

# Substance Use Prevention

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs



*Take 15 minutes to talk with your kids about drugs and alcohol.*

## Talking with Your Children

Studies show that when parents create a supportive and nurturing environment, they have a positive impact on their child’s decisions about using alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. The earlier parents talk to their child about substance use, the greater chance they have of influencing the choices their child makes.

The good news is that, according to the 2020 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey, the majority of Florida middle and high school students report that they do not use alcohol, nicotine products, and other drugs.

In fact, when questioned about how they feel about their peers using substances, 74.6% reported that they think it is wrong for someone their age to smoke marijuana and 95.3% reported that they also think it is wrong to use other illicit drugs.

This newsletter includes information, data, and resources to help you have those healthy conversations with your child about substance use.



### PREVENTION SERVICES

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## The Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey

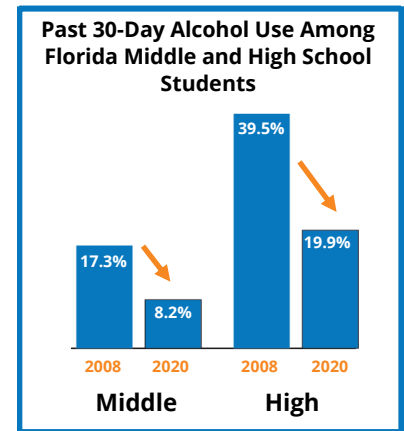
The Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS) is an annual collaborative effort between several Florida agencies. The surveys are administered to a statewide sample of students and assesses substance abuse prevalence and trends among middle and high school students. It questions students on their lifetime and past 30-day use. Past 30-day use may be an indicator of a regular user. Prevention Services uses the data from this survey to help guide the development of substance use educational initiatives.

According to the 2020 FYSAS, the percentage of Florida students who report using alcohol continues to decline. Between 2008 and 2020, past 30-day use declined by 52.6% among middle school students and 49.6% among high school students.

Florida students also reported long-term reductions in the use of illicit drugs other than marijuana. Reported past 30-day use of any illicit drug other than marijuana dropped from 9.4% in 2008 to 5.5% in 2020.

Youth cigarette use also continues to decline. Reported past 30-day use is now down from 9.1% in 2008 to 1.8% in 2020. There has also been a decline in reported past 30-day nicotine vaping, from a high of 13.7% in 2018 for both middle and high schools students combined down to 11.4% in 2020.

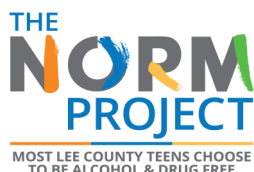
Go to <http://www.floridahealth.gov/> for the complete 2020 FYSAS report.



**Adolescents do listen to their parents when it comes to issues such as drinking and smoking, particularly if the messages are conveyed consistently and with authority. Parents can play a big role in shaping their child's attitude toward drinking and smoking. Research shows that children whose parents are actively involved in their lives are less likely to use these substances.**

### Tips for Parents

- Know where your child is and what activities they are involved in.
- Establish expectations and rules. Consistently enforce consequences when they are broken.
- Know your child's friends and their friends' parents.
- Avoid lectures and listen to your child's opinions and questions.
- Discuss reasons not to use.
- Talk with your child about what they see and hear on the Internet, TV, and radio.
- Discuss ways for your child to make responsible choices and to resist peer pressure.
- Tell your child how the body gets addicted to nicotine and other drugs. Explain withdrawal symptoms that happen when a person tries to quit.



### 2021 Poster Contest

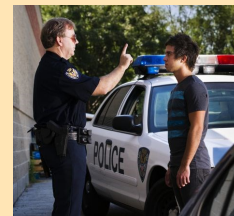
All middle and high school students are invited to enter the 2021 Norm Project Poster Contest by creating a poster that sends the message that most of their peers choose not to use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

The deadline for entries is March 12, 2021. For more information and contest rules about this United Way sponsored SDLC initiative, visit [The Norm Project](http://The Norm Project) webpage at [leeschools.net](http://leeschools.net).

## Drug House Odyssey

Parent Night- April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021

Drug House Odyssey is a real-life depiction about the dangers of underage drinking, drug use, and mixing those with driving.



Sponsored by the Coalition for a Drug-Free SWFL and the United Way, this walk through play is an annual event that provides a great opportunity to talk to your kids about making good choices.

**Parent night** is Wednesday, April 21<sup>st</sup> - 5:00 to 6:30 PM at the Lee Civic Center - Back Parking Lot.

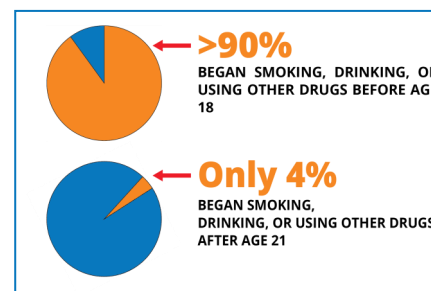
The video version of [Drug House Odyssey](#) is available on YouTube and includes discussion questions.



