

# Choices!

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*Can I Stop Hurting Myself?*

### ***Body Image & Self-Esteem***

### ***Caffeine***

*Got The Jitters?*

### ***Inhalants***

*Know The Dangers*

### ***Plus Much More...***

***Look Inside!***





THE DAKOTAS' MOST COUNTRY!



Choices! 2010 is produced by  
Cumulus Broadcasting  
1830 N. 11th Street, Bismarck, ND 58501  
Editor/Graphic Design: Nicki Kessler  
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To request additional copies of this  
publication, call (701) 250-6602 between  
the hours of 8am-5pm, Monday-Friday.

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## Assistance & Emergency Contact Information

### Licensed Addiction Treatment Centers

Heartview Foundation	701-222-0386
New Freedom Center	701-222-4673
West Central Human Service Center	701-328-8888

### Community Services, Information & Education

Burleigh County Social Services	701-222-6622
Morton County Social Services	701-667-3395
Police Youth Bureau, Bismarck	701-222-6738
First Call For Help (Bis-Man United Way)	701-258-7335
Abused Adult Resource Center	701-222-8370
AARC Teen Helpline	877-838-4648
HIT, Inc.	701-663-0379
ND Mental Health Association	701-255-3692
	800-472-2911
ND Division of Substance Abuse Services	701-328-8920
ND Help Line	2-1-1-ND
ND Prevention Resource Center	701-328-8919
	800-642-6744

### Support Groups ~ Counseling

Alcoholics Anonymous Connection	800-711-6375
Youthworks 24 Hour Crisis/Runaway Ctr	701-255-6909
Healthy Mothers - Healthy Babies	800-472-2286

### National Hotlines

Child Abuse Hotline	800-422-4453
Runaway Hotline	800-231-6946
Suicide Prevention/Assistance	800-273-8255
Drug Free Workplace (NIDA)	800-843-4971
Missing Children	800-843-5678
"Just Say No" of North Dakota	800-733-4281
Cocaine Hotline	800-262-2463
Mental Health Association	800-969-6642
SAMHSA's Center For Substance Abuse	800-662-4357
SAMHSA's National Clearing House For	
Alcohol And Drug Information	800-729-6686







*Office of the First Lady*  
*Mikey L. Hoeven*

Greetings!

I want to applaud Cumulus Broadcasting for offering "Choices" magazine in an effort to increase awareness of the problem of underage drinking among our youth. This statewide publication will serve as an excellent tool for our schools to use to educate our children about the dangers of underage drinking in addition to highlighting other destructive behaviors.

So many studies underscore the importance of talking to your children on an on-going basis about the dangers of underage drinking. That is because we, as parents, have tremendous influence over the decisions and the choices our children make. But we need to harness the power we have as parents and give them the information they need to say "no" to underage drinking.

The more education we can provide our children, the better equipped they will be in the future to make good choices and to live healthy, happy lives.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mikey L. Hoeven".

Mikey L. Hoeven  
First Lady of North Dakota



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*Today's average household in the USA contains more computer power than existed in the world before 1965.*

# Binge Drinking

## Do You Have All The Facts?

Chet has known Dave since they were in elementary school together, but lately their friendship has been strained. Dave's drinking on weekends has turned him into a completely different person. Dave used to get good grades and play sports, but since he started drinking he hasn't been finishing assignments and he has quit the soccer team. When Chet saw Dave pound five beers in 30 minutes at two different parties, he realized how serious Dave's problem was.

### What Is Binge Drinking?

Binge drinking used to mean drinking heavily over several days. Now, however, the term refers to the heavy consumption of alcohol over a short period of time (just as binge eating means a specific period of uncontrolled overeating). Today the generally accepted definition of binge drinking in the United States is the consumption of five or more drinks in a row by men — or four or more drinks in a row by women — at least once in the previous 2 weeks. Heavy binge drinking includes three or more such episodes in 2 weeks.

### Why Do People Binge Drink?

Liquor stores, bars, and alcoholic beverage companies make drinking seem attractive and fun. It's easy for a high school student to get caught up in a social scene with lots of peer pressure. Inevitably, one of the biggest areas of peer pressure is drinking. Other reasons why people drink include: They're curious — they want to know what it's like to drink alcohol. They believe that it will make them feel good, not realizing it could just as easily make them sick and hung-over. They may look at alcohol as a way to reduce stress, even though it can end up creating more stress. They want to feel older.

### What Are the Risks of Binge Drinking?

Many people don't think about the negative side of drinking. Although they think about the possibility of getting drunk, they may not give much consideration to being hung-over or throwing up. You may know from experience that excessive drinking can lead to difficulty concentrating, memory lapses, mood changes, and other problems that affect your day-to-day life. But binge drinking carries more serious and longer-lasting risks as well.

### Alcohol Poisoning

Alcohol poisoning is the most life-threatening consequence of binge drinking. When someone drinks too much and gets alcohol poisoning, it affects the body's involuntary reflexes

— including breathing and the gag reflex. If the gag reflex isn't working properly, a person can choke to death on his or her vomit. Other signs someone may have alcohol poisoning include: extreme confusion, inability to be awakened, vomiting, seizures, slow or irregular breathing, low body temperature, bluish or pale skin. If you think someone has alcohol poisoning, call 911 immediately.

### Impaired Judgment

Binge drinking impairs judgment, so drinkers are more likely to take risks they might not take when they're sober. They may drive drunk and injure themselves or others. Driving isn't the only motor skill that's impaired, though. Walking is also more difficult while intoxicated. In 2000, roughly one third of pedestrians 16 and older who were killed in traffic accidents were intoxicated. People who are drunk also take other risks they might not normally take when they're sober. For example, people who have impaired judgment may have unprotected sex, putting them at greater risk of a sexually transmitted disease (STD) or unplanned pregnancy.

### Physical Health

Studies show that people who binge-drink throughout high school are more likely to be overweight and have high blood pressure by the time they are 24. Just one regular beer contains about 150 calories, which adds up to a lot of calories if someone drinks four or five beers a night.

### Mental Health

Binge drinkers have a harder time in school and they're more likely to drop out. Drinking disrupts sleep patterns, which can make it harder to stay awake and concentrate during the day. This can lead to struggles with studying and poor academic performance. People who binge-drink may find that their friends drift away — which is what happened with Chet and Dave. Drinking can affect personality; people might become angry or moody while drinking, for example.

### Alcoholism

Some studies have shown that people who binge-drink heavily — those who have three or more episodes of binge drinking in 2 weeks — have some of the symptoms of alcoholism.

### Getting Help

If you think you or a friend have a binge-drinking problem, get help as soon as possible. The best approach is to talk to an adult you trust - if you can't approach your parents, talk to your doctor, school counselor, clergy member, aunt, or uncle. Drinking too much can be the result of social pressures, and sometimes it helps to know there are others who have gone through the same thing. If you're worried, don't hesitate to ask someone for help.

Source: Steven Dowshen, MD - TeensHealth® April 2009







# How To Combat Peer Pressure

Peer pressure is one thing that all teens have in common. You can't escape it; it is everywhere. No matter how popular you are, how well liked you may be or how together you feel, sooner or later you will have to face peer pressure.

Whether it is pressure to conform to a group norm or pressure to act a certain way peer pressure is something everybody has to deal with at some time in their life. How successfully you handle peer pressure depends a great deal on how you feel about yourself and your place in the world.

## Peer Pressure Risk Factors

There are certain risk factors for peer pressure, personality traits that make you more prone to give in to pressure. The traits that put you at higher risk for falling in to the peer pressure trap include:

- low self esteem
- lack of confidence
- uncertainty about one's place within a given peer group
- no personal interests exclusive of one's peer group
- feeling isolated from peers and/or family
- poor academic abilities or performance
- fear of one's peers
- lack of strong ties to friends
- feeling that friends could turn on you
- close bond with a bully

## Handling Peer Pressure

How do you prepare to face peer pressure and win? There are many things you can do. Prepare a mental script of how you would like to deal with uncomfortable situations. Script out the reaction you want to have in a given situation and play that script out in your head over and over again.

Know where you stand on key issues like sex, drugs and alcohol and do not allow anybody to make you deviate from your position. Never be afraid to speak up and let others know your boundaries. You may get a bit of teasing at first but most people respect the boundaries of others when they know what they are.

Never take part in any bullying. Making other people feel bad or sad is a terrible way to try to fit in. Flatly refuse to take part in anything designed to cause harm or distress to another person and speak up if such a situation arises. You do not have to be angry or confrontational but one person standing up for what is right is usually enough to inspire others to follow.

Think of yourself as a leader and act accordingly. The more you see yourself in a leadership role the more comfortable you will feel asserting your own opinions and feelings.

## Always Be Comfortable With Your Choices

When ugly situations arise and peer pressure kicks in to high gear it is very easy to get caught up in the moment and forget that you will have to live with the choices you make. If you give in and do something that is contrary to your character or core value system it will cause you distress later and you will feel regret.

When peer pressure rears its ugly head try to focus on how you feel about what is happening rather than getting caught up in the crowd. Always stand up for what you think is right.

Some people may not like it when you go against the group but doing the right thing is rewarding. Peer pressure only works if you let it, if you refuse to let it intimidate you it loses its power. The secret is to be assertive without becoming preachy or self-righteous. Stand your ground but refrain from standing on a soap box. Remember, peer pressure can only win if you let it.

## Peer Pressure Statistics

These peer pressure statistics are meant to act as a warning sign for parents and children. Having realistic knowledge of what is happening in society might help one become alert and probably not give in to these pressures:

- 30% of teens are offered drugs in high school and middle school. (*Adolescent Substance Abuse Knowledge Base*)
- 3.1 million American teens smoke. (*American Lung Association*)
- Of these, 25% of 17 and 18 year olds smoke daily.
- The Kaiser Foundation states that nearly 50% of adolescents between the ages of 12-18 feel pressured into having sex in relationships.
- Teens are infected by 4 million new STDs every year. (*Allan Guttmacher Institute*)
- The National Household Survey states that the use of marijuana has risen 275% from the years '92-'97.
- 9.5% teens have tried some form of cocaine in their lives. (*Adolescent Substance Abuse Knowledge Base*)
- 32.2% teens try their first drink before the age of 13. (*Adolescent Substance Abuse Knowledge Base*)
- 9% (14 Years), 18% (15-17 Years), 22% (18-19 Years) of teens experience a pregnancy every year. (*Communities Responding to the Challenge of Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention*)

Source: adapted from *Peer Pressure* by Mike Hardcastle - About.com



# Prescription Drug Abuse

Have you been misinformed?

## What are the common misconceptions about prescription drug abuse?

There's a reason that prescription drugs are intended to be taken under the direction of a doctor: if used improperly they can be dangerous. Teens are making the decision to abuse prescription medicines based on misinformation. In fact, many people think that abusing prescription drugs is safer than abusing illicit drugs such as heroin. As the facts will tell you, prescription drugs can have dangerous short- and long-term health consequences when used incorrectly or by someone other than for whom they were intended. For more information, read the following FAQs on the different types of prescription drugs:

### What Is Prescription Drug Abuse?

Prescription drug abuse is when someone takes a medication that was prescribed for someone else or takes their own prescription in a manner or dosage other than what was prescribed. Abuse can include taking a friend's or relative's prescription to get high, to help with studying, or even to treat pain.

