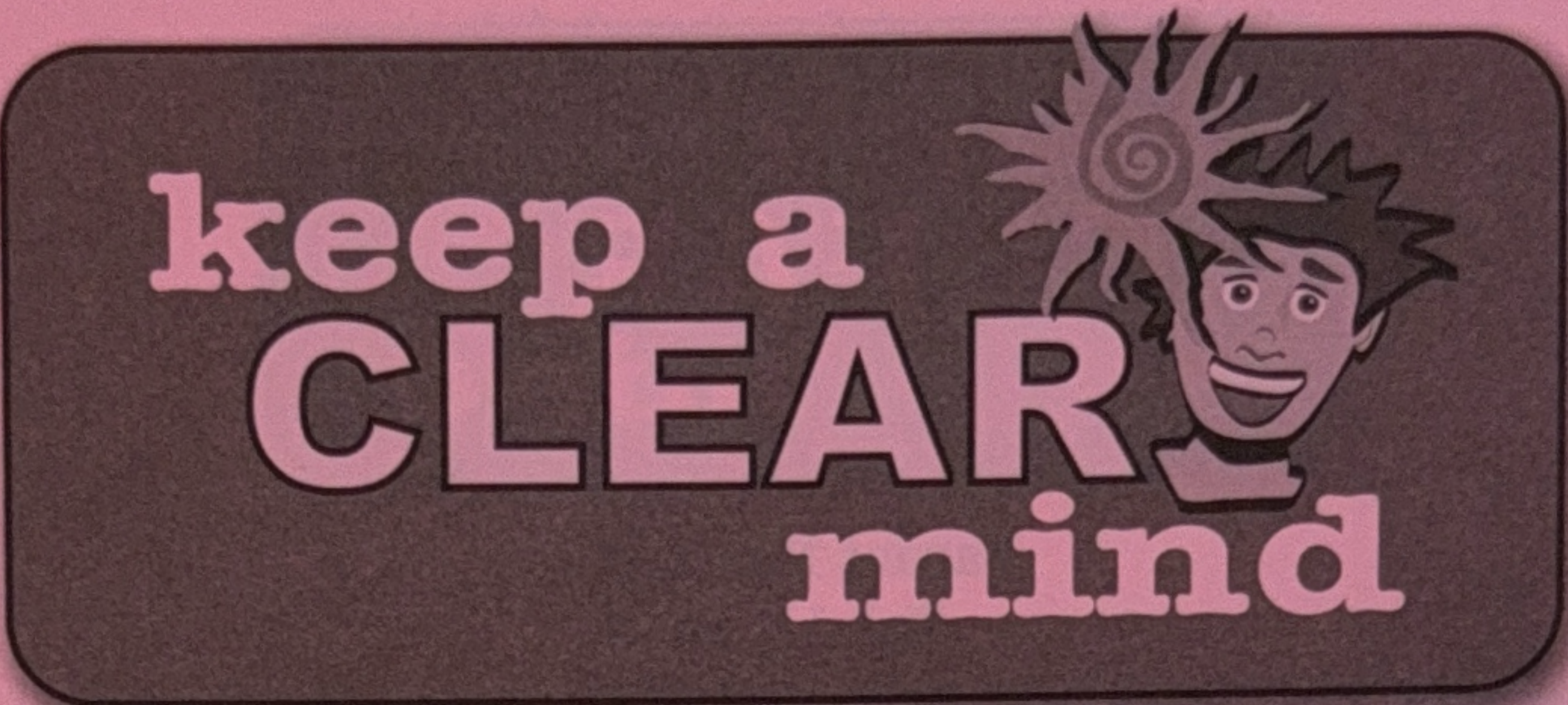
Motor vehicle crashes continue to be one of the leading cause of death among U.S. teens. Per mile driven, teen drivers age 16-19 are nearly three times more likely than drivers aged 20 and older to be in a fatal crash. Impaired driving resulting from alcohol or other drug use, along with distracted driving, play major roles. Alcohol is also involved in most homicides, suicides, and accidents involving youth.

