



Ounce of Prevention Newsletter

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Message to Coalition Members:

Welcome to the new “Ounce of Prevention Newsletter”. We will be sharing information with you relative to our mission to promote awareness and reduce alcohol and drug use in Steuben County. Please feel free to let us know if there are articles that you would like to share or if there is information you would like to see incorporated into our newsletter.

Article:

Letter from the Director – June 2016 *National Institute on Drug Abuse*

Changes in marijuana policies across states legalizing marijuana for medical and/or recreational use suggest that marijuana is gaining greater acceptance in our society. Thus, it is particularly important for people to understand what is known about both the adverse health effects and the potential therapeutic benefits linked to marijuana.

Because marijuana impairs short-term memory and judgment and distorts perception, it can impair performance in school or at work and make it dangerous to drive an automobile. It also affects brain systems that are still maturing through young adulthood, so regular use by teens may have a negative and long-lasting effect on their cognitive development, putting them at a competitive disadvantage and possibly interfering with their well-being in other ways. Also, contrary to popular belief, marijuana can be addictive, and its use during adolescence may make other forms of drug abuse or addiction more likely.

Whether smoking or otherwise consuming marijuana has therapeutic benefits that outweigh its health risks is still an open question that science has not resolved. Although many states now permit dispensing marijuana for medicinal purposes and there is mounting anecdotal evidence for the efficacy of marijuana-derived compounds, there are currently no FDA-approved indications for “medical marijuana.” However, safe medicines based on cannabinoid chemicals derived from the marijuana plant have been available for decades and more are being developed.

This Research Report is intended as a useful summary of what the most up-to-date science has to say about marijuana and its effects on those who use it—both young and old.

Nora D. Volkow, M.D.
Director
National Institute on Drug Abuse

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Trending:**Heroin**

National Institute on Drug Abuse

Heroin is an opioid drug that is synthesized from morphine, a naturally occurring substance extracted from the seed pod of the Asian opium poppy plant. Heroin usually appears as a white or brown powder or as a black sticky substance, known as “black tar heroin.” In 2011, 4.2 million Americans aged 12 or older (or 1.6 percent) had used heroin at least once in their lives. It is estimated that about 23 percent of individuals who use heroin become dependent on it.

When heroin enters the brain, it is converted back into morphine. It then binds to molecules on cells known as opioid receptors. These receptors are located in many areas of the brain and body, especially areas involved in the perception of pain and pleasure.

Short-term effects of heroin include a rush of good feelings and clouded thinking. For the first several hours after taking heroin, people want to sleep, and their heart rate and breathing slow down. When the drug wears off, people may feel a strong urge to take more.

Regular heroin use changes the functioning of the brain.

Using heroin repeatedly can result in:

- Tolerance—more of the drug is needed to achieve the same “high”
- Dependence—the need to continue use of the drug to avoid withdrawal symptoms
- Addiction—a devastating brain disease where, without proper treatment, people can’t stop using drugs even when they really want to and even after it causes terrible consequences to their health and other parts of their lives.

Article:**“Underage Drinking: What You Should Know”**

Partnership for Drug-Free Kids – May 24, 2016

Underage drinking is a serious public health problem in the United States. Alcohol is the most widely used substance of abuse among America’s young people and poses enormous health and safety risks.

With graduation parties and Memorial Day BBQs taking place this weekend, summer is around the corner, and it’s an important time to talk with your kids about alcohol.

At what age do kids start drinking?

Believe it or not, the average age for a first drink is 14.

Most underage drinking is in the form of binge drinking.

People ages 12-20 drink 11 percent of all alcohol consumed in the U.S. Although young people drink less often than adults do, when they drink, they drink more. That is because young people consume more than 90 percent of their alcohol by binge drinking.

Why is alcohol attractive to teens?

As children mature, it is natural for them to assert their independence, seek new challenges and try taking risks. Many teens want to try alcohol, but often do not fully recognize its negative effects on their health and behavior (see below for why it’s dangerous). Other reasons young people drink alcohol: peer pressure/to fit in, increased independence, stress/to escape or relax, to feel grown up among peers, to rebel, to relieve boredom or out of curiosity.

Teens’ Perception of Alcohol Use

- Almost half of teens (44 percent) do not see a “great risk” in drinking 5 or more drinks nearly every day.
- There is low social disapproval from peers: Only 34 percent strongly disapprove of “teens your age getting drunk.”
- It’s easy to get: 77 percent say alcohol is easily accessible. Also, 53 percent of current underage drinkers reported family and friends as their source for alcohol they consumed.

Underage Drinking is Dangerous

There is a range of risks and negative consequences. Underage drinking:

- Causes many deaths. Each year, 4,358 young people die in alcohol-related deaths as a result of underage drinking (car crashes, homicides, alcohol poisoning, falls, burns, drowning and suicides).
- Causes many injuries. In 2011, there were approximately 188,000 emergency room visits by people under 21 for injuries and other conditions related to alcohol.
- Impairs judgment. Drinking can lead to poor decisions about engaging in risky behavior, including drinking and driving, sexual activity (such as unprotected sex) and aggressive or violent behavior.
- Increases the risk of physical and sexual assault. Underage drinkers are more likely to carry out or be the victim of a physical or sexual assault after drinking than others their age who do not drink.
- Increases the risk of alcohol problems later in life. Research shows that people who start drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to meet the criteria for alcohol dependence at some point in their lives.

Myth vs. Fact

- Alcohol isn't as harmful as other drugs.
- ✓ Alcohol increases your risk for many deadly diseases, such as cancer. Drinking too much alcohol too quickly can lead to alcohol poisoning, which can kill you.

Myth vs. Fact:

- Marijuana is harmless.
- ✓ Use of marijuana can cause significant health, safety, social and learning problems.



MISSION:

To promote healthy and safe communities in Steuben County by reducing alcohol and drug use among youths!

Article Cont'd: Underage Drinking

Other Risk Factors:

- Teen brains are more vulnerable to alcohol. Research shows that the teen brain doesn't fully develop until 25. Alcohol can alter this development, potentially affecting brain structure and function. This may cause cognitive or learning problems and/or make the brain more prone to alcohol dependence. This is especially risky when people start drinking heavily at young ages.
- Mixing alcohol and prescription medicine is especially dangerous. It can cause nausea and vomiting, headaches, drowsiness, fainting, loss of coordination and puts you at risk for internal bleeding, heart problems and difficulties breathing.
- Alcohol and marijuana is also a dangerous combination, significantly impairing judgment. The level of intoxication and secondary effects experienced can be unpredictable.

What Parents Can Do

Parents, you hold tremendous influence on whether your child decides to drink or not. Be clear to your teen that you disapprove of underage drinking. Communicate and talk often about the dangers of alcohol .

Upcoming Events:

DITEP Training
 July 6th & 7th
 8:00 am – Steuben County Sheriff's Building

Next Coalition Meeting
 July 13, 2016
 11:00 am – Steuben County Sheriff's Building

TIPS Training
 August 9, 2016
 6:00 pm – St. James Mercy Hospital

Youth Action Forum
 October 25, 2016

Town Hall Meetings
 TBD

Reaching communities through
**prevention,
 education
 and support**