### What Are the Most Commonly Abused Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drugs?

Opioids (such as the pain relievers OxyContin and Vicodin), central nervous system depressants (e.g., Xanax, Valium), and stimulants (e.g., Concerta, Adderall) are the most commonly abused prescription drugs. Drugs available without a prescription—a.k.a. over-the-counter drugs—can also be abused. DXM, the active cough suppressant found in many over-the-counter cough and cold medications, is one example. It is sometimes abused to get high, which requires large doses that can be dangerous.

### How Are Prescription Drugs Abused?

It depends—some people take other people's drugs for their intended purposes (to relieve pain, to stay awake, or to fall asleep). Others take them to get high, often at larger doses than prescribed, or by a different route of administration. Most prescription drugs come in pill or capsule form. Sometimes, drug users break or crush the pill or capsule, then swallow the drug, sniff it, or “cook” it—turn it to liquid—and then inject it.

### What's Wrong With Abusing Prescription Drugs?

Virtually every medication presents some risk of undesirable side effects, sometimes even serious ones. Doctors consider the potential benefits and risks to each

patient before prescribing medications. They understand that drugs affect the body in many ways and take into account things like the drug's form and dose, its possible side effects, and the potential for addiction or withdrawal. For example, doctors know how to change the dose of a painkiller to prevent withdrawal symptoms. People who abuse drugs might not understand how these factors may affect them or that prescription drugs do more than cause a high, help them stay awake, help them relax, or relieve pain.

- **Form and dose.** Doctors know how long it takes for a pill or capsule to dissolve in the stomach, release drugs to the bloodstream, and reach the brain. They also take into account a person's weight, how long they've been prescribed the medication, and what other medications they are taking. When abused, prescription drugs may be taken in inappropriate doses or by routes of administration that change the way the drugs act in the body, risking

overdose.

- **Side effects.** Prescription drugs are designed to treat a particular illness or condition, but they often have other effects on the body, some of which can be dangerous. These are referred to as side effects. For example, OxyContin stops pain, but it also causes constipation and drowsiness and slows breathing. Stimulants such as Adderall increase attention but also raise blood pressure and heart rate. These side effects can be made worse when prescription drugs are not taken as prescribed or are abused in combination with other substances—including alcohol, other prescription drugs, and even over-the-counter drugs, such as cold medicines.

- **Addiction.** Studies show that when people take a medication as it is prescribed for a medical condition—such as pain or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)—they usually do not become addicted, because the medication is prescribed in dosages and forms that are considered safe. The drug is compensating for a problem, which makes the person feel better, not high. But medications that affect the brain can change the way it functions—especially when they are taken repeatedly. They can alter the reward system, making it harder to feel good without the drug and leading to some of the intense cravings people develop, which make it hard to stop using. This is no different from what can happen when someone takes illicit drugs—and addiction is a real possibility.

- **Withdrawal.** Taking drugs repeatedly over a period of time causes changes in the body as well as the brain, resulting in physical dependence. That is, the body adapts to the drug's presence, and when its use is abruptly stopped, the person can experience withdrawal symptoms. This can happen even in someone who is prescribed medications and takes them appropriately—which is why a physician should





be consulted when stopping prescription medications as well as when starting them.

### How Many Teens Abuse Prescription Drugs?

In 2008, 1.9 million youth (or 7.7 percent) age 12 to 17 abused prescription drugs, with 1.6 million (6.5 percent) abusing a prescription pain medication. That makes painkillers among the most commonly abused drugs by teens after tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana. In fact, each day an average of 2,000 teenagers age 12 to 17 used a prescription drug without a doctor's guidance for the first time.

### Why Don't People Who Take Prescription Drugs for Medical Conditions Become Addicted?

On rare occasions they do, which is why a person must be under a doctor's care while taking prescription medications and sometimes when stopping their use. A doctor prescribes a medication based on an individual's need—each patient is examined for symptoms and receives a dose of medication that will treat the problem effectively and safely. Typically, prescription drugs are taken in a form (e.g., a pill) that doesn't allow for rapid absorption of the drug by the brain and at a dosage that treats the problem but doesn't overwhelm the system—both of which reduce the likelihood of addiction.

Long-term medical use of certain prescription drugs can, however, lead to "physical dependence," because the brain and the body naturally adapt to chronic drug exposure. A person may need larger doses of the drug to achieve the same initial effects (tolerance), and when drug use is stopped, withdrawal symptoms can occur. Dependence is **not** the same as addiction (although it also happens to someone who is addicted). It is one of the many reasons why prescription drugs need to be taken **and stopped** under a physician's guidance.

### What About Over-the-Counter Drugs, like Cough Medicine? Aren't They Safer Than Prescription Drugs?

Cough and cold medications are some of the most commonly abused over-the-counter (OTC) medications. Many contain an ingredient called dextromethorphan (DXM). However, to get the "high" or "dissociative" state that abusers crave, large quantities are needed. At high doses, DXM causes effects similar to that of the drugs Ketamine or PCP by affecting similar sites in the brain. Ketamine and PCP are considered "dissociative" drugs, which make people feel disconnected from their normal selves. They affect memory, feelings, and thoughts. DXM is similar, and its abuse can affect control over movement; cause numbness, nausea, and vomiting; and can increase heart rate and blood pressure.

When taken as directed, OTCs are safe and effective, but high doses can cause problems. And, some OTC medications can produce dangerous health effects when taken with alcohol. It is important to understand these risks, read the bottle labels, and take OTC medications only as directed.

### Is Anyone Who Uses Prescription Drugs at Risk for Addiction? How Can I Protect Myself?

No, not all prescription drugs have the potential for abuse and addiction—many drugs don't even act in the brain. For example, antibiotics, which are used for infections, are not addictive.

You (and your parents) should read the information that comes with the prescription and that is written on the container. These will include the doctor's instructions for how much of the drug to take and how often, as well as warnings about possible side effects. Read the label and learn whether you should take the drug with or without food, whether the drug will make you drowsy, and whether you can take it with other prescription or over-the-counter medicines. You can protect yourself by taking prescription drugs **only** according to these instructions. That includes the dosage prescribed and the length of time. If you have a question about a drug that has been prescribed for you, have your parents call your doctor.

If the drug is creating problems for you (e.g., if you experience unpleasant side effects or think you may be becoming addicted), you should consult with your doctor immediately to see if a change in dosage or scheduling of the medication is needed, or if it should be stopped altogether. But do not **make** these decisions on your own—there can be risks to changing dosage or stopping a medication abruptly.

### What Can I Do To Help Someone I Suspect Is Abusing Prescription Drugs?

When someone has a drug problem, it's not always easy to know what to do. If you are concerned about someone's drug use (illicit or prescription), encourage him or her to talk to a parent, school guidance counselor, or other trusted adult. There are also anonymous resources, such as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK) and the Treatment Referral Helpline (1-800-662-HELP).

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a crisis hotline that can help with many problems, not just suicide. This includes problems due to drug use. Family and friends who are concerned about a loved one or anyone interested in mental health treatment referrals can call this Lifeline. Callers are connected with a professional nearby who will talk with them about what they're feeling or about concerns for family and friends.

In addition, the Treatment Referral Helpline offered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Center for Substance Abuse Treatment—refers callers to treatment facilities, support groups, and other local organizations that can provide help for their specific needs. You can also locate treatment centers in your state by going to [www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov).

Source: NIDA for Teens



# Teens and Smoking Tobacco

The differences between subjective feelings of those who smoke and those who don't are shown in behavioral changes that are more apparent in teens than adults. Teens seem to be more abrasive when smoking or they feel like they are older and wiser when they smoke. Why do they smoke when we have seen billions of dollars spent on antismoking campaigns? The American Lung Association estimates that every minute four thousand eight hundred teens will take their first drag off a cigarette. Of those four thousand eight hundred, about two thousand will go on to be chain smokers. The fact that teen smoking rates are steadily increasing is disturbing. We are finding out that about 80% of adult smokers started smoking as teenagers.

We now see a lot of smokers giving each other rewards in social aspects such as conversations, companionships, and other common social contacts. Research has proven the fact that nicotine has the ability to suppress feelings, suppress appetite for food, is used as stimulation after sex, and is a good way to relax from troubles and feelings of insecurities. People that smoke go to designated areas and congregate around the one that has the light, even when the weather is subzero. There they are huddled up against each other in an area, taking in the last drag before the break is over, or they find some kind of shelter to smoke their cigarettes.

Teens like to act as if they are someone special or dangerous. By smoking they can act on those feelings. Because it is so forbidden it becomes more alluring to teens. The problem is that when they take that first puff, they can become addicted. The idea that they are breaking the law or going against their parents and schools is an addiction within itself. Kids like to get attention; it does not matter if it's good attention or bad attention. They crave attention and by smoking they get big attention. The other teens look at them in all kinds of ways and the adults get upset and don't know what to do.

Nicotine is considered the number one entrance drug into other substance abuse problems. Research shows that teens between 13 and 17 years of age who smoke daily are more likely to use other drug substances. The use of other drugs is part of the peer pressure that our children have to face. The earlier that our youth begin using tobacco, the more likely they will continue using into adulthood.

Why is tobacco so addicting? It is because nicotine acts as a stimulant, which is stimulating the mind, body, and spirit. When the body tolerance levels high then one ends up needing to use larger doses of nicotine to maintain a certain level of the physiological effect. When the body becomes accustomed to the presence of nicotine, it then requires the use of the chemical to help the body to function normally. This level of dependence is referred to as an addiction.

**Here are some common experiences from teens who smoke.**

- \* They tried their first cigarette in sixth or seventh grade
- \* They often do not perform well in school
- \* They feel like they are not a part of the school
- \* They become isolated from other students
- \* They can't perform as well at sports events
- \* They feel like they have little hope of going to college
- \* They feel like they need a job to support their smoking habit
- \* They are reported to school officials for skipping classes
- \* They start using other illegal substances
- \* They begin experimenting with alcohol and other drugs
- \* They experience pressure from home and school and use tobacco as a form of relief
- \* Teen smokers enjoy trying to hide their smoking

This has made school more fun for some tobacco users. These types of behaviors get attention because the initiation of smoking is influenced by having a friend, particularly a best friend, who smokes. The risk factors do not apply because those who are young think that they are indispensable. The peers who use or have favorable attitudes toward tobacco use are more likely to use other illegal substances. On the other hand, if the teen becomes a member of a pro-social group, such as those participating in sports, cheerleading, or any club that promotes healthy living, the likelihood that the teen will attempt to stop smoking improves.

The amount of teens smoking cigarettes dropped about 28% in 2001. The following are some reasons why:

- a) The increase of cost in the retail price of cigarettes has gone up 70%
- b) The schools have implemented efforts to fight the use of tobacco (teen smoking).
- c) There is an increase in youth exposure to both state and national mass media campaigns.
- d) The truth on the effects of nicotine that are in tobacco products.

