



# Substance Use Prevention Guide

A resource for Youth, Families, Schools, and Communities





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# Substance Use and Prevention



## ► What is Substance Use?

Substance use means drinking alcohol, using drugs, or taking other substances that change how the brain and body work.

## ► Why Do People Use Substances?

People may use substances to feel good, relax, fit in with friends, or because they are curious.

## ► What Are the Risks?

Using substances can hurt the brain and body. It can make it harder to think clearly, lead to addiction, and cause problems at school, work, or in relationships.

## ► What is Prevention?

Prevention means learning about the risks, finding healthy ways to handle stress, talking to trusted adults, and making safe choices.





# Substance Use Disorder (SUD)



▶ **Substance Use Disorder**, or **SUD**, is when someone keeps using alcohol or drugs despite problems. **Addiction** is a severe form where the brain needs the substance just to feel “normal.”

▶ **How Does It Happen?**

Alcohol and drugs change the brain, making it want the substance more and more. People may also use them to cope with stress, emotions, or problems.

▶ **Signs of a SUD?**

- Using substances often.
- Having trouble at school, work, or home.
- Feeling upset, anxious, sick when not using.
- Losing interest in hobbies or friends.
- Continuing to use even when it causes problems.



▶ **Can It Be Treated?**

With help from doctors, counselors, and family, people can recover and live healthy lives.







# Alcohol Use and Its Impact



## ▶ What Is Alcohol?

Alcohol is found in beer, wine, and liquor. It changes how the brain and body work and is only legal for adults 21 and older.

## ▶ Why Can Alcohol Be Harmful?

- Changes how you think and act
- Slows brain and body

## ▶ Why Is Alcohol Risky for Kids and Teens

- Brain is still growing until age 25
- Hurt memory and learning
- Affects sports, school, hobbies
- Increases accidents



## ▶ Signs Someone Has Had Too Much Alcohol

- Slurred speech
- Trouble walking or standing
- Feeling sick or throwing up
- Passing out





# Understanding Tobacco



## ► What Is Tobacco?

Tobacco is a plant whose leaves are used to make products that people smoke, chew, or inhale. It contains nicotine, a drug that makes people want to keep using it.

## ► Types of Tobacco

- Cigarettes
- Chewing Tobacco
- Snuff
- E-cigarettes or vapes



## ► Why Is It Harmful?

- Hurts the lungs, heart, and brain
- Can cause cancer and other serious diseases
- Extra harmful for kids and teens because their bodies are still growing





# Cannabis and Effects



## ► What Is Cannabis?

Cannabis (also called marijuana or weed) comes from a plant, and people can smoke, eat, or vape it.

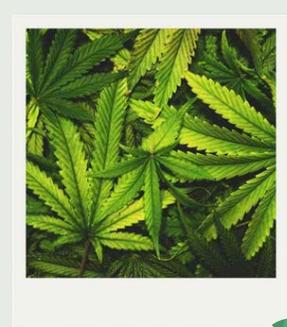
## ► Why Is It Harmful

- Makes it harder to think or remember
- Can cause anxiety or fear
- Smoke can hurt the lungs
- Can be addictive or make you sick
- Extra harmful for teens' growing brains



## ► Signs Someone Has Had Too Much

- Scared, anxious, or confused
- Trouble thinking or moving
- Fast heartbeat
- Feeling sick or throwing up
- Seeing or hearing things that aren't real





# Prescription Drug Misuse



## ► What Are Prescription Drugs?

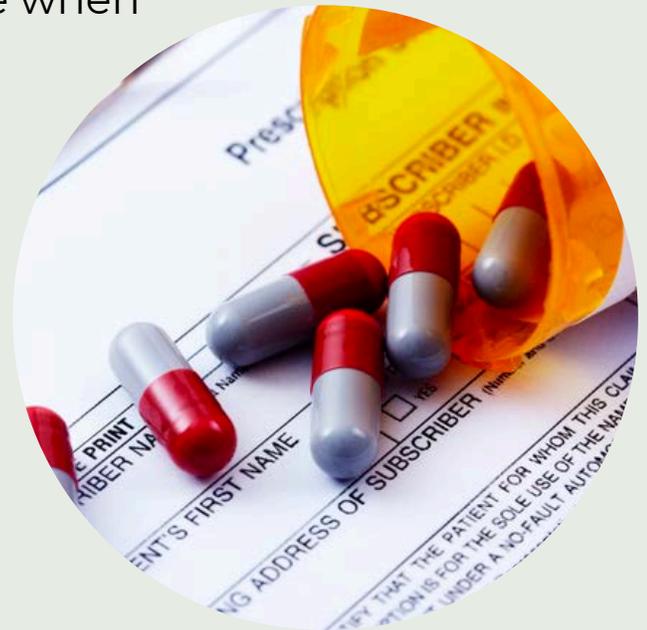
Prescription drugs are medicines a doctor gives you to treat health problems, like painkillers (Oxycodone), sedatives (Xanax), and stimulants (Adderall). They are safe when used correctly.

