

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?



Many Teens Start Using Alcohol or Other Drugs Over the Summer

Summer is a time many more adolescents start using alcohol and other drugs. More teens will initiate use of alcohol, marijuana, and/or cigarettes during June and July, compared to any other month. December is another month that shows new use spikes.

How Many Teens Start Using During the Summer Months?

On most days of the year between 5,000 and 8,000 teens will try [alcohol](#) for the first time. Each day in June and July, approximately 11,000 teens try alcohol for the first time. Average daily initiation of [marijuana](#) and cigarettes are usually around 3,000-4,000 teens. Each day during June and July, about 4,800 teens will try marijuana for the first time. About 5,000 teens will try cigarettes for the first time each day during this same period.

Prescription pain pills do not follow the same types of spikes. About 2,500 teens will try [pain pills](#) for the first time each day during the year. There are not the larger summer and December spikes seen among many other drugs. New use spikes for pain pills occur in January, September, and November, and these are much smaller in nature.

Why do Teens Start Using During Summer Months?

During the summer months, teens may start using alcohol or other drugs for many reasons. When teens are not in school, they tend to have more freedom with their time. Parents often relax the school year rules for teens during break times as well. Having less responsibility can cause teens to be out later or hang out with different people. Summer jobs can also bring them into contact with new friends their parents do not know. Teens who do not have much structure in their day may get off schedule, which can put them out of sync with their family's life. Parents may also spend less time supervising their teens, believing that they have become more responsible as they get older and finish another year of school.

What Can Parents Do?

Parents can use many strategies to help curb summer use. The biggest strategy is to try to keep the summer months as close to the rest of the year as you can.

KEEP CONTROL

During the summer, teens need to have supervision, structure, and responsibilities, just like they do the rest of the year. While most teens have schedule changes over the summer months, parents need to stay in control during these times of transition.

TALK TO YOUR TEENS

[Talk](#) to your teens about not using alcohol and other drugs. They will probably roll their eyes and remind you that they've heard it all before, but it is important that they hear from you on a regular basis. Show them scientific information about how their [brains](#) are developing until they are in their mid 20s. Using any types of substances until that time is highly inadvisable. Kids are finding pseudoscience supporting their desires to use, so you need to counteract what they think they know with real information.

DELAY

The longer you can keep your teen from trying alcohol or other drugs, the less likely they are to develop a life-long issue with substances. Those who start using as adolescents are much more likely to develop a substance use disorder during their lifetime; with earlier onset seeing a greater chance of lifelong problems.

BE ALERT

Even though summer brings its own changes, stay on top of what seem like normal differences

and which might be [signs of a greater problem](#). Closely monitor your child's [phone](#) and [social media](#) accounts, and get help as soon as you can if you see that your child is using alcohol or other drugs.

SUMMER
increases

TEEN Drug & Alcohol USE

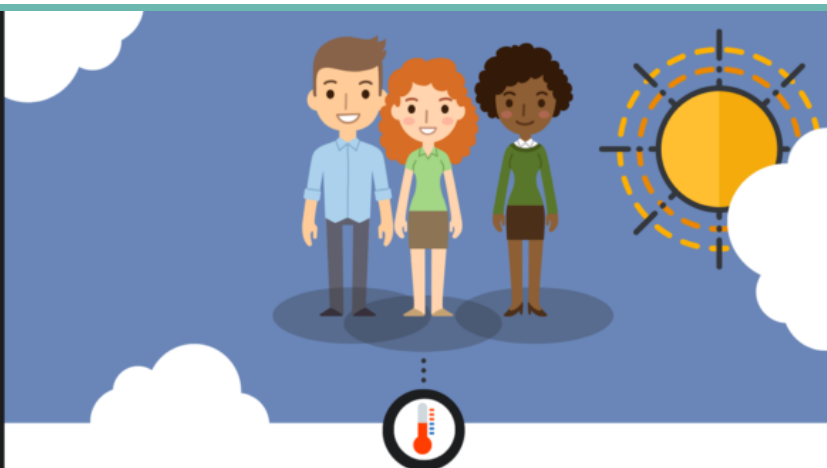
WHY?

▶ MORE FREEDOM

▶ LESS RESPONSIBILITY

▶ LESS STRUCTURE

▶ LESS SUPERVISION



More teens will initiate use during
June and July than any other month.

ALCOHOL:
Daily summer
new use: **11,000**

Compared to:
5,000–8,000 in
other months.

MARIJUANA:
Daily summer
new use: **4,800**

Compared to:
3,000–4,000 in
other months.

CIGARETTES:
Daily summer
new use: **5,000**

Compared to:
3,000–4,000 in
other months.

PRESCRIPTIONS:

Prescription pain pill misuse does not follow the same pattern as alcohol, marijuana, and cigarettes. **2,500** new adolescent users try pain pills daily, with small spikes in January, September, and November.

What Can Parents Do?

KEEP CONTROL:

During the summer, teens continue to need supervision, structure, and responsibility. Maintain control even as your teen's schedule changes.

TALK:

Talk to your teens about not using alcohol and other drugs. Use scientific information and family values to drive the conversation. Talk frequently.

DELAY:

The longer you can keep your teens from trying alcohol or other drugs, the less likely they are to have life long issues with substances.

BE ALERT:

Don't ignore changes you see in your teens. Monitor their phone and social media use, and get help if you see a problem. All kids can have issues.

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