## Young People And Substance Use

Research has shown that the human brain is not fully mature until the age of mid-twenties. When it comes to the effects of drugs and alcohol on the body, this becomes a problem. When an adolescent uses addictive substances, their brain creates circuits in the reward centers more quickly than a fully developed adult brain does. As a result, teens may become addicted more quickly.

The earlier an individual starts smoking, drinking, or using other drugs, the greater the likelihood of addiction. 90% of substance abusers began smoking, drinking, or using other drugs before the age of 18. Only 4% of substance abusers or people who are addicted began using after the age of 21. For every year that substance use is delayed during the period of adolescent brain development, the lower the risk of addiction.



There are a variety of reasons why young people use substances. They include curiosity, peer pressure, boredom, to feel older, to escape, to self-medicate, to feel good, and to reduce stress.

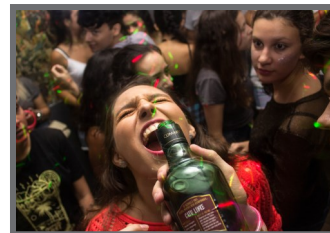
Adolescence is a time of change and growth, including behavior changes. These changes usually are a normal part of growing up, but sometimes can point to a problem. The following may be signs of alcohol, nicotine, marijuana, or other drug use:

- Changes in mood, including anger and irritability
- Academic and/or behavioral problems in school
- Changing groups of friends
- Less interest in usual activities and/or care in appearance
- Problems concentrating and/or remembering

## Alcohol

Alcohol is considered the most regularly used addictive substance in the United States. About 5,000 kids under 21 die every year as a result of underage drinking. Alcohol advertising and marketing have a significant impact on youth decisions to drink. Youth are overexposed to alcohol advertising. By the age of 18, a person has seen over 500,000 alcohol advertisements. Alcohol advertising targeted at adolescents contributes to youth having positive expectations of drinking, initiating drinking, and drinking more often.

Alcohol poisoning, car crashes, homicides, and suicides are some of the risks teens face when they've been drinking.



In 2020, Florida teens report using alcohol more than any other drug, including nicotine. Florida Youth Survey-30-day alcohol use for middle and high school went from 29.8% in 2012 down to 14.8% in 2020. Adolescent alcohol users (regardless of whether they are heavy, binge, or light drinkers) report that they are more likely to use illicit drugs than non-drinkers.



14.7% of Florida high school youth reported that in the past 30 days they have ridden in a vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol. 4.1% of Florida high school youth reported driving a vehicle after drinking alcohol within the past 30 days .

Research from the Journal of Adolescent Health suggests that, regardless of parenting styles, adolescents who are aware that their parents would be upset with them if they drank are less likely to do so,

highlighting the importance of communication between parents and teens as a protective measure against underage alcohol use.

## Tobacco and Nicotine

Nicotine can slow brain development in teens and can affect memory, concentration, learning, self-control, attention, and mood.

According to the Surgeon General, teenagers who use nicotine are:

- 3 times more likely to use alcohol
- 8 times more likely to smoke marijuana
- 22 times more likely to use cocaine

The National Institute on Drug Abuse states that teens who vape are 4 times more likely to smoke cigarettes than teens who do not.

### Vaping in Plain Sight

NBC's Vicky Nguyen tests teachers and parents to see if they can find hidden vaping devices. [Watch on YouTube.](#)

### Flavor Ban

On February 6th, 2020, sales of flavored e-cigarette cartridges, except for menthol and tobacco flavors, were banned.

This follows the change of the federal minimum age of sale of tobacco products from 18 to 21 years in December 2019.

These measures were done with the intention of reducing youth e-cigarette use. However, the flavor ban does not extend to refillable, tank-based vaping systems, which users can refill with flavored e-liquid, or disposable cartridge-based vaping devices.

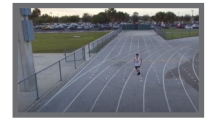
## Signs That Your Child May Be Vaping

- If their room or clothes smell artificially sweet, don't assume it is a candle, or lotions, perfume, etc.
- Nosebleeds and increased thirst are common among vape users due to the propylene glycol. Propylene glycol is a dehydrating chemical, so when there is propylene glycol in the e-liquid you are vaping with, it will extract water from your mouth, nose, and eyes.
- Because nicotine can act as a stimulant, there is often a heightened caffeine sensitivity, so they may reduce their caffeine intake and turn down coffee and sodas.