Family Activity: DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING SITUATION WITH YOUR CHILDREN. ASK THEM WHAT THEY THINK, AND LET THEM KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT THESE CHOICES:

SCENARIO - A FRIEND SAYS, "JUST TRY IT ONCE, IT WON'T HURT," AND OFFERS YOU A CIGARETTE OR VAPE.

Parent Talking Points

- (1) RESEARCH SHOWS THAT MOST ADULT SMOKERS AND VAPERS START BEFORE AGE 18 — AND ONCE ADDICTED, QUITTING IS VERY HARD.
- (2) EVEN TRYING A CIGARETTE OR VAPE ONCE CAN HARM LUNGS AND EXPOSE KIDS TO NICOTINE (THE ADDICTIVE SUBSTANCE).
- (3) REMIND YOUR CHILD: IT'S OKAY TO SAY "NO THANKS" AND WALK AWAY.



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Parent Newsletter
Vol. 11, No. 2

Dear Parents:

Research studies show that parent involvement is critical to preventing or reducing risky behaviors in children, including participation in substance use, and other harmful life choices. That is why we want to provide you with important factual information that will be of benefit to you as you provide guidance for your child.

Here I want to provide you with some information about e-cigarettes. Vaping does not involve burning tobacco like cigarettes do, so no smoke is created. This means vaping generally exposes people to fewer harmful substances than smoking cigarettes, but it is still a major health concern. Nicotine is the primary agent in both regular cigarettes and e-cigarettes. Some e-cigarette users, especially users of pod systems like JUUL – which use nicotine salts – actually get more nicotine than they would from smoking a regular cigarette. Nicotine is a toxic substance that also raises a person's blood pressure, increases heart rate, and increases the chances of having a heart attack. Thus, while switching from tobacco cigarettes to e-cigarettes, may reduce the risk of lung cancer, it does not reduce the person's risk of a heart attack. There are many unknowns about vaping, including the long-term impact on health.

While vaping may be a less risky alternative for cigarette smokers who want to quit smoking, many adult users of e-cigarettes use them to supplement, not replace, the use of traditional cigarettes. This substantially increases the smoker's risk of a heart attack. Also, many young people who would never have begun smoking regular cigarettes are now vaping. A 2020 systematic review and meta-analysis found that adolescents and young adults who used e-cigarettes had more than 3 times the odds of later smoking cigarettes, compared to those who never vaped.

If a young person you know tells you that e-cigarettes are safe you have your answer: E-cigarettes may be less risky than smoking tobacco cigarettes, but they are not safe. The nicotine in e-cigarettes is highly addictive and causes an increased risk of heart disease. Young people who use e-cigarettes are more likely to also smoke regular cigarettes. I hope this information is of help to you as you visit with your child about the risks of smoking.

Talk With Your Children:

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Parent Newsletter
Vol. 11, No. 2

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Communicate Family Values to Your Children

Research shows that family values and behavior standards are very important in preventing substance use in children. Kids often "choose not to use" because they have strong convictions based on family values. Family, social, and religious values can give kids good reasons to say NO to drug use and other risky behaviors. Here are some good ways to help make your family values about alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use clear to your children.

Talk Openly to Your Kids, and Listen to Them

Talk about why values such as responsibility, honesty, and obeying the law are important, and how good values can help kids make good decisions. Also, closely listen to what they say.

Be a High Quality Role Model for Your Children

Children copy their parents. People who smoke and drink are more likely to have kids who smoke and drink. Carefully examine your own use of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and other potentially risky behaviors. Are you the role model your children need? If you are - great. If you fall a little short, then decide to make the necessary changes.

Look for Conflict Between Your Words and Actions

Your message is weakened when you do the things you tell your kids not to do. Kids are quick to sense when parents seem to show by their actions that it's all right to duck unpleasant duties or be dishonest.