When tobacco companies lost the lawsuit that made them pay for anti-smoking ads, they raised the cost of cigarettes. Young people are having a harder time finding ways to smoke because smokers are paying top dollar for their cigarettes. We are also seeing teens speak out in the media and in person and they have been capturing the attention of their peers and changing attitudes about how un-cool and unhealthy teen smoking is.

The times are changing; what the public and science did not know twenty years ago is now coming to the surface. The fact is that smoking cigarettes can cause many health problems including emphysema, high blood pressure, and various forms of cancer. We are seeing people live longer and healthier lives and the old idea that smoking makes you cool and attractive is gone. This is the truth about cigarettes; they are loaded with harmful chemicals and the end result is that they are a dangerous drug that can seriously harm people.

*Source: Teen Help LLC*







I'm fat. I'm too skinny. I'd be happy if I were taller, shorter, had curly hair, straight hair, a smaller nose, bigger muscles, longer legs.

Do any of these statements sound familiar? Are you used to putting yourself down? If so, you're not alone. As a teen, you're going through a ton of changes in your body. And as your body changes, so does your image of yourself. Lots of people have trouble adjusting, and this can affect their self-esteem.

### Why Are Self-Esteem and Body Image Important?

Self-esteem is all about how much people value themselves, the pride they feel in themselves, and how worthwhile they feel. Self-esteem is important because feeling good about yourself can affect how you act. A person who has high self-esteem will make friends easily, is more in control of his or her behavior, and will enjoy life more.

Body image is how someone feels about his or her own physical appearance.

For many people, especially those in their early teens, body image can be closely linked to self-esteem. That's because as kids develop into teens, they care more about how others see them.

### What Influences a Person's Self-Esteem?

#### Puberty

Some teens struggle with their self-esteem when they begin puberty because the body goes through many changes. These changes, combined with a natural desire to feel accepted, mean it can be tempting for people to compare themselves with others. They may compare themselves with the people around them or with actors and celebs they see on TV, in movies, or in magazines.

But it's impossible to measure ourselves against others because the changes that come with puberty are different for everyone. Some people start developing early; others are late bloomers. Some get a temporary layer of fat to prepare for a growth spurt, others fill out permanently, and others

feel like they stay skinny no matter how much they eat. It all depends on how our genes have programmed our bodies to act.

The changes that come with puberty can affect how both girls and guys feel about themselves. Some girls may feel uncomfortable or embarrassed about their maturing bodies. Others may wish that they were developing faster. Girls may feel pressure to be thin but guys may feel like they don't look big or muscular enough.

#### Outside Influences

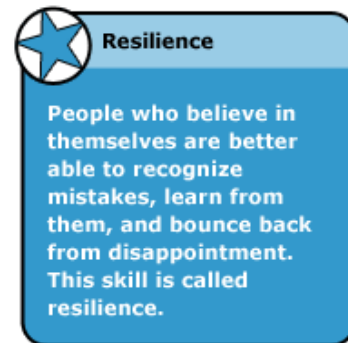
It's not just development that affects self-esteem, though. Many other factors (like media images of skinny girls and bulked-up guys) can affect a person's body image too.

Family life can sometimes influence self-esteem. Some parents spend more time criticizing their kids and the way they look than praising them, which can reduce kids' ability to develop good self-esteem.

People also may experience negative comments and hurtful teasing about the way they look from classmates and peers. Sometimes racial and ethnic prejudice is the source of such comments. Although these often come from ignorance, sometimes they can affect someone's body image and self-esteem.

#### Healthy Self-Esteem

If you have a positive body image, you probably like and accept yourself the way you are. This healthy attitude allows you to explore other aspects of growing up, such as developing good friendships, growing more independent from your parents, and challenging yourself physically and mentally. Developing these parts of yourself can help boost your self-esteem.



A positive, optimistic attitude can help people develop strong self-esteem — for example, saying, “Hey, I’m human” instead of “Wow, I’m such a loser” when you’ve made a mistake, or not blaming others when things don’t go as expected.

Knowing what makes you happy and how to meet your goals can help you feel capable, strong, and in control of your life. A positive attitude and a healthy life-style (such as exercising and eating right) are a great combination for building good self-esteem.



### Tips for Improving Your Body Image

Some people think they need to change how they look or act to feel good about themselves. But actually all you need to do is change the way you see your body and how you think about yourself.

The first thing to do is recognize that your body is your own, no matter what shape, size, or color it comes in. If you're very worried about your weight or size, check with your doctor to verify that things are OK. But it's no one's business but your own what your body is like — ultimately, you have to be happy with yourself.

Next, identify which aspects of your appearance you can realistically change and which you can't. Everyone (even the most perfect-seeming celeb) has things about themselves that they can't change and need to accept — like their height, for example, or their shoe size.

If there are things about yourself that you want to change and can (such as how fit you are), do this by making goals for yourself. For example, if you want to get fit, make a plan to exercise every day and eat nutritious foods. Then keep track of your progress until you reach your goal. Meeting a challenge you set for yourself is a great way to boost self-esteem!

When you hear negative comments coming from within yourself, tell yourself to stop. Try building your self-esteem

by giving yourself three compliments every day. While you're at it, every evening list three things in your day that really gave you pleasure. It can be anything from the way the sun felt on your face, the sound of your favorite band, or the way someone laughed at your jokes. By focusing on the good things you do and the positive aspects of your life, you can change how you feel about yourself.


### Where Can I Go if I Need Help?

Sometimes low self-esteem and body image problems are too much to handle alone. A few teens may become depressed, lose interest in activities or friends — and even hurt themselves or resort to alcohol or drug abuse.

If you're feeling this way, it can help to talk to a parent, coach, religious leader, guidance counselor, therapist, or an adult friend. A trusted adult — someone who supports you and doesn't bring you down — can help you put your body image in perspective and give you positive feedback about your body, your skills, and your abilities.


If you can't turn to anyone you know, call a teen crisis hotline (check the yellow pages under social services or search online). The most important thing is to get help if you feel like your body image and self-esteem are affecting your life.

*Reviewed by: D'Arcy Lyness, PhD - TeensHealth®*



## Nothing compares to the North Dakota Army National Guard

*When I got back from drill, my friends said I missed a good party. I thought back to fast-roping out of a helicopter. Zip-100 feet, just like that. Whoa! I just shook my head and smiled. If you ask me, I didn't miss a thing!*



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# Caffeine... Got the Jitters?

It's 11:00 PM and Aaron has already had a full day of school, work, and after-school activities. He's tired and knows he could use some sleep. But Aaron still hasn't finished his homework. So he reaches for his headphones — and some caffeine.

## What Is Caffeine?

Caffeine is a drug that is naturally produced in the leaves and seeds of many plants. It's also produced artificially and added to certain foods. Caffeine is defined as a drug because it stimulates the central nervous system, causing increased alertness. Caffeine gives most people a temporary energy boost and elevates mood.

Caffeine is in tea, coffee, chocolate, many soft drinks, and pain relievers and other over-the-counter medications. In its natural form, caffeine tastes very bitter. But most caffeinated drinks have gone through enough processing to camouflage the bitter taste.

Teens usually get most of their caffeine from soft drinks and energy drinks. (In addition to caffeine, these also can have added sugar and artificial flavors.) Caffeine is not stored in the body, but you may feel its effects for up to 6 hours.

## Got the Jitters?

Many people feel that caffeine increases their mental alertness. Higher doses of caffeine can cause anxiety, dizziness, headaches, and the jitters. Caffeine can also interfere with normal sleep.

**Caffeine sensitivity** (the amount of caffeine that will produce an effect in someone) varies from person to person. On average, the smaller the person, the less caffeine needed to produce side effects. Caffeine sensitivity is most affected by the amount of caffeine a person has daily. People who regularly take in a lot of caffeine soon develop less sensitivity to it. This means they may need more caffeine to achieve the same effects.

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Caffeine is a diuretic, meaning it causes a person to urinate (pee) more. It's not clear whether this causes dehydration or not. To be safe, it's probably a good idea to stay away from too much caffeine in hot weather, during long workouts, or in other situations where you might sweat a lot.

Caffeine may also cause the body to lose calcium, and that can lead to bone loss over time. Drinking caffeine-containing soft drinks and coffee instead of milk can have an even greater impact on bone density and the risk of developing osteoporosis.

Caffeine can aggravate certain heart problems. It may also interact with some medications or supplements. If you are stressed or anxious, caffeine can make these feelings worse. Although caffeine is sometimes used to treat migraine headaches, it can make headaches worse for some people.

I've gotta cut back on the caffeine



## Moderation Is the Key

Caffeine is usually thought to be safe in moderate amounts. Experts consider 200-300 mg of caffeine a day to be a moderate amount for adults. But consuming as little as 100 mg of caffeine a day can lead a person to become “dependent” on caffeine. This means that someone may develop withdrawal symptoms (like tiredness, irritability, and headaches) if he or she quits caffeine suddenly.

Teens should try to limit caffeine consumption to no more than 100 mg of caffeine daily, and kids should get even less. The following chart includes common caffeinated products and the amounts of caffeine they contain:

Drink	Amount	
<b>Caffeine</b>		
SoBe No Fear	8 ounces	83 mg
Monster energy drink	16 ounces	160 mg
Rockstar energy drink	8 ounces	80 mg
Red Bull energy drink	8.3 ounces	80 mg
Mountain Dew	12 ounces	55 mg
Coca-Cola	12 ounces	34 mg
Diet Coke	12 ounces	45 mg
Pepsi	12 ounces	38 mg
7-Up	12 ounces	0 mg
Brewed coffee (drip method)	5 ounces	115 mg*
Iced tea	12 ounces	70 mg*
Cocoa beverage	5 ounces	4 mg*

Chocolate milk beverage	8 ounces	5 mg*
Dark chocolate	1 ounce	20 mg*
Milk chocolate	1 ounce	6 mg*
Jolt gum	1 stick	33 mg
Cold relief medication	1 tablet	30 mg*
Vivarin	1 tablet	200 mg
Excedrin extra strength	2 tablets	130 mg

\*denotes average amount of caffeine

Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration, National Soft Drink Association, Center for Science in the Public Interest.

## Cutting Back

If you’re taking in too much caffeine, you may want to cut back. The best way is to cut back slowly. Otherwise you could get headaches and feel tired, irritable, or just plain lousy.

Try cutting your intake by replacing caffeinated sodas and coffee with noncaffeinated drinks. Examples include water, caffeine-free sodas, and caffeine-free teas. Keep track of how many caffeinated drinks you have each day, and substitute one drink per week with a caffeine-free alternative until you’ve gotten below the 100-milligram mark.

As you cut back on the amount of caffeine you consume, you may find yourself feeling tired. Your best bet is to hit the sack, not the sodas: It’s just your body’s way of telling you it needs more rest. Your energy levels will return to normal in a few days.

Reviewed by: Mary L. Gavin, MD - TeensHealth®

# What Is Addiction?

Alcohol and drug addiction is considered a disease because it is chronic, progressive, and fatal. It is incurable and characterized by loss of control over alcohol and other drugs. It is chronic because it lasts a long time and progressive because it gets worse over time. Addiction is incurable because once you have it, it will never go away. Addiction is fatal because it can and will kill you.

