



As a parent, there are times when it seems that there are far more questions than answers. Based on NCADD's decades of experience in responding to parents and their questions, that statement seems very true when it comes to alcohol and drug issues and our children.

Although some of us have had personal experiences with alcohol or drugs, others have not. In both cases, there is a fair amount of myth and misconception about alcohol and drugs, as well as confusion about what we should do as a parent.

So to help up you get started, here are some [basic facts and information about alcohol and drugs](#):

#### **Facts About Alcohol and Drugs:**

**FACT:** Parents Play a Key Role: Research shows that kids who learn a lot about the risks of alcohol and drugs from their parents are up to 50% less likely to use.

**FACT:** More than 23 million people over the age of 12 are addicted to alcohol and other drugs affecting millions more people.....spouses, children, family members, friends, neighbors and colleagues at work.

**FACT:** Marijuana and Grades: 19.3% of students (ages 12-17) who receive average grades of "D" or lower used marijuana in the past month and 6.9% of students with grades of "C" or above used marijuana in the past month.

**FACT:** Brothers and Sisters: Use of alcohol and drugs by older brothers and sisters influences the alcohol and drug use of younger brothers and sisters, particularly brother to brother and sister to sister.

**FACT:** Family History: Sons of fathers with alcoholism are four times more likely to develop alcoholism than sons of non-alcoholic fathers.

**FACT:** Marijuana and Cigarettes: In 2010, 21.4% of high school seniors used marijuana in the past 30 days, while 19.2% smoked cigarettes.

**FACT:** Underage Drinking Deaths: Each year, approximately 5,000 young people under the age of 21 die as a result of underage drinking; this includes about 1,900 deaths from motor vehicle crashes (38%), 1,600 as a result of homicides (32%), 300 from suicide (6%), as well as hundreds from alcohol overdose and other injuries such as falls, burns, and drownings (from NCADD Fact Sheet: [Facts About Underage Drinking](#)).

**FACT:** Increase in Current Illegal Drug Use (past month): In 2009, after six years of continued

decreases among youths ages 12-17, the rate of current illegal drug use increased from 9.3% to 10%.

#### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's): Alcohol and Drugs:**

##### **Question: Why should I talk to my kids about alcohol before age 10?**

**Answer:** In a recent survey, 1 in 3 fifth and sixth graders (ages 10-11) said that alcohol was available and easy to get. Approximately 10% of 9-10 year olds have started drinking, one in three begin drinking before age 13 and by age 15, approximately 50% have had at least one drink.

##### **Question: Why is age of first use of alcohol so critically important?**

**Answer:** Kids who start drinking alcohol before age 15 are 5 times more likely to develop alcohol abuse or dependence than people who first used alcohol at age 21 or older (16% vs. 3%).

##### **Question: What are the top two factors in whether kids decide to try drugs?**

**Answer:** Perceived Risk and Social Acceptance. If kids understand the risks of using drugs and they see using them as socially unacceptable, they are less likely to try drugs. As parents we have an opportunity and responsibility to help our kids on both of these issues.

##### **Question: I thought drinking and driving was the only alcohol-related risk for college students?**

**Answer:** An estimated 1,900 young people under the age of 21 die each year from alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes. And, approximately 600,000 college students are unintentionally injured while under the influence of alcohol. Approximately 700,000 students are assaulted by other students who have been drinking and about 100,000 students are victims of alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape.

##### **Question: My ex-husband was alcoholic, should I be concerned about my kids?**

**Answer:** Children of alcohol or drug addicted parents are the highest risk group of all children to become alcohol and drug abusers due to both genetic and family environment factors.

##### **Question: I think my 19 year son has a drug problem, but I think he'll grow out of it. Am I right?**

**Answer:** Plain and simple, if you are concerned, **now** is the time to seek help, **not later**.

##### **Question: Should I be concerned about prescription drugs when the "real problem" is the illegal drugs like cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine?**

**Answer:** As a parent you should be concerned about alcohol and all of the other drugs, legal and illegal. Recently there has been a significant increase in the non-medical use of

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prescription pain drugs among young people. In fact, after marijuana, the next three most commonly used drugs are the non-medical use of prescription pain medications-Vicodin, OxyContin and Adderal.

For additional information, [Learn About Alcohol](#), [Learn About Drugs](#) or [Get Help](#) may be helpful.