

Find out more

All substances:

- **“Strengthening Families Program,”** a DVD program for the whole family that has been shown to help decrease the likelihood of youth using substances, available at www.mass.gov/maclearinghouse; 1-800-952-6637; TTY: Use MassRelay at 711 or 1-800-439-2370

Inhalants:

- **20-minute online training for parents** with information about inhalant abuse, product and safety tips, and how to teach children of different ages about inhalants: www.inhalantabusetraining.org (for adults only)
- **“A Parent’s Guide: Preventing Inhalant Abuse Among Children And Teens,”** including a list of safer products, available at www.mass.gov/maclearinghouse; 1-800-952-6637; TTY: Use MassRelay at 711 or 1-800-439-2370

Prescription drugs:

- **Prescription drug information and publications:** www.nida.nih.gov/DrugPages/prescription.html
- **“Their Future Depends on You – Together We Can Prevent Prescription Drug Abuse”** available at www.mass.gov/maclearinghouse; 1-800-952-6637; TTY: Use MassRelay at 711 or 1-800-439-2370
- **Prescription and non-prescription medication information**, including generic names: www.medlineplus.gov

Alcohol:

- **“Preventing Underage Drinking . . . Priceless”** available at www.mass.gov/maclearinghouse; 1-800-952-6637; TTY: Use MassRelay at 711 or 1-800-439-2370
- **Tips for parents** and other adults who work with children: www.stopalcoholabuse.gov

Talk with your children about drugs and alcohol, monitor their activities, and set rules and consequences. (See resources on the back page.) *Youth whose parents talk to them regularly about drugs are less likely to use them.* When your children are doing well, tell them.

More guides and services

Mass 211:

Information and referrals for youth (including recreational programs) and family services: 2-1-1 or 1-877-211-6277 (toll-free; multi-lingual); TTY: 1-508-370-4890; www.mass211help.org

Youth Central Intake and Care Coordinator:

Information for youth and their families affected by alcohol or other drugs and referrals to services: 1-866-705-2807 (toll-free; English and Spanish); TTY: 1-617-661-9051; www.healthrecovery.org/projects/youth-cicc/

Massachusetts Substance Abuse Information and Education Helpline:

Confidential information, prevention and treatment referrals: 1-800-327-5050 (toll-free; 7 days a week; multi-lingual); TTY: Use MassRelay at 711 or 1-800-439-2370; www.helpline-online.com

Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse:

Free copies of publications on how to talk with children about alcohol and other drugs (including “Preventing Substance Abuse Starts at Home”), and other health topics: 1-800-952-6637 (toll-free); TTY: Use MassRelay at 711 or 1-800-439-2370; www.mass.gov/maclearinghouse

Regional Center for Poison Control and Prevention serving MA and RI:

Information and hotline about inhalants and other poisons: 1-800-222-1222 (toll-free; 24 hours); TTY: 1-888-244-5313; www.maripoisoncenter.com

Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, Massachusetts Department of Public Health:

Information, downloadable parent and youth publications, and statistics: www.mass.gov/dph/bsas or www.mass.gov/parentpower

Selected information sources for this brochure include: MA Department of Public Health and MA Department of Education, “MA Youth Health Survey;” National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism: www.niaaa.nih.gov; The Anti-Drug: www.theantidrug.com.



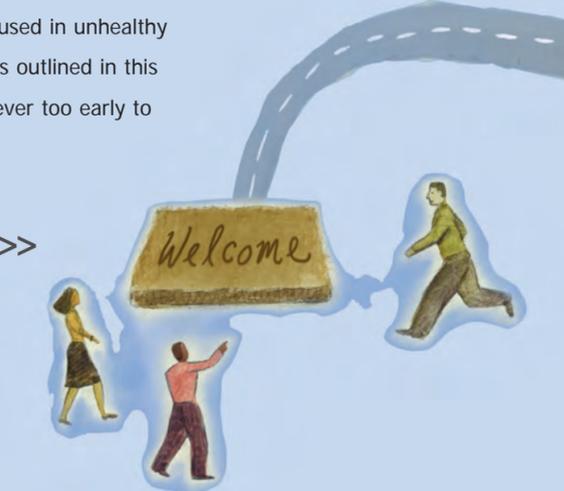
Preventing Substance Abuse Starts at Home Safeguarding Your Children



When it comes to drugs and alcohol, many parents worry about influences from the outside world, like the media and their children’s friends. But what can be found *inside* your home is just as important – youth say that the family home can be a major source of substances like prescription drugs, alcohol, and inhalants.

Common medication and household products can be used in unhealthy ways – even by young children. By following the steps outlined in this brochure, you can help prevent substance use. It’s never too early to take action!

Take a tour of your home >>>>



Take steps to protect your children:

- **Learn** about risky substances, and how to safeguard your children
- **Go through** your home and identify substances that might be abused
- **Replace** or remove risky products when possible
- **Put** risky substances in secure places and supervise their use
- **Watch** your children for possible signs of misuse and find out how to address concerns right away

Inhalants

Inhalant abuse is the deliberate breathing or sniffing of gases or vapors for their mind-altering effect. Over 1,000 common household products can be used as inhalants. Examples include gases, fuels, products that contain solvents, or anything in an aerosol can (like air freshener or whipped cream).

Computer gas dusters, used to clean computers and keyboards, are an especially dangerous inhalant.

