

# Parenting for Prevention

Student Assistance Services Corp., 660 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, New York, 10591, October, 2018

## Alert!



There are ongoing concerns about teen alcohol and marijuana use. County data supports the reality that these continue to be the most popular substances used by teens in our area.

There is also concern about the continuing increase in teen vaping. In addition to nicotine, there are other harmful substances in the flavoring and aerosol. Many teens, parents, and professionals are unaware of the serious health consequences of these chemicals.

The growing use of vape devices for other addictive substances such as THC (the ingredient in marijuana that causes the high), opioids, and other drugs adds to the concerns about vaping and its role in addiction. While most youth who use THC containing products do not go on to use heroin, there is clear scientific evidence that teen marijuana use increases the risk for later substance use disorders.

As the sports seasons are in full gear and the possibility of injuries increases, research is showing that treatment for a sports injury is often the first time that a teen uses an opioid. When they can no longer access drugs prescription opioids, teens may turn to heroin as a more available and cheaper substitute. Another time opioids may be prescribed is for the pain associated with a dental procedure like having wisdom teeth removed. These situations need a thoughtful and cautious response.

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## Additional Concerns: Vaping

### Pod Mods/Juul

The August issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine* said that the adolescents' use of electronic cigarettes took the public health community by surprise. In 2011, less than 2% of teenagers reported the use of e-cigarettes and by 2015, the percentage was 16%.

**Juul's website indicates that the nicotine per pod is the equivalent of approximately 20 combustible cigarettes.**

There is concern that the use of "pod-mods," small, rechargeable devices that aerosolize liquid solutions containing nicotine, flavoring and other contents are gaining popularity among youth. Juul, the most popular brand of pod-mods has 49.6% of the market and there is concern that this is not just a passing fad and could bring adverse consequences to the current generation of adolescents.



According to Juul's advertisements, the nicotine per pod contains nicotine salt solutions that contain nicotine concentrates 2 to 10 times those found in most free-base nicotine e-cigarette products. Juul's website indicates that the nicotine per pod is the equivalent of approximately 20 combustible cigarettes.

Pod mods are easy to conceal and need very little electrical power to deliver high doses of nicotine. They are inconspicuous and look like a USB drive. As a result, young people can bring and use them on school grounds and even in a classroom.

The Food and Drug Administration (F.D.A.) declared in early September that the use of electronic cigarettes by teenagers has reached epidemic proportion. The Administration put the makers of the most popular devices on notice that they have 60 days to prove that they can keep these devices away from teenagers.

This order was sent to the makers and sellers of e-cigarettes. If sales to minors do not decline then the agency said it could remove the flavored products from the market.

Most prevention professionals feel that the addition of flavors to e-cigarettes was specifically designed to attract younger users. In April the F.D.A. announced that it was investigating whether Juul's marketing practices, one of the most popular e-cigarettes among teens, was deliberately targeting youths.

Risa Robinson, of Rochester Institute of Technology, began to study e-cigarettes six years ago for the F.D.A. She said that the early products did not have enough nicotine to cause concern but later products, like Juul had more nicotine. She went on to say that "I'm highly concerned now," as the addition of heat to the e-liquid flavors generates chemicals that have not been studied in depth.

### **Vaping Connected to Marijuana**

A recent study published in *Pediatrics* done at the University of Southern California and University of Pennsylvania found that teenagers are up to four times more likely to use marijuana if they smoked e-cigarettes or hookah. Hookah is a single- or multi-stemmed instrument for vaporizing and smoking flavored tobacco, or sometimes cannabis or opium. The vapor or smoke is passed through a water basin, often glass-based, before inhalation.

Nearly nine percent of students surveyed in 2016 said they used an e-cigarette device with marijuana, according to a September, 2018 report in the journal *JAMA Pediatrics*. That included one-third of those who ever used e-cigarettes.

E-cigarettes typically contain nicotine, but many of the battery-powered devices can vaporize other substances, including marijuana. Results published in *JAMA Pediatrics* means that 2.1 million middle and high school students have used vape devices to get high. That means that almost 1 in 11 students in the United States have used marijuana in electronic cigarettes, increasing health concerns about the new popularity of vaping among teens.

### **E-Cigarettes and Heart Attacks**

The data from two national surveys carried out in 2014 and 2016 showed that compared with people who never used e-cigarettes, daily users almost doubled their risk for heart attack.



Vampires, witches,  
zombies, goblins,  
peer pressure, drugs,  
and alcohol.

Some Halloween dangers  
are much more real  
than others.

Halloween is one of the biggest nights for teen drinking and drug use. Combined with unsupervised parties and careless drivers, Halloween can be a frightful night for families. Power to the Parent is here to empower Westchester parents. Learn the facts, strategies and information to help you get through to your teens. Teach your teen how not to get tricked this Halloween. [www.PowerToTheParent.org](http://www.PowerToTheParent.org).



## Opioids

Many of the teenagers who misuse opioid drugs first received the drugs from a doctor according to Sean McCabe, a research professor at the University of Michigan, in a 2017 article published in *Pediatrics*. The researchers looked at the use of prescriptions opioids from 1976 to 2015 and found a strong correlation between teens' taking the drugs for medical reasons and then taking them later for "non-medical" reasons. In other words, misusing them.

Often, teens who participate in athletics have an injury that requires a visit to an orthopedist and even surgery to treat the injury. As a result, opioids may be appropriately prescribed to help a teen deal with the accompanying pain. Another common scenario is teens being prescribed opioids after a common dental procedure such as when wisdom teeth are removed.

It is important for parents to carefully monitor their child's use of these strong medications. It is helpful to involve the medical professional who prescribed the medication and ask them to talk to your teen about guidelines on how to use the medications safely, how and when to reduce the use of the medication; and when and if non-opioid medication can be used. Parents can make sure those guidelines are being followed and that their child is not taking too many doses of the medication and that they are not giving them to anyone else.

Students have been known to monitor who may have been prescribed opioids for pain and then contact the student and try to purchase some of the pills. Warn your child about this possibility, count the pills that have been prescribed and make sure all are accounted for on a daily basis.

## Up Coming Events

**November 9 6:00-9:00pm**  
**Student Assistance Services**  
**2018 Tribute Dinner**

**Tappan Hill**  
Tarrytown, NY,  
Contact: 332-1300

**Nov 28 7 to 8pm**  
White Plains Middle School  
Highlands Campus Media Center.  
*Hidden In Plain Sight*  
Presenter: Judy Mezey  
Contact: 422-2247

**December 5 6:00pm**  
Elmsford Carl L. Dixon  
Elementary School  
*Danger of Vaping*  
Presenter: Hector Rodriquez  
Contact: 592-4187

**December 11 8:15am-3:15pm**  
**SAS's 25th Annual**  
**Holiday Conference**  
**Adolescent Substance Use and**  
**Mental Health: Clinical Strategies for Addressing Economic & Cultural Factors**  
Doral Arrowwood Hotel  
and Conference Center  
Rye Brook, NY  
Contact: 332-1300