Avoid Exposing Your Children to Substance Use

If you use alcohol at times, don't let your kids be involved in your drinking. For example, don't have them bring you a beer or have a sip from your drink. If you smoke or use smokeless tobacco, don't let your kids bring you cigarettes or try a dip of smokeless.

Leaving alcohol or cigarettes where kids can get to them gives curious kids opportunities to experiment. Research shows that sometimes a little experimentation is all it takes to start a person on the path to addiction.

A Special Note About The Use of Alcohol

Risky behaviors can occur when teenagers drink alcohol. Risky behavior can have both short-term and long-term impacts. This is why it is important to change community attitudes surrounding alcohol; to stop underage drinking from being the norm.

Drinking is more harmful to teens than adults because the adolescent brain is still developing. Brain development continues throughout adolescence and well into young adulthood. Drinking during this critical growth period can lead to lifelong damage in brain function, particularly as it relates to memory, motor skills and coordination.

Parents who don't want their kids to use illicit drugs may find it harder to talk about alcohol than any other issue. After all, many good parents consume wine at dinner or drink a few beers on the weekend. Alcohol is also part of some religious observances, and is often shown in a favorable light in movies or on TV. As a result, some consider alcohol to be less dangerous than other drugs. Take a look at some facts:

* Alcohol is the leading contributor to injury death, which until recently, was the main cause of death among young people.


* Kids who use alcohol at an early age are more likely to use alcohol and drugs heavily, have family problems, and get into trouble with the law.

Family Activity: DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING SITUATION WITH YOUR CHILDREN. ASK THEM WHAT THEY THINK, AND LET THEM KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT THESE CHOICES.

SCENARIO - A CLASSMATE SAYS YOU WON'T BE INVITED TO HANG OUT IF YOU DON'T DO WHAT THE GROUP IS DOING (AND YOU HAVE HEARD THEY SOMETIMES SMOKE CIGARETTES AND DRINK ALCOHOL).

Parent Talking Points

- (1) TRUE FRIENDS DON'T PRESSURE EACH OTHER TO DO UNSAFE THINGS.
- (2) PEER PRESSURE IS COMMON, BUT STANDING UP FOR YOURSELF IS A SIGN OF STRENGTH.
- (3) ROLE-PLAY RESPONSES LIKE, "I'D RATHER NOT — LET'S DO SOMETHING ELSE."



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Parent Newsletter
Vol. 11, No. 3

Dear Parents:

Research studies show that parent involvement is critical to preventing or reducing risky behaviors in children, including participation in substance use (tobacco, alcohol, and drugs), and other harmful life choices. That is why we think it is important to provide you with factual information, to help you as you encourage your children to make positive, healthy decisions.

In this letter I want to briefly provide you with some important information about marijuana. Because of the increased number of states that have legalized marijuana for recreational and/or medical purposes, many people have come to believe that marijuana use is essentially harmless. It is important, however, to point out that marijuana use can produce some harmful effects.

One concern expressed by researchers is the negative impact of the regular use of marijuana by adolescents, on brain development. Researchers have noted that adolescent brains continue to develop beyond adolescence. In fact, the human brain is not fully mature until around age 25. During this developmental period the brain is much more vulnerable than a mature brain to the effects of harmful substances, such as exposure to THC, the primary active ingredient in marijuana. Adolescents who regularly smoke marijuana have been found to have impaired neural connectivity (fewer fibers) in specific brain regions. This impacts alertness and self-conscious awareness, learning, memory, and attention. And control of inhibitions, as well as habits and routines.

To summarize, even though many states are legalizing marijuana for recreational and/or medical purposes, its use can cause some harmful effects. One area of special concern is the negative effects of marijuana use on adolescent brain development. Make sure your child knows the facts about this negative effect of marijuana.