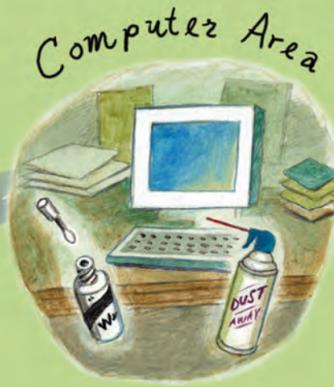
Know the facts:

- Inhalants are often the *first* substance children try. Children in elementary school have been found using them.
- Inhalant abuse can cause death, even the first time. Inhalants can also cause weight loss, organ and brain damage, addiction, and problems with judgment and long-term memory.

Help protect your children:

- When possible, replace potential inhalants with water-based products and non-aerosol products such as pump sprays.
- Keep potential inhalants in a secure place, and watch for possible use by children.
- Model safe use of these products to your children by following product directions. Supervise children's use of these products.
- Throw away products you don't use. Find out from your city or town how to safely throw away hazardous products.
- Teach your children to protect their bodies by not putting anything into them unless it was given to them by a trusted adult. Don't mention to your children that inhalants can be used to get "high."

Don't tell children exactly what products can be used as inhalants.



Watch for:

- Chemical smells on breath or clothing
- Paint or other stains on face, hands, or clothes
- Hidden empty aerosol cans or solvent containers (such as paint thinner or nail polish remover)
- Items used for inhaling products, such as plastic or paper bags, rags, or balloons
- Disoriented behavior
- Attention or coordination problems
- Changes in social behavior or school performance

Prescription Drugs

Prescription drugs can be safe and helpful when used correctly, but many prescription drugs can also be *abused*. Youth can get prescription drugs from their own homes, peers, and the Internet. Only keep prescriptions you are currently using in the house.

The most commonly abused prescription drugs include:

- **Pain medications** such as Vicodin®, OxyContin®, Percocet®, and codeine – prescribed for people with serious, long-term pain, and sometimes to treat short-term pain.
- **Stimulants** such as Ritalin®, Concerta®, Adderall®, Dexedrine®, and Meridia® – used to treat ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) or other disorders.
- **Sedatives and tranquilizers** such as Valium®, Xanax®, Ativan®, Klonopin®, Ambien®, Lunesta®, and barbiturates – prescribed to treat stress and anxiety, panic attacks, insomnia, and seizures.

Tips for monitoring your children's use of prescription medications

If your children are prescribed medications:

- Keep control of the medication bottle and supervise your children when they are taking medication. Count the pills regularly.
- Keep the medication at home if possible. If your children need to take medication during the school day, the school (by law) must give the medication to them. Talk with the school nurse or principal about supervision.
- Remind your children that their prescription medications are only good for them – and could hurt other children.

Watch for:

- Medications your children have for reasons they can't explain, such as cough or cold medications, prescription drugs, or unidentifiable pills
- Missing medications
- Visits to websites where your children can order or learn about using drugs
- Changes in social behavior



Know the tips on how to talk to your children:

- Let your children know you are open to discussing any substance issues.
- Clearly state that they cannot use any medications unless they were prescribed or recommended for them.
- Make it clear to your children that the abuse of prescription or over-the-counter drugs can be just as, if not more, harmful as some street drugs.
- Remind them that taking another person's prescription or sharing their prescriptions with someone else is illegal.
- Explain that you will hold onto their pill bottles and oversee their doses and refills.

Prescription drug abuse can cause addiction, increased blood pressure and heart rate, seizures, organ damage, and even death.

Help protect your children:

- Store all medications in a place where children can't easily get them or aren't likely to look. Locked boxes are the safest.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs: Mix medications with an undesirable substance like coffee grounds or kitty litter, and put them in an empty can or sealed bag in the trash. Don't flush medications unless the label tells you to do so.
- Take advantage of community prescription take-back programs, or the drop-off boxes in many police departments.
- Show your children how you want them to act by what you do and say about prescription drugs. Stop and think about how you use all medicines. When you take medicines responsibly, you are modeling healthy behavior for your children.

Bathroom



Bedroom



Non-prescription danger: cough medicine

An ingredient found in many cough medicines – dextromethorphan (DXM) – can also be abused.

Misuse of cough medicine can cause serious health problems including increased heart rate, high blood pressure, seizures, dizziness, and coma. Any product name with "DM" or "tuss" in it contains DXM. You can also look for dextromethorphan in the ingredient list.

Alcohol

Alcohol, which is commonly found in family households, and is legal when used by people over 21, is *the most commonly abused substance by teens*.

Know the facts:

- Some young people try alcohol in their homes without their parents knowing.
- Young people's brains continue maturing in their teen years and early twenties. Alcohol can interfere with this development.

Alcohol use can cause serious health problems for teens, and it is also linked to risky behaviors, like sexual activity and violence. Other risks include long-term learning and memory problems, poor judgment, addiction, accidents, injuries, and death.

Help protect your children:

- Put all alcohol in a secure place that is out of children's reach.
- Monitor the levels in liquor bottles and watch for alcohol that has been watered down.
- Don't store extra alcohol in places like the basement or garage – it's easy for bottles or cans to disappear.
- If you drink, model healthy alcohol use to your children.
- Don't allow teen drinking. Don't host parties or allow your children to go to parties where alcohol is served to those under 21. Make your rules and expectations clear to your children and enforce those rules.

Storage Area



Watch for:

- Bloodshot eyes, slurred speech, poor coordination
- Alcohol in your child's bedroom or backpack
- Bottles with unknown liquids inside
- Smell of alcohol on the breath
- Changes in social behavior

Basement