## Why do people become addicted to drugs?

You hear it all the time, that it only takes a few drinks to change your life and become an alcoholic. It’s the same with drugs. How does a person go from being a voluntary substance user to a compulsive substance user? And why is it that some people get addicted while others don’t?

Addiction is complicated. It affects a person both physically and mentally. A person can become an addict if they are exposed to elevated amounts of drugs and alcohol. Another factor leading to addiction is genetics. It has been found that if a person has a family history of addiction, they are four times more likely to become an addict than someone who does not have addiction in their family history. The continued use of drugs changes how your brain functions. It impairs your ability to think clearly, feel normal, and takes

away your ability to control your behaviors. These factors all contribute to compulsive drug seeking and uncontrollable substance use that defines addiction. There is no such thing as a healthy addiction.

## How Do I Know if Someone has an Alcohol or Drug Problem?

Answering “yes” to any of the following questions could indicate that someone has a problem with drugs/alcohol; it does not necessarily mean they are addicted.

1. Do you ever use alcohol or drugs to relax, feel better about yourself, or to fit in?
2. Have you ever ridden in a car driven by someone (including yourself) who had been using alcohol or drugs?
3. Do you ever use alcohol or drugs when you are alone?
4. Do you ever forget things you did while you were under the influence of alcohol or drugs?
5. Does family or friends ever tell you to cut down on your use of alcohol or drugs?
6. Have you ever gotten into trouble as a result of your alcohol or drug use?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you may want to seek help from an addiction professional. An addiction professional will be able to help you assess your drug and alcohol use and help determine if you have a problem and what type of help may be beneficial to you.

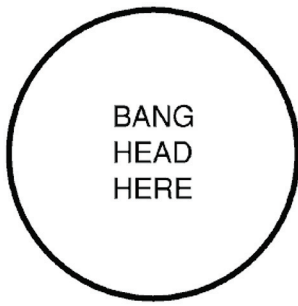
Source: New Freedom Center





## ANTI-STRESS KIT

1. PLACE ON A FIRM SURFACE
2. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS IN CIRCLE
3. REPEAT UNTIL YOU ARE UNSTRESSED OR BECOME UNCONSCIOUS



Feeling like there are too many pressures and demands on you? Losing sleep worrying about tests and schoolwork? Eating on the run because your schedule is just too busy? You're not alone. Everyone experiences stress at times — adults, teens, and even kids. But there are ways to minimize stress and manage the stress that's unavoidable.

### What Is Stress?

Stress is a feeling that's created when we react to particular events. It's the body's way of rising to a challenge and preparing to meet a tough situation with focus, strength, stamina, and heightened alertness.

The events that provoke stress are called **stressors**, and they cover a whole range of situations - everything from outright physical danger to making a class presentation or taking a semester's worth of your toughest subject.

The human body responds to stressors by activating the nervous system and specific hormones. The **hypothalamus** signals the **adrenal glands** to produce more of the hormones adrenaline and cortisol and release them into the bloodstream. These hormones speed up heart rate, breathing rate, blood pressure, and metabolism. Blood vessels open wider to let more blood flow to large muscle groups, putting our muscles on alert. Pupils dilate to improve vision. The liver releases some of its stored glucose to increase the body's energy. And sweat is produced to cool the body. All of these physical changes prepare a person to react quickly and effectively to handle the pressure of the moment.

This natural reaction is known as the **stress response**. Working properly, the body's stress response enhances a person's ability to perform well under pressure. But the stress response can also cause problems when it overreacts or fails to turn off and reset itself properly.

### Good Stress and Bad Stress

The stress response (also called the **fight or flight response**) is critical during emergency situations, such as

when a driver has to slam on the brakes to avoid an accident. It can also be activated in a milder form at a time when the pressure's on but there's no actual danger - like stepping up to take the foul shot that could win the game, getting ready to go to a big dance, or sitting down for a final exam. A little of this stress can help keep you on your toes, ready to rise to a challenge. And the nervous system quickly returns to its normal state, standing by to respond again when needed.

But stress doesn't always happen in response to things that are immediate or that are over quickly. Ongoing or long-term events, like coping with a divorce or moving to a new neighborhood or school, can cause stress, too.

Long-term stressful situations can produce a lasting, low-level stress that's hard on people. The nervous system senses continued pressure and may remain slightly activated and continue to pump out extra stress hormones over an extended period. This can wear out the body's reserves, leave a person feeling depleted or overwhelmed, weaken the body's immune system, and cause other problems.

### What Causes Stress Overload?

Although just enough stress can be a good thing, stress overload is a different story - too much stress isn't good for anyone. For example, feeling a little stress about a test that's coming up can motivate you to study hard. But stressing out too much over the test can make it hard to concentrate on the material you need to learn.

Pressures that are too intense or last too long, or troubles that are shouldered alone, can cause people to feel stress overload. Here are some of the things that can overwhelm the body's ability to cope if they continue for a long time:

Being bullied or exposed to violence or injury

Relationship stress, family conflicts, or the heavy emotions that can accompany a broken heart or the death of a loved one

Ongoing problems with schoolwork related to a learning disability or other problems, such as ADHD

Crammed schedules, not having enough time to rest and relax, and always being on the go

### Signs of Stress Overload

People who are experiencing stress overload may notice some of the following signs:

Anxiety or panic attacks

A feeling of being constantly pressured, hassled, and hurried

Irritability and moodiness

Physical symptoms, such as stomach problems or headaches

Problems sleeping

Drinking too much, smoking, overeating, or doing drugs



Everyone experiences stress a little differently. Some people become angry and act out their stress or take it out on others. Some people internalize it and develop eating disorders or substance abuse problems. And some people who have a chronic illness may find that the symptoms of their illness flare up under an overload of stress.

### **Keep Stress Under Control**

What can you do to deal with stress overload or, better yet, to avoid it in the first place? The most helpful method of dealing with stress is learning how to manage the stress that comes along with any new challenge, good or bad. Stress-management skills work best when they're used regularly, not just when the pressure's on. Knowing how to "de-stress" and doing it when things are relatively calm can help you get through challenging circumstances that may arise.

Here are some things that can help keep stress under control:

**Take a stand against over-scheduling.** If you're feeling stretched, consider cutting out an activity or two, opting for just the ones that are most important to you.

**Be realistic.** Don't try to be perfect, no one is. Expecting others to be perfect can add to your stress level. If you need help on something, like schoolwork, ask for it.

**Get a good night's sleep.** Getting enough sleep helps keep your body and mind in top shape, making you better equipped to deal with any negative stressors. Because the biological "sleep clock" shifts during adolescence, many teens prefer staying up a little later at night and sleeping a little later in the morning. But if you stay up late and still need to get up early for school, you may not get all the hours of sleep you need.

**Learn to relax.** The body's natural antidote to stress is called the relaxation response. It's your body's opposite of stress, and it creates a sense of well-being and calm. The chemical benefits of the relaxation response can be activated simply by relaxing. You can help trigger the relaxation response by learning simple breathing exercises and then using them when you're caught up in stressful situations. And ensure you stay relaxed by building time into your schedule for activities that are calming and pleasurable: reading a good book or making time for a hobby, spending time with your pet, or just taking a relaxing bath.

**Treat your body well.** Experts agree that getting regular exercise helps people manage stress. Eat well to help your body get the right fuel to function at its best. It's easy when you're stressed out to eat on the run or eat junk food or fast food. But under stressful conditions, the body needs

its vitamins and minerals more than ever. Some people may turn to substance abuse as a way to ease tension. Although alcohol or drugs may seem to lift the stress temporarily, relying on them to cope with stress actually promotes more stress because it wears down the body's ability to bounce back.

**Watch what you're thinking.** Your outlook, attitude, and thoughts influence the way you see things. Is your cup half full or half empty? A healthy dose of optimism can help you make the best of stressful circumstances. Even if you're out of practice, or tend to be a bit of a pessimist, everyone can learn to think more optimistically and reap the benefits.

**Solve the little problems.** Learning to solve everyday problems can give you a sense of control. But avoiding them can leave you feeling like you have little control and that just adds to stress. Develop skills to calmly look at a problem, figure out options, and take some action toward a solution. Feeling capable of solving little problems builds the inner confidence to move on to life's bigger ones - and it can serve you well in times of stress.

### **Build Your Resilience**

Ever notice that certain people seem to adapt quickly to stressful circumstances and take things in stride? They're cool under pressure and able to handle problems as they come up. Researchers have identified the qualities that make some people seem naturally resilient even when faced with high levels of stress.

If you want to build your resilience, work on developing these attitudes and behaviors:

Think of change as a challenging and normal part of life.

See setbacks and problems as temporary and solvable.

Believe that you will succeed if you keep working toward your goals.

Take action to solve problems that crop up.

Build strong relationships and keep commitments to family and friends.

Have a support system and ask for help.

Participate regularly in activities for relaxation and fun.

Learn to think of challenges as opportunities and stressors as temporary problems, not disasters. Practice solving problems and asking others for help and guidance rather than complaining and letting stress build.

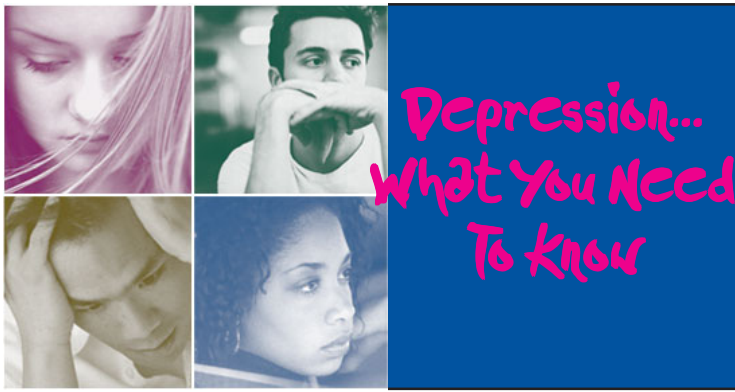
Make goals and keep track of your progress. Make time for relaxation.

Be optimistic. Believe in yourself. Be sure to breathe. And let a little stress motivate you into positive action to reach your goals.

*Source: D'Arcy Lyness, PhD - TeensHealth®*







Being depressed for long periods of time can be a sign of something more serious.

### What Is Clinical Depression?

When you feel depressed, you have what some people call the blues. It can last several days but then you begin to feel better. However, when you are depressed for more than several days with no end in sight, it is a sign of clinical depression. Clinical depression, or long-term depression, needs to be diagnosed and treated by a physician. Treatment may include therapy, medication or a combination of the two. Take the depression quiz below to find out if you are suffering from more than the blues and need help.

### Depression Quiz for Teens

The following depression quiz for teens is designed to help you identify signs of long-term depression.

1. Are you able to sleep through the night?
2. Have you gained or lost weight recently, but not by dieting?
3. Have your grades gone down since the last grading period?
4. Do you feel irritable?
5. Do you feel worthless or insignificant?
6. Is it difficult for you to concentrate on your schoolwork?
7. Have you quit enjoying things that used to bring you pleasure?
8. Do you feel angry or anxious but don't know why?
9. Do you feel tired all of the time?
10. Have you started or increased use of drugs or alcohol?
11. Do you entertain thoughts of suicide?

