



WELLNESS Newsletter

This publication is brought to you by the District Wellness Council, which is dedicated to educating Rush-Henrietta families about important topics to keep your children healthy.

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Substance Abuse 101; What Every Parent Needs to Know

Alcohol and other drug use among youth in our nation remains a major public health problem. The National Institute on Drug Abuse reports that more adolescents are exposed to and experimenting with diverse substances that can lead to lifelong addictions or in some cases even death.

Every year, the Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey measures drug, alcohol, and tobacco use and related attitudes among eighth, tenth, and twelfth graders. The survey conducted in 2012 reported:

- 3 percent of 8th graders, 14 percent of 10th graders, and 28 percent of 12th graders reported getting drunk in the past month.
- 6 percent of 8th graders, 17 percent of 10th graders, and 22 percent of 12th graders used marijuana in the past month.
- 11 percent of high-school seniors, 8 percent of 10th graders, and 4 percent of 8th graders reported using synthetic marijuana in the past year.
- 14 percent of high school seniors reportedly used a prescription drug non-medically in the past year.

Alcohol

Alcohol use among teens has dropped to historically low levels. This has been a consistently long-term downward trend during the past five years. Last year, 23 percent of high-school seniors reported binge drinking (defined as 5 or more drinks in a row in the past two weeks). This is a drop of one-quarter since the late 1990s.

Inhalants, Cocaine and Heroin

Positive trends in the past several years include reduced use of inhalants and less use of cocaine. The use of other drugs, such as methamphetamine, heroin, and hallucinogens, are holding fairly steady.

Tobacco

Cigarette smoking by high-school students peaked in 1996-1997 and has declined continuously since then. Other forms of smoked tobacco remain popular, however. The use of hookah water pipes and small cigars has raised public health concerns. In 2012, 18 percent of 12th graders had smoked a hookah in the past year, and 19 percent had smoked a small cigar.

Fewer teens smoke cigarettes than smoke marijuana. 17 percent of high school seniors reported that they had smoked cigarettes in the past month vs. 22 percent that had smoked marijuana.

Upcoming Events and Important Links

Family Health and Wellness Fair

Wednesday, March 6, 2013
5 to 7:30 p.m.

****New Location****

Roth Middle School Gymnasium

Resources

New York Regional Poison Control Center: 1-800-222-1222

NYS DOH Synthetic Drug Hotline: 1-888-99SALTS

Important Links

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency:

<http://www.ncadd-ra.org/>

Henrietta Ambulance:

<http://www.henriettaambulance.org/>

Upstate New York State Poison Control Center:

<http://www.upstate.edu/poison/>

Prescription Drug Disposal Programs:

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/63826.html#Western>

Bath Salts:

<http://www.webmd.com/mental-health/features/bath-salts-drug-dangers>

Synthetic Marijuana:

<http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/spice-synthetic-marijuana>

Rush-Henrietta Wellness Newsletter

Marijuana

Young people are showing decreased perception that marijuana is dangerous. The growing perception of marijuana as a safe drug may reflect recent public discussions over medical marijuana and marijuana legalization.

Synthetic Marijuana

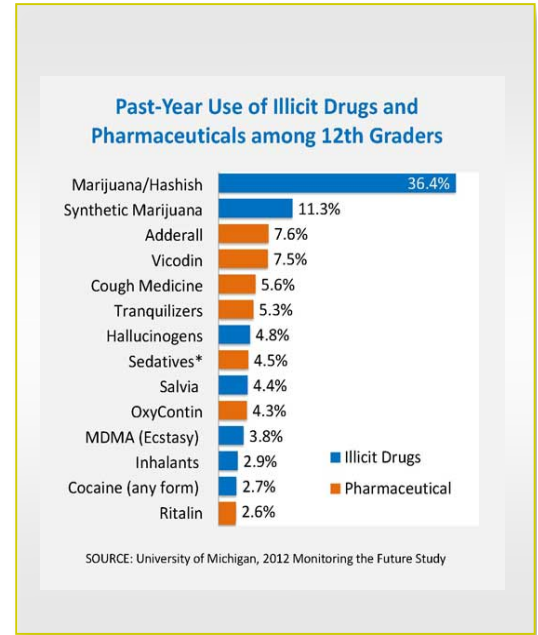
Synthetic marijuana is a new and major concern. Also known as Spice or K2, synthetic marijuana refers to herbal mixtures laced with synthetic cannabinoids, chemicals that act in the brain similarly to THC, the main active ingredient in marijuana. These mixtures could be obtained legally until recently and are still wrongly perceived as a safe alternative to marijuana.