Healthy and Drug Free:

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Parent Newsletter
Vol. 11, No. 3

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Household Rules About Substance Use

Parents are responsible for setting rules for their children. When the topic is alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, we recommend that strong rules be set. We recommend that rules be enforced. If a rule is not enforced, why have it?

Clear Rules Protect Teens

Research shows when parents set firm rules about alcohol, it doesn't just reduce teen drinking — it also lowers the chances that teens will smoke or use marijuana. Rules about one substance can have a protective "spill-over" effect on others.

When adolescents perceive their parents are permissive toward cigarette smoking or drinking alcohol, they are much more likely to use not just tobacco and alcohol, but also other illegal drugs, when compared with adolescents who perceived strict parent norms. This link appears to be stronger for boys. Clear, non-permissive rules serve as protective barriers.

Talk to Your Child about Tobacco and Other Drugs

Many parents don't talk with their children about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Some just don't know what to say. Others fear "putting ideas into their heads." Some believe their kids just wouldn't use harmful legal substances or illegal drugs. Don't let these beliefs keep you from communicating with your children.

Facts About Tobacco Smoking and Chewing

Some people consider tobacco use less of a problem than the use of alcohol or other drugs. They are wrong! Use of tobacco products is still the #1 cause of preventable death in the U.S. Smoking causes cancer, heart disease, strokes, emphysema.

According to the most recent Surgeon General's Report (2024), smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke are responsible for over 490,000 deaths every year in the United States. That's nearly one in five deaths.

While national smoking rates have declined in recent decades, the death toll has remained stubbornly high. Public health experts warn that cigarette smoking remains the single most powerful factor we can change to protect the health and future of our children.

The good news: Parents play a crucial role. By setting clear expectations and modeling healthy behavior, families can give kids strong reasons to say "no" to tobacco and other addictive products.

Tony Gwynn was a Hall of Fame baseball player. He played 20 years for the San Diego Padres. Over his career he won 8 batting titles, and was a 15-time All Star. He died not that long ago from oral cancer. He attributed the cancer to his long use of smokeless tobacco. Many people view smokeless tobacco as a safe alternative to cigarette smoking. It isn't.

"Second-Hand Smoke" is Harmful to Health

Second-hand smoke is smoke that comes from other people's cigarettes, cigars, or pipes. Research has shown exposure to second-hand smoke causes numerous health problems in children. Some of the health problems in adults caused by second-hand smoke include heart disease, stroke, and lung cancer.

If you smoke, give serious consideration to quitting. If you continue to smoke, don't smoke around your kids- especially not in enclosed areas like the house or car.

"E-Cigarettes/Vaping - Is it Safe?"

In the introductory letter in newsletter 2 we have already established that E-cigarettes are not safe. Clearly the use of e-cigarettes by young people is a bad idea. The use of regular tobacco cigarettes by young people – or by anyone – is a really bad idea.

Other Health Issues - Lack of Physical Activity

Chronic diseases are major killers in modern society. Conclusive evidence exists that physical inactivity is one important cause of most chronic diseases (not "the" cause, but one important cause). This includes conditions such as: coronary heart disease, hypertension, congestive heart failure, stroke, obesity, osteoporosis, certain types of cancer (colon, breast and endometrial), diabetes, and depression and anxiety. Parents can help their children develop healthy, physically active lifestyles by being good examples themselves; eating healthy and being physically active.

Family Activity: DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING SITUATION WITH YOUR CHILDREN. ASK THEM WHAT THEY THINK, AND LET THEM KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT THESE CHOICES.


SCENARIO - AN OLDER KID SAYS THAT DRINKING OR SMOKING MAKES YOU LOOK COOL, MORE MATURE AND GROWN UP.

Parent Talking Points

(1) THOUGH SOME KIDS MAY THINK THESE ACTIVITIES MAKE PEOPLE LOOK COOL, MORE MATURE AND GROWN-UP, THAT VIEW HAS MARKEDLY CHANGED. IT IS MORE BROADLY VIEWED AS UNHEALTHY, SOCIALLY UNACCEPTABLE, AND EVEN DUMB.