If you answered "yes" to two or more of these depression quiz for teens questions, you need to talk to your parent or a trusted adult for help. Depression can lead to serious consequences, especially if you are thinking about suicide. If

you feel you have no one to talk to about your thoughts of suicide, please call the National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-784-2433. They have counselors available to speak with you 24/7.

### Causes of Depression

There are many causes of depression, from troubles with your family to things that go on in school or at your job. Depression may also be caused by other factors that most people never think about. Things that can cause depression include:

Traumatic experiences that may have occurred when you were young. Typical depression triggers include abuse and incest, especially when the offender denies it ever happened.

The death of a loved one, divorce or breaking up with a girlfriend or boyfriend can cause deep feelings of loss.

Hormone or physical changes

Vitamin deficiencies

Stress or results of Peer Pressure

Allergies to milk, wheat and sugar

Genetic predisposition; a close relative has been diagnosed with clinical depression

Substance abuse can cause changes in the chemistry of your brain

### Treatments for Depression

There are many treatments for depression including various therapies and medications. Since everyone is different, each patient is treated individually. Your physician will determine Being depressed for long periods of time can be a sign of something more serious.

### Conclusion

If you feel that you need help after taking the depression quiz for teens, contact a trusted friend or relative who will listen and get you the help you need. A school nurse, counselor, teacher or your parents are good choices when seeking assistance. Don't wait to get help, especially if you are having suicidal thoughts or thinking of hurting someone else.

Don't be afraid to get help. The treatment programs can be as interactive or private as you feel comfortable with. No physician or counselor will add stress to your situation by making you do something you are uncomfortable with. Your depression may be related to something as simple as your diet, but you won't know if you don't ask for help.

Talk to someone about your feelings. You don't have to go it alone. There are counselors that have been through the same things you are going through and they would love to help you out. Many crisis centers are available just to talk, and you won't have to give out your name unless you want to. Take control of your depression before it takes control of you.

*Source: Parenting Teens – Recognizing Teen Depression*



# Dating Safety

## 7 Tips For Staying Safe While Having Fun

You've met someone who's cute, fascinating and interested in you. Congratulations! Here are some tips to help that first date—or the fiftieth one—go smoothly and safely.

### 1. Date People You Know and Trust

While it's not always practical to become friends before dating someone, try to get to know your date through a group activity or a double-date before you go solo. You'll see how your date-to-be gets along with others, and you'll get some good clues about what to expect from them.

If you can't hang out in a group before your first date, try to talk on the phone before you make plans to go out. Getting to know your love interest before you go on a full-fledged date gives you more to talk about and less to feel awkward about when you spend time as a couple.



### 2. Be Extra Careful About Meeting People Online

If the person you'd like to date is someone you met online, insist on meeting them in person first, and bring a friend along. Ask lots of questions to be sure that the person you're meeting is who they claimed to be online.

Trust your instincts: If something doesn't seem right about the person, do not share your contact information and leave the situation immediately.

### 3. Talk To Your Parents

Never go on a date without telling someone else. Even if it's a little annoying, let your mom, dad or another adult know when you're going out. Be sure to tell your parents who you're going with, where you plan to go and what time you expect to return home, too.

It's a good policy to bring your cell phone along, if you have one, and to leave your date's phone number with your parents, just in case anything goes wrong. Be prepared for the unexpected: You might need a ride home, some extra cash or a way to bail if your date is a dud.

### 4. Know Your Limits and Communicate Them

Review your personal values and hopes for the date before leaving the house. Be sure to let the person you're dating know what makes you comfortable, what makes you uncomfortable and what kinds of things you'd like to avoid on your date, whether it's sex, alcohol or spicy foods. Let your date know what kinds of things you *would* like to do, too! Plus, be sure you know and respect your date's limits as well.

If you feel uncomfortable about a situation, say "no" clearly and confidently. You're always allowed to change your mind about something, too. If someone likes and respects you, they'll back off. Don't worry: They will most likely ask you out again. If your

date doesn't respect your decision, stay safe by leaving the situation.

### 5. Avoid Drugs and Alcohol

Drugs and alcohol compromise your ability to make smart decisions and to escape dangerous situations. They can make you take risks you wouldn't usually take with your body, your car and your safety in general. They also prevent you from getting to know what your date is really like and keep your date from getting to know the real you.

If you feel you must have a drink on a date or at a party, keep an eye on your glass at all times: Many teens are sexually assaulted after someone slips a powerful sedative drug into whatever they're drinking. Resisting the urge to drink is the best way to prevent getting hurt and having to deal with the consequences of unwanted sex.

### 6. Go Out, Don't Hang Out

Getting out of the house for dates is always a good goal, especially if it's your first date with somebody. Not only is it safer to hang out in a public place such as a restaurant, movie theater or coffee shop, it's fun to discover new places with someone else. Going out rather than hanging out tells your date that you think they're special and want to explore the world—not just the cable channels—with them.

If you want to spend some time alone with the person you're seeing, wait until you've had a few dates and have set ground rules for alone time. Even if your date wants to stroll through an empty park or make out in the car, you don't have to go along with it. Trust your gut, and don't be afraid to say no and call it a night.

### 7. Know The Warning Signs of Dating Violence and Relationship Abuse

Dating violence is extremely common among teens. Even if your partner is charming and sweet at first, look out for signs of abusive relationships, such as:

- isolating you from friends and family
- having angry outbursts
- blaming others for problems
- threatening to hurt you during arguments
- getting extremely jealous for no reason
- acting cruel toward animals or children
- trying to control you by belittling your values or ideas.

If these warning signs sound like someone you're dating, take a step back and reevaluate the relationship. If you need help figuring out what to do, talk to a school guidance counselor, social worker, teacher, pastor or domestic violence hotline. You are not alone!

Source: Jessica Stevenson, former About.com Guide







## Social Networking... Are You Addicted?

Social networking sites like My Space, Facebook and Twitter can be great resources for staying in touch with friends, but they should never become a substitute for physical interaction with others.

Unfortunately for many people, checking in on social networking sites takes up a lot of their spare time and sometimes can even become a bit of an addiction.

To help you determine if you use social networking sites appropriately we have put together the questionnaire below. Answer "yes" or "no" to each question and then total your answers to determine if you are addicted to social networking sites.

### Questionnaire

1. Are you a member of multiple social networking sites?
2. Do you visit your social networking sites with no goal or specific purpose in mind?
3. Are you usually surprised by how much time you spend on a social networking site?
4. Have you ever said no to an activity with your family or friends because of social networking sites?
5. Have you ever ignored a responsibility like homework or chores because of social networking sites?
6. Do you ever stay up late or get up early to spend more time on social networking sites?
7. Have you ever hidden your time on social networking sites from family or friends?
8. Have you ever used social networking sites when a parent or teacher has told you not to?
9. Do you prefer to interact with people on social networking sites rather than face to face?
10. Has anyone ever commented on how much time you spend on social networking sites?
11. Do you have more friends on your social networking sites than you do in your real life?
12. Do you become frustrated or angry when a social networking site goes down or is unavailable?

### So....Are You Addicted to Social Networking Sites?

If you answered "yes" to between one and four questions then you are most likely not addicted to social networking sites. You probably use social networking sites to extend your relationships with family and friends but recognize that keeping up with these sites are less important than strengthening the relationships that exist outside of the Internet. You're likely very choosy about who you are friends with on these sites and realize the dangers of allowing strangers to view your personal information.

If you answered "yes" to between five and eight questions then you may be addicted to social networking sites. For the next week try to write down every time you visit a social networking site and how long you spend on it. If you want to, also include information on what you did while you used the site and take note of any time someone else mentions your use of social networking sites. At the end of the week total your notes to determine how much of your life you really spend on social networking sites. You might be surprised by the results.

If you answered "yes" to nine or more questions then you are likely to be addicted to social networking sites. Your use of these sites is most likely getting in the way of your real life and you may even be using them as a substitute for getting out and making friends. Try to wean yourself off of social networking sites by spending less time on them each day, and more time on activities away from the computer. Join a club, take up a new hobby, study somewhere without Internet access or organize an activity for your family or friends. With so much going on in your life your enthusiasm for social networking sites will be no doubt soon fade on its own.

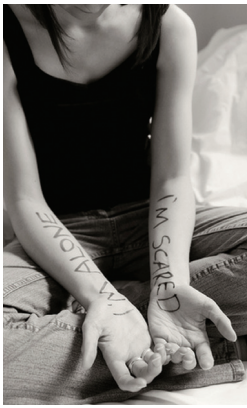
## Mind Blowing Facts About Social Media...

- \* 72% of the internet population are active on at least 1 social network (Brazil 95%, USA 84%, Portugal 82%)
- \* Facebook has the highest penetration at 51%, MySpace at 20% and Twitter at 17%
- \* On average users log in 2 times a day
- \* Sending personal messages is the most popular online activity
- \* On average, people have about 195 friends
- \* Although Facebook is the most popular social network website, 1 out of 3 users have little faith in it!
- \* Everyone removes friends sometimes
- \* 13% of users admit to having a far-from-real image on at least 1 social networking site
- \* More than 1 of 2 users cannot access their profiles at work (that's 55%!)
- \* 20% of the online population are already users of a social network.

Sources: InSites Consulting Market Research Study 2010

Teen Internet Usage - Teen Health





# Self - Injury

## Can I stop hurting myself?

Your teen years can be the most complicated phase of your life. Some of your challenges include: more school work, changes in relationships, and changes in your body. Sometimes it can be hard to handle the feelings that come with these changes, while you're also trying to manage the day-to-day of teen life. Some teens have a harder time than others balancing out their feelings and may turn to harmful activities such as drinking, using drugs, or self-injury. This guide was created to help you understand self-injury, and how you can get help for yourself or a friend.

### What is self-injury?

When you hurt your body on purpose it is called "self-injury". Other names for self-injury are "cutting", "self-harm", or "self-mutilation". Some ways that people hurt themselves are by cutting, scratching, picking, or burning their body.

People who self-injure sometimes hurt themselves repeatedly, and often have scars. While you are self-injuring you might not feel pain, and could do more damage than you mean to.

### Why do people self-injure?

People who injure themselves are experiencing overwhelming feelings, like extreme anxiety or tension, and in the moment self-injury may seem to provide a feeling of escape or relief. Some people also experience "depersonalization", which is when a person doesn't feel real, or feels she is outside of her body watching herself. People who feel this way might cut or harm themselves to help themselves feel "real" again. Others cut or injure themselves as a way of punishing themselves. Many people who self-injure have a history of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, and have a sense of shame about themselves.

Most people who self-injure haven't yet learned healthier ways to cope with negative feelings. Although you might feel stuck in a pattern of injuring yourself, there is a way out.

### Is self-injury the same as being suicidal?

No, but sometimes injuries can be severe enough to cause death, and sometimes people who self-injure may become suicidal.

If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal you should get professional help immediately. Tell a parent, an adult you

trust, or someone who can help right away. If you can't get someone to help you or do not know what to do, call 911 or go to the closest hospital emergency room.

### What should I do if I self-injure?

It is very important to ask for help if you or someone you know self-injures. Talk to an adult you trust, such as a parent, relative, guidance counselor or your health care provider. Friends can be very supportive, but it is important that you tell an adult too.