Watch our student created Vaping PSAs



Cypress Lake HS

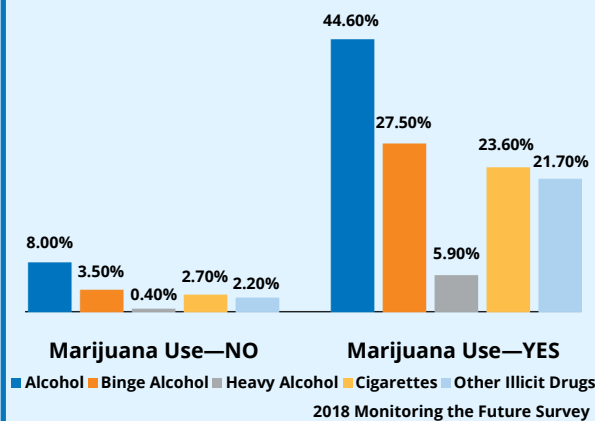


Island Coast HS

Watch Prevention Services Tobacco and Vaping Facebook Parent Presentation



## Marijuana and Other Drug Use



The annual Monitoring the Future Survey measures adolescent reported alcohol and drug use and attitudes nationwide.

This graph shows the difference in reported use of alcohol, cigarettes, and other drugs between teens who report not using marijuana versus teens who report using marijuana. This shows us that teens who report not using marijuana also report much lower use of alcohol, cigarettes, and other drugs.

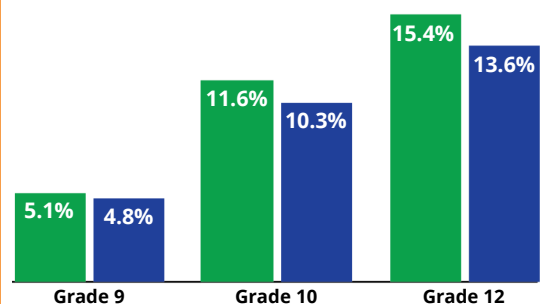
## Marijuana

Marijuana is the dried flowers and leaves of the cannabis plant. Marijuana concentrate is a highly potent THC concentrated mass often similar in appearance to honey or butter. They contain extraordinarily high THC levels that can range from 40 - 80%, compared to the THC found in traditional (plant-based) cannabis, which is about 14-15% THC.

Vaping marijuana concentrates (called “dabbing”) has become popular because it is smokeless, odorless, and easy to conceal.

Research has shown that marijuana’s negative effects on attention, memory, and learning can last for days or weeks. Data from three studies found that adolescents who used marijuana regularly were significantly less likely than their non-using peers to finish high school or obtain a degree.

Florida 2019-20 Past 30-Day Reported Use of Marijuana Vaping



The 2020 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey shows that the percentage of students who reported vaping marijuana in the past 30 days has decreased from 2019 in all three grades.

**Marijuana continued:**

Research has also linked heavy marijuana use to lower income, greater welfare dependence, unemployment, criminal behavior, and lower life satisfaction.

According to the CDC, 1 out of 6 marijuana users under the age of 18 will become dependent on it.

Watch our student created marijuana vaping PSA.



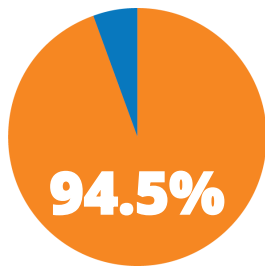
Island Coast HS

 **Opioids**

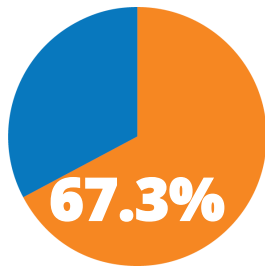
Opioids are a class of drugs that include pain relievers available legally by prescription, and synthetic opioids such as fentanyl and carfentanil; and the illegal drug heroin. Prescription opioids usually come in pill form and are given to treat severe pain. Opioids also often create feelings of euphoria.

Many young people are given or prescribed opioids during emergency room visits for sports injuries. This and pain medicine prescribed after the removal of wisdom teeth can be problematic, especially for young people. Prescription medications are some of the most commonly misused drugs by teens, after tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana.

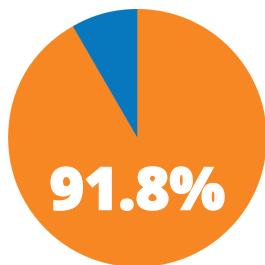
Effective July 1, 2018, **MOST** opioid prescriptions have a three-day limit. However, physicians can prescribe a seven-day supply for acute pain, if the situation is medically necessary. There are medical conditions that are exempt from this law, which is designed to make it more difficult for people to take opioids long enough to become dependent. Studies show the likelihood of addiction increases the longer someone is on the first prescription of opioids.



Lee County students expressed disapproval of non-marijuana illicit drug use ("amphetamines, LSD, cocaine, or another illegal drug").



Lee County students felt that using prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them could cause great risk of harm.



Lee County students felt that their friends think it would be wrong to use prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them.

**Drug Dependency Signs**

- Higher drug tolerance and withdrawal feelings
- Unable to cut down or stop drug use
- Activities and friends begin to revolve around using
- Using drugs to escape from problems
- Continuing to use despite the problems it causes

If you or someone you know needs help, call SAMHSA's\* National Helpline

**1-800-662-HELP (4357)**

for free, confidential, 24/7, 365 days a year treatment referral and information service in English and Spanish.

\*Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Please visit [Prevention Services' Substance Prevention Resources web page](#) for more information and resources about substance use and its effect on youth.