(2) REAL MATURITY IS ABOUT MAKING GOOD DECISIONS, NOT RISKY ONES.

(3) ADULT SMOKERS DO LOOK OLDER THAN NON-SMOKERS; SMOKERS IN THEIR 40'S MAY OFTEN APPEAR AS OLD AS NON-SMOKERS IN THEIR 60S.



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Parent Newsletter
Vol. 11, No. 4

Dear Parents:

The use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs are important health issues, but other factors also influence health. Some factors are not under our control, but some of the most important factors are. As you visit with your children, about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, we also encourage you to think about, and talk about some of these health issues as well.

For example, regular physical activity is an important contributor to good health. You don't have to be an Olympic marathon runner or weight lifter to be healthy, but participating in activities that promote heart health (such as, walking, running, or biking) and maintaining and improving muscular strength (for example, training with resistance bands, or weights) can go a long way to improving health. Combine that with healthy eating and maintaining a healthy body weight and you are on your way to promoting long-term health and achieving a high level of well-being.

For young people, the top three causes of death are unintentional injuries, suicide, and homicide. Within unintentional injuries, motor vehicle crashes account for the clear majority. Alcohol or drug-impaired driving, sleep deprivation, and distracted driving—including cell phone use and texting—are all major factors. Using seatbelts greatly increases a person's chances of surviving a crash.

In recent years, firearms have become the leading cause of death for U.S. children and teens (ages 1-17). For older teens (15-19), guns are a major factor in accidents, suicides, and homicides—taking more young lives than car crashes or cancer.

Research shows that household gun ownership increases risks, but safe storage—keeping firearms unloaded, locked, and stored separately from ammunition—greatly reduces the chance of tragedy while respecting the rights of families who own guns.


Here's a word to the wise: exercise, eat healthy, and be safe. Don't drive while impaired or distracted. Wear seatbelts. If you own guns, keep them stored safely. And most importantly—talk with your children about these issues.

Be Healthy-Be Safe

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Marijuana - Legal Status and Other Info

As of August 2025, 40 states, Washington, D.C., and three U.S. territories allow medical marijuana. Twenty-four states, D.C., and three territories also allow adult (recreational) use. At the same time, 19 states still treat simple possession as a jailable offense. Under federal law, possession of marijuana remains illegal nationwide and marijuana is listed in Schedule I—the same category as heroin, LSD, and MDMA—defined as having a high abuse potential and no currently accepted medical use. A proposal has been made to move marijuana to Schedule III, but that has not yet been approved.

Since 2014, Congress's annual DOJ funding bill includes a rider that blocks the Dept of Justice (DOJ) from using funds to prevent states and territories from implementing their medical-marijuana laws. Courts have read this to mean federal prosecutions are barred while the rider is in effect if—and only if—the person strictly complies with state medical-marijuana rules.

There is no comparable rider for recreational use, so federal law still applies. In practice, simple-possession cases are rarely a federal priority and most federal arrests tend to occur on federal property (e.g., national parks), where state legalization doesn't apply. Finally, you may recall the 2022 and 2023 presidential pardons that cleared many past federal simple-possession offenses. Those pardons did not apply to state level offenses, did not legalize future possession, and did not change state laws.

What does the future hold?

We don't know; but it would come as no surprise if even more states move to legalize marijuana for recreational and/or medical use. Why? States are viewing marijuana tax money as an important source of revenue. Entrepreneurs also view marijuana sales as an opportunity to make big money. Though it seemed impossible only a few years ago, even federal legalization may even be in our future.

Medical benefits & concerns Regarding marijuana – What does research tells us?

Many people are convinced of marijuana's benefits because of stories they have heard from friends, family, or their own experience. These personal accounts (often called anecdotal evidence) are valuable in showing us where marijuana might be helpful, but they are not the same as scientific evidence. To truly know whether marijuana provides consistent benefits, researchers use rigorous methods like randomized controlled trials, which allow us to see whether improvements are due to the treatment itself and not to chance or outside factors. Both perspectives matter, but when it comes to guiding medical care, the stronger evidence has to come from well-designed studies.