When you talk to a trusted adult, tell them you have been self-injuring, and that you want to stop. Ask them for support, and ask them to help you find resources and make a plan for stopping.

**Special note:** if you have a cut that is infected, or that won't stop bleeding, you will need to get first aid right away.

### Can I stop hurting myself?

Yes, you can stop. Stopping self-injury is like quitting drugs or alcohol. It's a challenge, but with support and a good plan, you can do it! You can find healthier ways to handle your intense feelings, and you can learn to take good care of yourself.

Deciding to stop self-injuring is a decision that you will have to make for yourself—but it is a lot easier with the support of family, friends, and a health care provider.

The first thing you should know is that you are a good person, and that your body and mind deserve good care. You may not have heard that very often in your life, but it is important to know this basic truth about yourself! Knowing this can inspire you to learn healthier ways of coping with stress.

### How do I stop hurting myself in the moment?

It's important to find ways to soothe or focus yourself when you feel like self-injuring. Make a list of non-harmful things that help you feel relaxed and real, like playing a sport, meditating, drawing, or playing an instrument. Keep this list where you can see it so when you feel like hurting yourself you will have other options and you can choose to do something else.

### Here are some ways to use up nervous energy:

- |                                  |                     |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Go for a long walk               | Dance to loud music |
| Go jogging                       | Clean your room     |
| Shoot hoops or kick soccer goals |                     |

### Here are some ways to relax and de-stress:

- |                             |                  |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Take a bath or a hot shower | Listen to music  |
| Write in a journal          | Talk to a friend |
| Read a good book            |                  |

Many teens find that keeping busy and spending time with good friends and family helps the most.

### How can I recover from self-injury?

Self-injury is a symptom of deeper emotional pain. Getting counseling or psychotherapy can help you better understand your feelings and your life situation. A counselor or therapist





can help you figure out why you hurt yourself, what situations put you at risk, and what steps you can take to learn healthier ways to deal with intense emotions. If you are also dealing with depression, anxiety, or other mental health issues, a therapist can address those too. Sometimes a healthcare provider may recommend medication as part of your overall plan for recovering from self-injury.

Making the decision to stop self-injuring is a big first step. Remember that learning healthier ways to handle intense feelings will take time. The key to recovering is to get support from people who care about you, and treatment from an experienced therapist or counselor. You deserve this change, so keep working on it, and remember, you are not alone in your recovery!

### **How can I help a friend who self-injures?**

If you have a friend who self-injures there are steps you can take to help them stop, and help them recover.

First, suggest to your friend that they talk to an adult they trust, like a parent, school counselor, or their health care provider. Second, support your friend by listening to them, and letting them know you care about them. Lastly, print out this guide, or some other information on self-injury, and give it to them. They can read it when they feel ready.

If your friend won't talk to an adult, and refuses help, you should find a trusted adult who knows your friend, and talk to that person. Tell an adult even if your friend asked you to keep their self-injury a secret! Your friend might get angry at you, but in this situation, it's more important to get help.

Self-injury is very serious and can be deadly, and your friend's safety is more important than privacy right now. Your friend might be mad at you for a while, but you can apologize and talk about it later, after you know they're safe.

*Source: CYWH Staff at Children's Hospital Boston*

## **WHERE DID ALL MY MONEY GO? IT WAS IN THE FINE PRINT.**

When it comes to credit cards, buyer beware. Recently the Credit CARD Act was put in place to help crack down on credit card companies. One area it targets is protecting young adults.

*New legislation NOW specifically requires anyone younger than 21 to prove that they can repay the money before being given a credit card, or have a parent or guardian promise to pay off their debt if they default.*

While this new law takes some protective measures to offer you better protection, it is still important for you to keep your guard up. As credit card issues and fees can still creep in.

### **Here's the good news:**

- Credit card issuers can no longer retroactively hike your interest rate: the interest rate on your past purchases remains the same.

- Issuers must keep your payment due date the same day EVERY month.

- Credit card issuers are now required to tell you how long it will take you to pay off your card, and how much it will cost you if you only pay the minimum each month.

These positive changes are great. But it's up to you as consumers to pay attention. No-one is going to watch out to make sure you don't go into debt. You have to take time to read the fine print to make sure YOU aren't cheated out of YOUR hard earned money.

### **What to watch out for:**

- Even though card issuers cannot hike your rate retroactively. They can still raise your rate at any time after you have had your

credit card account open for a year.

If this happens, you should receive a 45 day notice in the mail so DON'T ignore your mail.

- Fees still exist. Some fees commonly charged include: fees for using paper statements, annual fees, etc. Don't assume your mail is junk. Be sure to read all mail carefully before you send it to the trash.

- Also, there are no caps in interest rates or new charges. Meaning if you have one late payment they can still double or triple your interest rate.

The real deal is that YOU need to stay alert for where YOUR money is going. The day will come when you will have the choice to own a credit card, and you need to be ready!

### **Helpful Credit Card Tips**

- 1) Always read the fine print.
- 2) Watch for interest rate changes and off-the-wall fees.
- 3) Never make a late payment or you will end up paying for this mistake.
- 4) Nothing is free with credit cards. Don't fall for the gimmicks of a free t-shirt or a free pizza.
- 5) Don't use a credit card to regularly finance purchases.
- 6) Watch out for rewards and cash back offers. They encourage you to spend more

money,

maybe even more money than you actually have.

- 7) Don't ever charge money you can't pay off each month.
- 8) Never borrow money close to your credit limit.
- 9) Never delay paying your credit card bill. If you don't pay your bill in full you will be charged interest and in the end can end up paying twice the amount or more, than if you would of waited to save up for your purchase.
- 10) Be smart and stay out of debt!

*Source: Mid-America Credit Union Association*





Inhalants are a diverse group of volatile substances whose chemical vapors can be inhaled to produce psychoactive (mind-altering) effects. While other abused substances can be inhaled, the term “inhalants” is used to describe substances that are rarely, if ever, taken by any other route of administration. A variety of products common in the home and workplace contain substances that can be inhaled to get high; however, people do not typically think of these products (e.g., spray paints, glues, and cleaning fluids) as drugs because they were never intended to induce intoxicating effects. Yet young children and adolescents can easily obtain these extremely toxic substances and are among those most likely to abuse them.

### What Types of Products Are Abused as Inhalants?

Inhalants generally fall into the following categories:

**Volatile solvents**—liquids that vaporize at room temperature

- *Industrial or household products*, including paint thinners or removers, degreasers, dry-cleaning fluids, gasoline, and lighter fluid

- *Art or office supply solvents*, including correction fluids, felt-tip marker fluid, electronic contact cleaners, and glue

**Aerosols**—sprays that contain propellants and solvents

- *Household aerosol propellants* in items such as spray paints, hair or deodorant sprays, fabric protector sprays, aerosol computer cleaning products, and vegetable oil sprays

**Gases**—found in household or commercial products and used as medical anesthetics

- *Household or commercial products*, including butane lighters and propane tanks, whipped cream aerosols or dispensers (whippets), and refrigerant gases

- *Medical anesthetics*, such as ether, chloroform, halothane, and nitrous oxide (“laughing gas”)

**Nitrites**—a special class of inhalants that are used primarily as sexual enhancers

- *Organic nitrites* are volatiles that include cyclohexyl, butyl, and amyl nitrites, commonly known as “poppers.” Amyl nitrite is still used in certain diagnostic medical procedures. When marketed for illicit use, organic nitrites are often sold in small brown bottles labeled as “room odorizer,” “leather cleaner,” or “liquid aroma.”

These various products contain a wide range of chemicals such as—

- toluene (spray paints, rubber cement, gasoline),
- chlorinated hydrocarbons (dry-cleaning chemicals, correction fluids),

- hexane (glues, gasoline),
- benzene (gasoline),
- methylene chloride (varnish removers, paint thinners),
- butane (cigarette lighter refills, air fresheners), and
- nitrous oxide (whipped cream dispensers, gas cylinders).

Adolescents tend to abuse different products at different ages. Among new users ages 12–15, the most commonly abused inhalants are glue, shoe polish, spray paints, gasoline, and lighter fluid. Among new users age 16 or 17, the most commonly abused products are nitrous oxide or whippets.

### How Are Inhalants Abused?

Inhalants can be breathed in through the nose or mouth in a variety of ways (known as “huffing”), such as sniffing or snorting fumes from a container, spraying aerosols directly into the nose or mouth, or placing an inhalant-soaked rag in the mouth. Users may also inhale fumes from a balloon or a plastic or paper bag that contains an inhalant.

The intoxication produced by inhalants usually lasts just a few minutes; therefore, users often try to extend the “high” by continuing to inhale repeatedly over several hours.

### How Do Inhalants Affect the Brain?

The effects of inhalants are similar to those of alcohol, including slurred speech, lack of coordination, euphoria, and dizziness. Inhalant abusers may also experience light-headedness, hallucinations, and delusions. With repeated inhalations, many users feel less inhibited and less in control. Some may feel drowsy for several hours and experience a lingering headache. Chemicals found in different types of inhaled products may produce a variety of additional effects, such as confusion, nausea, or vomiting.

By displacing air in the lungs, inhalants deprive the body of oxygen, a condition known as hypoxia. Hypoxia can damage cells throughout the body, but the cells of the brain are especially sensitive to it. The symptoms of brain hypoxia vary according to which regions of the brain are affected: for example, the hippocampus helps control memory, so someone who repeatedly uses inhalants may lose the ability to learn new things or may have a hard time carrying on simple conversations.

Long-term inhalant abuse can also break down myelin, a fatty tissue that surrounds and protects some nerve fibers. Myelin helps nerve fibers carry their messages quickly and efficiently, and when damaged, can lead to muscle spasms and tremors or even permanent difficulty with basic actions such as walking, bending, and talking.

Although not very common, addiction to inhalants can occur with repeated abuse.

### What Other Adverse Effects Do Inhalants Have on Health?

#### Lethal Effects

Sniffing highly concentrated amounts of the chemicals in solvents or aerosol sprays can directly induce heart failure and death within minutes of a session of repeated inhalation.

This syndrome, known as “sudden sniffing death,” can result from a single session of inhalant use by an otherwise





healthy young person. Sudden sniffing death is particularly associated with the abuse of butane, propane, and chemicals in aerosols.

High concentrations of inhalants may also cause death from suffocation by displacing oxygen in the lungs, causing the user to lose consciousness and stop breathing. Deliberately inhaling from a paper or plastic bag or in a closed area greatly increases the chances of suffocation. Even when using aerosols or volatile products for their legitimate purposes (i.e., painting, cleaning), it is wise to do so in a well-ventilated room or outdoors.

### **Harmful Irreversible Effects**

- Hearing loss—spray paints, glues, dewaxers, dry-cleaning chemicals, correction fluids
- Peripheral neuropathies or limb spasms—glues, gasoline, whipped cream dispensers, gas cylinders
- Central nervous system or brain damage—spray paints, glues, dewaxers
- Bone marrow damage—gasoline

### **Serious but Potentially Reversible Effects**

- Liver and kidney damage - correction fluids, dry-cleaning fluids
- Blood oxygen depletion - varnish removers, paint thinners
- **HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, and Other Infectious Diseases**

Because nitrites are abused to enhance sexual pleasure and performance, they can be associated with unsafe sexual practices that greatly increase the risk of contracting and

spreading infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and hepatitis.