Bath Salts

The term bath salts refers to an emerging family of drugs containing one or more synthetic chemicals related to cathinone, an amphetamine-like stimulant found naturally in the Khat plant. They are marketed under names like Ivory Wave, Purple Wave, Vanilla Sky, and Bliss. Reports of severe intoxication and dangerous health effects associated with use of bath salts have made these drugs a serious and growing public health and safety issue. The synthetic cathinones in bath salts can produce euphoria and increased sociability and sex drive, but some users experience paranoia, agitation, hallucinatory delirium, and acute psychosis.

Pharmaceuticals

The use of prescription-type drugs like the narcotics OxyContin and Vicodin are specific drugs used for pain control, but also have an increased potential for opiate addiction. The rises in opiate addictions in youth have increased exponentially over the past several years. Often teenagers can gain access to these medications that are left unused in their own medicine cabinets.



Warning signs that your child may be using drugs

Physical Changes and Signs

Children or teenagers who use drugs may not look the same. You may notice that your child's pupils look smaller or larger than normal due to physical effects of drugs or alcohol. You may also smell alcohol or marijuana on your child's clothing, breath or hair. Children who use alcohol may slur their speech and have difficulty walking, while children who use marijuana may lose or gain weight or may have glassy or red eyes.

If your child snorts cocaine, you may notice that her nose is frequently running, although she has no other cold symptoms. The use of injectable drugs may leave red track marks on your child's arms. Other possible signs of substance abuse include dry mouth, anxiety, mouth sores, extreme thirst, sweaty palms, facial flushing, vomiting, and tremors.

Changes in Behavior and Interests

Children who use drugs or alcohol may seem tired, unmotivated and lethargic, and may no longer care about favorite activities. Their grades may begin to drop or they may start experiencing behavioral problems in school or may even skip school. Old friends may suddenly be discarded in favor of new friends and your child may seem reluctant for you to meet the new friends. If your child needs cash to pay for drugs and alcohol, you may notice that money is missing from your purse or wallet, even if your child has been completely trustworthy in the past. Moods may fluctuate and your child may act silly one moment, but quickly become angry or hostile with little or no provocation. Children using drugs may seem extremely elated for no reason or experience periods of high energy or sleeplessness followed by long periods of sleep. Children may go to great lengths to cover substance abuse and may resent questions about their activities or behavior.

Grooming Changes

Grooming and personal hygiene may suffer if your child is using alcohol or drugs. If your normally fastidious child suddenly stops combing his hair, taking showers or using deodorant or a toothbrush, substance abuse may be to blame. Wearing long sleeves and avoiding exposing the arms, even in warm weather, can be an attempt to hide needle marks.

What to do if you suspect your child may be abusing substances

Sometimes you may suspect or discover that your child is using drugs. The earlier you respond, the more likely you can convince your child how to stop. Seek professional help to assist your child and you through this difficult time. There are many local resources that can guide this process.

Interested in being involved with your local community on this issue?

Join the Rush-Henrietta CLEAR Coalition. The Rush-Henrietta CLEAR Coalition is a collaboration of residents and representatives from local community organizations whose mission is to unify and mobilize the communities of Rush and Henrietta to keep kids safe from harmful influences and to promote the positive and drug-free development of all youth. The coalition administered a community survey to get more information as to the view of residents regarding alcohol and drug abuse. Approximately 200 surveys were completed and the group is beginning to analyze the data to inform their next steps. CLEAR is always looking to increase its membership and if you are interested or have any questions you can contact Nerlande Anselme, Executive Director of Student and Family Services, at 585-359-5048 or Karen McArthur, Director of Youth Bureau and Recreation, 585-359-2540. The group meets at 8 a.m. every third Thursday of the month at Henrietta Ambulance, 280 Calkins Road.

Prescription drug take-back programs have been very successful locally. Monroe County sheriff's deputies oversee the drop-off which is free and open to the public. Residents are asked to black out any personal information (not the medication name or dosage) on their prescription and over-the-counter medication containers. The pharmaceutical take back programs are on 3/1/13 and 4/5/13 at the Brighton Police Department.