So, what do we know? Research on the medical benefits of marijuana has grown in recent years, though much of it still focuses on standardized oral or pharmaceutical preparations. This is despite the fact that the over-whelming majority of people who use marijuana for its potential medical benefits use edibles or smoked forms. Evidence supports cannabis-based medicines in several areas: chronic pain in adults, nausea and vomiting from chemotherapy and appetite stimulation for AIDS-related weight loss. Cannabinoid products have also shown benefits in reducing patient-reported muscle spasms in multiple sclerosis, improving short-term sleep in some conditions, and—most notably—in the case of cannabidiol (CBD), treating seizures in rare forms of childhood epilepsy.

One curious but well-documented effect is that marijuana alters a person's perception of time, making events feel longer or shorter than they really are. While this can sometimes make ordinary experiences seem more vivid, it also contributes to safety concerns, such as impaired driving.

Potential problems associated with marijuana use include: problems with academic learning and processing speed, and compromised sleep quality. Additionally, there is also real concern about the negative effects of marijuana on adolescent brain development.

How are we then to regard marijuana?

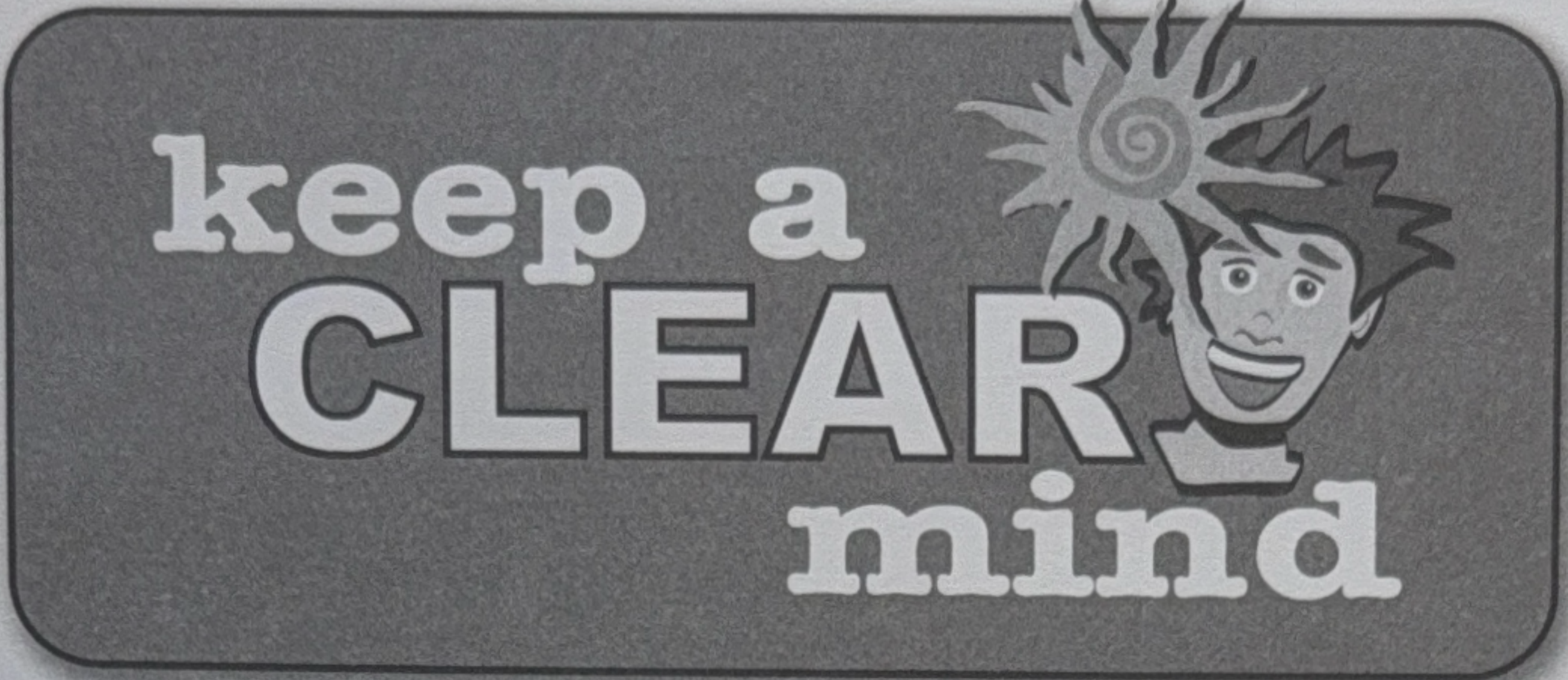
I often hear some people say that marijuana is no worse than alcohol or tobacco. They may be right. I honestly don't know – but even if they are right, that's not much of a recommendation. Remember 88,000 people die each year in the U.S. from alcohol related deaths and tobacco is responsible for 490,000 deaths per year in the U.S. and according to the World Health Organization, more than 8 million worldwide! So, saying something is no worse than alcohol or tobacco, certainly doesn't mean it is safe. Regardless of legal status, it is important to encourage young people to avoid using alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana.