### **How Widespread Is Inhalant Abuse?**

#### **Monitoring the Future Survey**

According to the Monitoring the Future survey, a significant increase in past-month inhalant use was measured among 10th-graders from 2008 to 2009; prevalence of use rose from 2.1 percent to 2.2 percent among that population. Other prevalence measures remained stable. Lifetime use of inhalants was reported by 14.9 percent of 8th-graders, 12.3 percent of 10th-graders, and 9.5 percent of 12th-graders in 2009; 8.1 percent of 8th-graders, 6.1 percent of 10th-graders, and 3.4 percent of 12th-graders reported use in the past year. However, investigators are concerned that perceived risk associated with inhalant use has been in decline for several years, which may leave young people open to renewed interest.

#### **National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) <sup>†††</sup>**

Data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health show that the primary abusers of most inhalants are adolescents ages 12 to 17; in 2008, 1.1 percent reported using inhalants in the past month. From 2002 to 2008, there were declines in past-month inhalant use among young adults aged 18 to 25 (from 0.5 percent to 0.3 percent). Of the 729,000 persons aged 12 or older who tried inhalants for the first time within the previous year, approximately 67 percent were under age 18 when they first used.

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse



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# Beware The Cyber Bully!

- A website set up to mock others
- "Borrowing" someone's screen name and pretending to be them while posting a message.
- Forwarding supposedly private messages, pictures, or video to others.

The i-Safe America research team has discovered a disturbing trend - cyber bullying has affected more than half the students surveyed, on both sides of the issue. Their latest assessments surveyed more than 1500 students ranging from fourth to eighth grade across the country.

They found out:

- 58% of kids admit someone has said mean or hurtful things to them online
- 53% of kids admit having said something mean or hurtful things to another online
- 42% of kids have been bullied while online

The tradition of home as a refuge from bullies on the school playground is over.

The Internet is the new playground, and there are no off hours. The popularity of instant messaging, e-mail, webpages, and blogging means kids are a target 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Even worse, i-SAFE found out 58 percent of kids have not told their parents or any adult about something mean or hurtful that had happened to them online.

Teachers and school officials need to be aware of the rising trend of cyber bullying as incidents online are brought onto school grounds.

i-SAFE offers these tips to share with students who are being cyber bullied:

- Tell a trusted adult and keep telling them until they take action.
- Never open, read or respond to messages from cyber bullies.
- If it is school related, tell your school. All schools have bullying solutions.
- Do not erase the messages. They may be needed to take action.
- If bullied through chat or IM, the bully can often be blocked.
- If you are threatened with harm, call the police.

Above all, students are the cure to the cyber bullying epidemic. By speaking out and telling adults they can stop bullying online and make the Internet experience a more positive one.

## Cyber Bullying: Breaking It Down Beware of the Cyber Bully

*Cyber Bullying is verbal harassment that occurs during online activities. Cyber Bullying can take many forms.*

*These are a few:*

- A threatening e-mail
- Nasty instant messaging session
- Repeated notes sent to the cell phone

## The Effects of Cyber Bullying: Teen Takes His Own Life

Awhile ago our 13-year-old son Ryan took his own life. For the first few days we were nearly immobilized by shock and grief. It made absolutely no sense.

Ryan was an outwardly happy-go-lucky kid with two loving and supportive parents. He did not leave a note and his peers at school did not give the counselors and police any logical reasons for his action. It turned out the computer in Ryan's bedroom would be the key to unlocking most of the mystery.

I was very proud of the fact that my children grew up with computers from a very early age. To be safe, we often discussed the dangers of the Internet with them. They knew not to divulge any personal information or IM with anyone they did not know in person.

Periodic inspection of Ryan's computer and frequent discussions had assured me that Ryan was continuing to use the PC responsibly. Another rule was no online accounts with passwords kept secret from his parents. We felt this was a good deterrent to any inappropriate e-mailing or instant messaging.

A week after his death, I logged onto Ryan's AOL IM account. I was quickly instant messaged from many of his startled peers. I immediately identified myself as Ryan's dad and that I was, on his account, trying to find clues to explain his death. It was during this first session that two children told me the details of what happened at school in regards to bullying.

Another child also tipped me off that there might be logged IM conversations on Ryan's computer if he had installed a program called "DeadAIM." I found the folder of conversations.

Reading them was almost as difficult as losing my son. I found three months of IM conversations right up to just a few days before his death.

One very disturbing IM exchange was with another boy who was harassing Ryan in a very disgusting, sexual way. There were many other conversations that revealed Ryan's view of life had taken a dramatic negative turn over the summer. And there was one particular boy whose online advice and encouragement was anything but helpful to Ryan's state of mind. This one IM exchange, just a few nights before his death, sums up the nature of this very unhealthy relationship:

My son: "Tonight's the night. You are going to read about in the paper tomorrow."

Other boy: "It's about time."

Ryan never mentioned this boy's name. We learned later that Ryan hung out with him a few times in person but mostly





online since he lives a few hours away. Had we met this child in person or had the chance to ask other parents about the boy, we would have never allowed him to associate with this kid.

Do I blame the computer and the Internet for my son's death? No. Did I feel the computer in his room exacerbated a very unhealthy situation that started with schoolyard bullying? Yes. The computer in his room provided an environment that reinforced his bad feelings. He continued to get harassed and tried to harass back online throughout the summer, which only made things much worse when he had to face the same kids at the start of the new school year.

Instead of turning to an adult, the computer made it too easy for him to turn to another peer who ended up being more harmful to Ryan's state of mind. Behind closed doors, Ryan was also able to more easily explore the option of suicide and find a website that showed him ways to do it.

I'll never know for certain if he would still be alive today had the computer not been in his room, but I hope by sharing this, another parent pauses and reflects on our family's tragedy. To learn more about Ryan and ways to prevent teenage suicide, visit: [www.RyanPatrickHalligan.com](http://www.RyanPatrickHalligan.com).

*By John Halligan, Ryan's father*

### Prevention Techniques: Avoiding Bullies Online

- Don't give out private information such as passwords, pins, name, address, phone number, school name, or family and friends' names. This information can be used by bullies and other harmful people on the Internet. Don't even reveal your password to your friends. They might reveal it or use it against you in a fight.
- Don't exchange pictures or give out e-mail addresses to people you meet on the Internet.
- =Ask permission from parents when it is necessary to give such information.
- Don't send a message when you are angry—it's hard to undo things that are said in anger.
- Delete messages from people you don't know, or those from people who seem angry or mean.
- When something doesn't seem right, it probably isn't. Get out of the site, chat, etc.
- Realize that online conversations are not private. Others can copy, print, and share what you say or any pictures you send. Be careful!

*Source: i-Safe America Inc*

## Avoid Pocket Money Problems

Pocket money is generally a gift from your parents or money that you "earn" from your parents by doing chores for them. To figure out how much pocket money you honestly need per week, read on to help you avoid pocket money problems later.

### Assess Your Needs

In the past "pocket money" was a term that referred to fun money or money that was not required to pay for life's necessities. Today there seems to be a lot more necessities, so when determining how much pocket money you think you need be very clear about what your pocket money must pay for. Take into account:

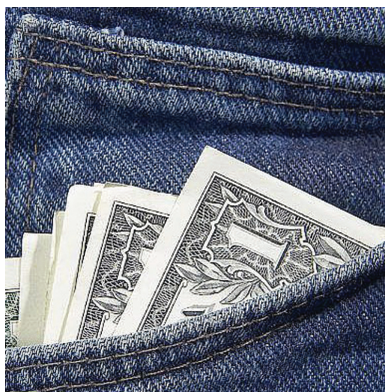
- Food and snacks.
- Entertainment such as cinema tickets, DVD rentals, books and magazines.
- Mobile phones and phone credit.
- School supplies.
- Birthday and holiday presents.
- Clothes and accessories.
- Beauty and personal care items.

### Understand the Terms

When you have totalled up what you believe is a suitable amount for weekly pocket money, discuss this figure with

your parents. Make sure that you are all clear about the terms of your pocket money, including:

- What it must cover.
- If it is being given freely or you if need to "work" for it by doing chores, keeping up your grades, etc.
- If it can ever be withheld, such as for punishment or until you perform a certain chore.
- If you will be able to reassess this figure or ask for a "pay raise" in the future.
- If other money, such as birthday money or holiday money must be used for certain expenses or put into savings.



### Supplementing Your Pocket Money

If you consider your pocket money allowance too small, there may be ways to supplement this figure. Consider:

- Taking on a steady part time job.
  - Taking on extra chores around the house.
  - Helping your parents with their work, such as by typing or running errands for them.
  - Tutoring other students.
  - Babysitting for family.
  - Asking your parents about hosting a rummage sale or posting items on eBay or another online auction site.
- No matter how much pocket money you get, it never seems enough. Of course this is the point of pocket money, to teach you to budget and save and become responsible for your purchases. Prove to your parents that you are equal to the task and you just might be pleasantly surprised by the results!

*Source: Teen Issues*



# What Teenagers Need To Know About Sex and the Law

In North Dakota, a person can be charged with a serious crime if he or she engages in a sexual act or sexual contact with a minor and is at least three years older than the minor. The seriousness of the crime and the penalties are even greater if the minor is under 15 years of age and there is no requirement that the person be at least three years older than the minor.

- If you are 18, you are considered to be an adult - even if you are still in high school. Anyone younger than 18 is a "minor." A minor *cannot* legally "consent" to engage in sexual contact or perform a sexual act.

**The law does not make an exception just because you are in love.**

Did You Know

- "Sexting" is a crime and your boyfriend or girlfriend can get into trouble if they have a nude or partially nude photo of you on their cell phone or computer—even if you took the photo yourself. You can get into trouble, too, for sending it to them.

And, once you send the photo, you can't control who else they share it with or where they post it.

- Even if you have consensual sexual contact with someone under the age of 15, you can be charged with gross sexual imposition in juvenile court. If your case then is transferred to adult court, you will be treated as an adult sex offender and will be subject to the same penalties as an adult.

- If you fool around with someone you know has been given a "date rape" drug, you can be in just as much trouble as the person who gave it to the unsuspecting victim.

- If you slap or pinch someone's breast or butt as a joke in school, it may not be a joke to that person. If the person you touch finds it offensive, the legal system won't take it as a joke, either.

- Having sex with someone who is too drunk to know what is happening to them is a Class A Felony, even if the person got drunk voluntarily.

- Chat rooms are fun—but be careful—you don't know who is really on the other end. It could be a 12 year old boy, an adult pretending to be a teen, or even a cop ready to arrest you for luring a minor by computer.

- Even if your boyfriend or girlfriend wants to have sex with you, your friend's parents can still have you arrested and charged with a crime if they find out.

Decisions you make about sex will affect the rest of your life. The wrong decision can have devastating consequences – for you, your partner, and your family.

- If you are convicted of a sex offense, even as a juvenile, you will be required to register as a *sex offender*.

You will have to notify the police every time you move, get a new job, or attend a new school. You may end up studying at home with a tutor instead of hanging out with your friends at

school. If you still have friends - their parents may not let them hang out with a convicted sex offender.

- Along with the criminal charges you may face, there is always the risk of pregnancy or contracting a *sexually transmitted disease*, such as gonorrhea, Chlamydia, herpes or HIV - even with protection.

## Legal Terms You Should Know:

### The Crimes

**Sexual Act** Anal sex, oral sex, intercourse, or digital penetration.

**Sexual Contact** Any touching, even through clothing, of sexual or other intimate body parts of a person, for the purpose of arousing or satisfying sexual or aggressive desires.

**Gross Sexual Imposition** A person who engages in sexual acts or sexual contact with a minor under age 15.

**Corruption of Minors** An adult who engages in a sexual act with a 15-17 year old minor and who is at least three years older than the minor.

**Sexual Assault** Fondling of a 15-17 year old who is at least three years younger than the offender, or sexual contact with a person whose ability to consent is impaired.

### Luring Minors by Computer

Using a computer or other electronic means to talk about or arrange sexual encounters, sex acts or sexual contact with a minor.

**Fornication** A minor engaging in a consensual sex act.

**Indecent Exposure** Exposing yourself, or masturbating in public for the purpose of arousing another person or satisfying your own sexual desires.

**Surreptitious Intrusion** ("peeping") Seeking to satisfy a sexual desire by window peeping, or intruding on another person's privacy in their home, hotel room, tanning booth, etc.

Intruding on privacy includes things like recording, photographing, broadcasting and videotaping.

### The Penalties

If you are adjudicated (convicted) of a sexual offense as a juvenile, you can be removed from the custody of your parents and sent to a juvenile facility.

But, if you get transferred to adult court, these penalties apply:

**Felony** If you are convicted of a felony, you may be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of up to life, be fined up to \$10,000, or both. A felony conviction has to be disclosed on most job applications. You will lose the right to carry a firearm and will not be able to hunt for 5-10 years.

**Misdemeanor** If you are convicted of a misdemeanor offense, you may receive a sentence of up to one year, a fine of up to \$2,000, or both.

The conviction is part of your criminal record, which *never* goes away. When you apply for a job or want to rent an apartment your future employer or landlord may run a criminal history record check. If they do, they will see the sex offense - it may cost you the job or the apartment.



The largest stained-glass window in the world is at Kennedy International Airport in New York City. it can be seen on the American Airlines terminal building and measures 300 feet long by 23 feet high.





## Alcohol Myth vs. Fact

As the nation's current debate on the 21 Minimum Legal Drinking Age (MLDA) continues, it can be easy to mistake opinions for facts.

**Myth:** The law only makes youth want to drink because it's a "forbidden fruit." If drinking alcohol was legal at 18, it wouldn't be a big deal and those under 21 would be less likely to drink.

**Fact:** When the "forbidden fruit" is no longer forbidden, youth simply drink more. In states where the drinking age was 18, those under 21 drank more than youth in states where the minimum drinking age was 21 and they continued to drink more as adults in their early 20s. In states where the drinking age was 21, teenagers drank less than youth in states where the minimum drinking age was 21 and continued to drink less through their early 20s.

But drinking more is not the only issue.

Because alcohol impairs decision-making capabilities, young people who drink are more likely to engage in risk-taking behavior. And this risky behavior can lead to unintentional deaths and injuries associated with driving or engaging in other activities that lead to homicide and violence, suicide attempts, sexual assault, risky sexual behavior, and vandalism and property damage.

And, youth who started drinking before age 15, compared to those who waited until they were 21, were 12 times more likely to be unintentionally injured while under the influence of alcohol, 7 times more likely to be in a motor vehicle crash after drinking, and 10 times more likely to have been in a physical fight after drinking.

Drinking at earlier ages is also associated with higher rates of drinking later in life. In fact, 40 percent of those who

started drinking before 15 meet criteria for alcohol dependence at some time in their lives.

**Myth:** If I'm old enough to go to war, I should be old enough to drink.

**Fact:** Many rights have different ages of initiation. You can get a hunting license at age 12, drive at 16, vote and serve in the military at 18, serve in the U.S. House of Representatives at 25, and serve as the U.S. President at 35. Other regulated rights include the sale and use of tobacco, and legal consent for sexual intercourse and marriage. Vendors, such as car rental facilities and hotels, also have set the minimum age for a person to use their services—25-years-old to rent a car and 21-years-old to rent a hotel room.

And these minimum ages are set for a reason. In the case of alcohol, 21 is the minimum age because a person's brain does not stop developing until his or her early to mid-20s. Drinking alcohol while the brain is still developing can lead to long-lasting deficits in cognitive abilities, including learning and memory.

Alcohol use by those under 21 is also related to numerous health problems including injuries and death resulting from alcohol poisoning, car crashes, suicide, homicide, assaults, drowning and recreational mishaps. Not to mention that the early onset of drinking by youth significantly increases the risk of future health problems such as addiction.

**Myth:** Lowering the drinking age will encourage young people to be responsible consumers and drink under supervision at bars (or on college campuses) rather than at uncontrolled, private parties.



**Fact:** While many bars serve alcohol legally and responsibly, many bars encourage irresponsible drinking with happy hours, two-for-one specials and bar crawls. Many also serve obviously intoxicated patrons. On college campuses, fraternity and sorority members drink more frequently than their peers and accept high levels of alcohol consumption and associated problems as “normal”.

Youth drink with the goal to get drunk. They are not “wired” in the brain to assess risk and to be responsible when it comes to risky behavior. There is no class or situation that will prompt a teen to drink responsibly when alcohol flows freely.

**Myth:** Europeans let their kids drink at an early age, yet they do not have the alcohol-related problems we do.

**Fact:** This popular myth, which is referred to as the “European Myth”, was dispelled by the facts of the 2003 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs and the United States 2003 Monitoring the Future report.

What was discovered is that in most European countries, young people have higher intoxication rates than in the United States, and less than a quarter had lower or equivalent rates to the United States.

Also, a greater percentage of young people in a majority of European countries report binge drinking at higher rates than compared to their US counterparts. And that some European youth have higher rates of alcohol-related problems because of their heavy drinking.

Perhaps the best example of fact versus myth when it comes to the “European Myth” is a look at what happened in New Zealand. In 1999, New Zealand lowered its purchase age from 20 to 18. Not only did drunk driving crashes increase, but youth started to drink earlier, binge drinking escalated, and in the 12 months following the decrease in legal drinking age, there was a 50 percent increase in intoxicated 18- and 19-year-old patients at the Auckland Hospital emergency room.

Clearly, Europe has serious issues with youth alcohol use.

*Source: Adapted from Why 21?*



The advertisement features a yellow background with the McDonald's logo and the slogan "i'm lovin' it" in the top left. In the center, three Angus Snack Wraps are displayed in a metal wire basket. The wraps are filled with Angus beef, cheddar cheese, pickled onions, and a choice of tomatoes, jalapeños, or mushrooms. At the bottom, a dark brown banner contains the text "new ANGUS SNACK WRAPS" in white and yellow, followed by "Six Bismarck / Mandan Locations!" in white.

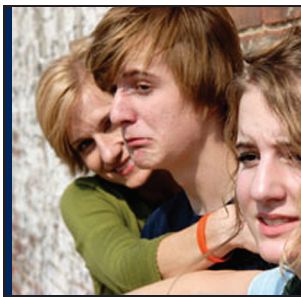


The advertisement features a white background with various fruits (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and banana slices) arranged around two McDonald's Real Fruit Smoothies. The smoothies are in clear plastic cups with pink straws. One is labeled "strawberry banana" and the other "wild berry". Above the cups, the text "100% pure sipping fun." is written in a large, blue, sans-serif font. Below this, in smaller text, it says: "Introducing Real Fruit Smoothies from McCafé®. They're a delicious blend of real fruit, creamy low-fat yogurt and ice. Try smooth and creamy strawberry banana or refreshing wild berry. They're bursting with fruit and bursting with flavor." At the bottom right, there is a small McDonald's logo and the slogan "i'm lovin' it".

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*February 1865 is the only month in recorded history not to have a full moon.*





# Surviving Embarrassing Parents

Bless them, they probably think they look hip and groovy and who wants to tell them any different? Unfortunately tolerating your parents' embarrassing ways at home is a little different than being forced to survive them in public. If you fear going out with your parents due to their jokes/pronouncements/clothing/dancing/eating or any other mortifying habit, read on for a few tips on surviving embarrassing parents.

## Pick Your Battles

Undoubtedly there are a number of embarrassing things about your parents, but tackling them all at once will get you nowhere. Instead, prioritize which habit you'd wish your parents would stop immediately and make that the center of your attention. For a little while keep track of when this habit happens so that you have "evidence" to draw on later.

## Teenagers' top most embarrassing parent behavior:

- Shouting or telling them off in public
- Treating them like a child
- Trying too hard to be cool in front of them and their friends
- Wearing embarrassing / un-cool clothing
- Telling bad jokes in public
- Shopping at un-cool shops
- Calling them by their nickname in public
- Singing in public
- Talking to their friends
- Acting like a teenager in public
- Kissing them in public
- Dropping them off or picking them up from outside school
- Getting out the photos of them when they were a child
- Dancing in public
- Telling stories about when they were a child
- Hugging them in public
- Talking to them in public

## Talk It Out

Once you have a short diary of the behaviors that embarrass you the most, talk to your parents about them. Chances are that they will have no idea about how you are feeling, and their explanations might surprise you.

Remember that a discussion will get you much farther than shouting at them, so:

- Speak calmly and clearly, expressing your concerns.
- Listen to their explanations.
- Understand that they will probably not be willing to change underlying principles or convictions, no matter how embarrassing.
- Be willing to discuss why you feel embarrassed.
- Explain that you would just like the behavior to stop, or the behavior to stop at certain times.
- Remind them that you love them, but you really can't take any more of their "fun"!

## Rise Above It

Sometimes, no matter how earnestly you plead your case or how much your parents want to please you, their embarrassing behaviors will continue. There are some Moms you just can't stop from wiping smudges away with their own spit, and some Dads you just can't get out of socks and sandals. There is hope though, as many teens find that:

- Not answering their parents when they are embarrassing helps to calm them down.
- Just agreeing with adamant parents will help them change topics more quickly.
- Shopping with their parents will steer them away from the worst of the clothes.
- Encouraging parents to donate embarrassing items helps clear them out of the house.
- Avoiding situations that you know will lead to your own embarrassment is for the best.
- Telling their friends about their parents' embarrassing ways prepares everyone for the eventual embarrassment.

The sad truth is that even the coolest parents on your block have some hidden habits that embarrass their children. Even sadder is that undoubtedly there are habits of your own that embarrass your parents. Remember that no one is perfect, so if your parents flaws are only embarrassing you really should be thanking your lucky stars that no one has ever literally died of embarrassment. If it seems like you may be the first, talk with your parents about their behaviors and try to hammer out a compromise that you can all live with.

Good luck!

Source: *Teen Issues*







**Take A Closer Look.**

[www.nd.gov/dhs/prevention](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/prevention)

North Dakota Department of Human Services  
North Dakota Prevention Resource and Media Center  
The Office of Justice and Delinquency Prevention