Family Activity: DISCUSS THIS SITUATION WITH YOUR CHILDREN.

SCENARIO – A STUDENT IN CLASS ASKS THE TEACHER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION: "A LOT OF STATES ARE LEGALIZING MARIJUANA. THAT MUST MEAN IT'S SAFE, RIGHT? I MEAN IF IT WASN'T SAFE, THEY WOULDN'T MAKE IT LEGAL; WOULD THEY? THE TEACHER SAYS "THAT'S A REALLY GOOD DISCUSSION QUESTION FOR US. CLASS, WHAT DO YOU THINK? THEN SHE CALLS ON YOU. WHAT DO YOU SAY?"

Parent Talking Points

- (1) LEGAL DOESN'T MEAN SAFE
- (2) POLICY VS HEALTH
- (3) AGE MATTERS



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Parent Newsletter

Vol. 11, No. 5

Dear Parents:

How do we encourage people to engage in healthy behaviors? We just provide them accurate health information and then, of course, they will make decisions that best promote their own health – right? It makes sense, but it doesn't always work that way. Information is what one of our scholarly friends calls “a necessary, but insufficient precursor behavior change” In plain english - information is important, but by itself, it is not enough. Other factors also play a role. For example, perception of peers norms has an important influence on behavior. That is, we tend to do what we think most other people do. If we are around a lot of people who smoke, we may think, most people smoke. This makes it more likely that we will smoke. That's one reason it is important to understand that perceptions may not always reflect reality. We may think “everyone is doing it” (whatever “it” is) when in reality “everyone” may turn out to be a relatively small number.

Here are other important influencers of health behavior. Let's say you want to encourage smokers to quit. If smokers understand that by continuing to smoke, (1) they have a high risk of cancer and heart disease (susceptibility), (2) that these are serious health problems (severity), (3) quitting smoking dramatically reduces health risks and greatly outweighs any benefit they think they get from smoking (perceived benefits vs costs), they have a much better chance of quitting. They must however also (4) believe they can quit (self-efficacy). Many people also experience an “aha” moment, that moment of sudden realization that spurs them to take some action (cue to action). My Dad was a heavy smoker into his early 30s, but then he quit. Many years later, Dad told me his cue to action was when he was holding my baby brother on his lap and smoking a cigarette. My brother, sitting in a cloud of smoke, began coughing. Dad said he suddenly realized what he was doing to my brother, put his cigarette down, and never smoked another cigarette.

Consistently engaging in healthy behaviors is not easy, but it can be done – with healthy results.

Encouraging Healthy Decisions

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Parent Newsletter
Vol. 11, No. 5

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High Self-Esteem Is Important To Kids

Research shows that a high generalized sense of self-esteem (for example "I feel good about myself") is not really related to whether or not a person becomes involved with alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. Area specific self-esteem, in areas such as home (for example "I know I am a valued member of this family") and school ("I know that my teachers respect me and the efforts I make in my classes"), however, has been found to be related to alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. Young people who score high in home and school self-esteem are less likely to be involved in substance use. Here are some tips on how to help your children develop and maintain high area-specific self-esteem.

- Make a special effort to recognize, discuss, and reward healthy behaviors in your family. Positive feedback is good for everyone!
- Avoid providing false praise, that is, it is probably not a good idea to say "you did a fantastic job," when it is clear to both you and your child, that the job was not at all fantastic, but rather poor. What you can do is look for specific positive things that can be reinforced. For example (when warranted), "I was really impressed by the effort you put into this;" "You never gave up, you stuck with it. I am proud of you."
- The idea of providing specific praise/feedback is also important when it was "a fantastic job." Here are some more examples: "I really liked the way you hit that high note;" "I think that the greatest thing you may bring is your enthusiasm for the task at hand;" "This report is not only solid on the information you present, you have done such a good job of organization. It is easy for the reader to follow and to clearly understand the points you are making."
- Encourage academic success. Provide learning opportunities at home and work closely with your children's teachers to ensure his/her success at school.

Opioid Addiction

Opioids are powerful drugs that act on the nervous system to relieve pain. Prescription opioids were initially administered primarily for short-term bouts of pain, but over the last 20 years or so, physicians have often prescribed them to treat chronic pain. This longer-term use has led to higher levels of addiction and widespread overdoses.

A part of the problem is the introduction of a highly potent synthetic opioid drug, fentanyl. Because of its potency, relatively small quantities can cause overdose. Alcohol and other drugs, such as cocaine and heroin, can greatly increase fentanyl's side effects. Narcan can reverse the effects of an opioid dose. Here's our best advice: (1) Avoid street drugs. (2) When your physician does provide you or a family member with a prescription opioid to reduce pain, work with him/her to use as little as possible and to develop a "game plan" as to when you will be totally off of them.

The good news in all of this is two-fold. First, we believe that evidence-based prevention programs, like *Keep A Clear Mind*, along with actively involved parents, can help young people make healthy decisions and reduce adolescent drug involvement. Second, the increased availability of Narcan has saved the lives of many people who would have otherwise died from opioid overdose.

Narcan is a medication that rapidly reduces and opioid overdose. It is now available over-the-counter as a nasal spray, making it easy to administer. Simply spray it into one nostril while the person lies on their back. If the person doesn't wake up in 2-3 minutes, give another dose in the other nostril. Always call 911 — Narcan usually works quickly, but the person still needs medical attention because opioids can last longer in the body than Narcan does.

Family Activity: THIS IS THE FIFTH AND FINAL KEEP A CLEAR MIND PARENT NEWSLETTER. WE HOPE YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN HAVE ENJOYED THE PROGRAM AND FOUND IT HELPFUL. AS A CLOSING ACTIVITY, CONSIDER THIS QUESTION TOGETHER:

IF YOU WERE DESIGNING A DRUG PREVENTION PROGRAM, AND NEEDED TO WRITE ONE MAIN OBJECTIVE, HOW WOULD YOU COMPLETE THIS SENTENCE?

"AS A RESULT OF PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM, YOUNG PEOPLE WILL _____."

Parent Taking Point

ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO THINK ABOUT THE KINDS OF CHOICES AND HABITS THAT LEAD TO A HEALTHY FUTURE. REMEMBER THE CONVERSATIONS YOU HAVE WITH YOUR CHILDREN TODAY CAN MAKE A LASTING DIFFERENCE IN THE CHOICES THEY MAKE TOMORROW