## ► What is Misuse?

- Taking too much or taking someone else's medicine
- Using it to get "high"
- Mixing with alcohol or other drugs

## ► Why Misuse is Dangerous

- Can cause addiction
- Overdose can be fatal
- May cause confusion, dizziness, or mood changes
- Mixing with other substances can be life-threatening





# Vaping and Nicotine

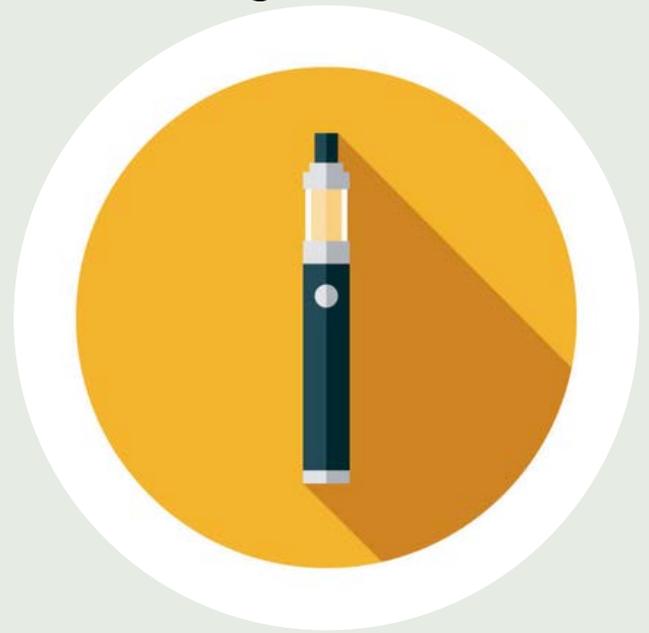


## ► What Is Vaping?

Vaping is when someone breathes in aerosol from an electronic cigarette (also called an e-cig or vape pen). The device heats a liquid into a cloud that is then inhaled into the lungs.

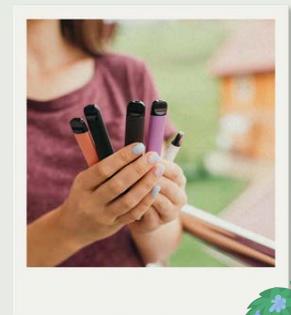
## ► What's In a Vape?

- Nicotine (very addictive)
- Harmful chemicals
- Flavorings (like fruit and candy)
- Tiny particles that can hurt the lungs



## ► Why Is Vaping Bad for You?

- Nicotine harms the growing brain, making it harder to learn and remember.
- It damages the lungs, making it harder to breathe.
- Vaping is addictive, so stopping can be difficult.
- Vaping isn't safe, even if it is not a cigarette.





# Opioids: Key Facts



## ▶ What Are Opioids?

Opioids are strong medicines that doctors give for serious pain, such as after surgery or an injury.

## ▶ Some Names for Opioids Are:

- Oxycodone
- Hydrocodone
- Morphine
- Fentanyl
- Heroin

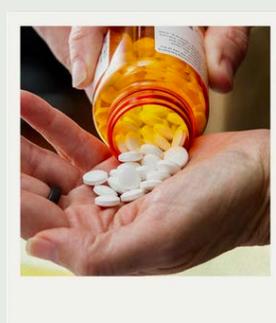


## ▶ Why Can Opioids Be Dangerous?

- Can make people sleepy or dizzy
- Taking too much can slow or stop breathing
- Very addictive; the brain starts to want more and more
- Can lead to overdose, which can be deadly

## ▶ How Do People Misuse Opioids?

- Taking more than prescribed
- Using someone else's medicine
- Taking them just to feel good





# Over-the-Counter Risks



## ▶ What Are Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medications?

Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines are drugs you can buy without a prescription, such as pain relievers, cold and flu medicines, allergy medicine, and cough syrup.

## ▶ When Used Correctly

- Safe and helpful when used as the label says
- Can reduce symptoms and make you feel better



## ▶ Safety Tips:

- Always read and follow the label
- Use the proper measuring device
- Keep medicines in their original container
- Store them out of reach of children
- Ask a doctor or pharmacist if unsure or taking other medicines





# Mental Health Connection



▶ **Mental health** is how we think, feel, and handle stress. Some people use alcohol or drugs to cope, but this often makes things worse.

▶ **How They Connect**

- **Depression:** Substances can deepen sadness
- **Anxiety:** May calm at first but increase worry
- **Stress:** Using to escape makes stress return stronger
- **Coping skills:** Healthy skills reduce substance use



▶ **Why It Matters**

- Drugs and alcohol change the brain.
- They can cause more sadness, stress, or confusion.
- Getting help for both improves mental health and well-being.





# Harm Reduction



## ► What Is It?

Harm reduction helps people minimize negative health, social and legal consequences associated with substance use. It focuses on reducing risks and harms, and meeting them where they are at.

## ► Why It Matters:

- Prevents overdoses and disease
- Supports safer choices
- Connects people to help and treatment

## ► Key Facts:

- Reduces risk instead of only focusing on quitting
- Promotes safer use, like clean needles or knowing overdose signs
- Uses a caring, non-judgmental approach
- Links people to support and resources.





# Treatment and Recovery



## ► What Is It?

Treatment and recovery services help people get healthier when they struggle with substance use. These services support people in safely managing withdrawal symptoms, stopping use, learning healthy ways to cope, and working toward long-term recovery.

## ► Why It Matters:

- Helps people become more stable and improve their overall health.
- Lowers the risk of relapse, overdose, injury, and illness.
- Connects people with professional care, counseling, and long-term support.



## ► Key Facts:

- Focuses on healing, growth, and long-term recovery.
- Offers support like counseling, education, and treatment plans.
- Treats people with compassion and respect, without judgment.
- Helps people get treatment, learn recovery skills, and find ongoing support.



# How to Support Someone in Recovery

## ► What Is It?

Recovery means someone is working to stop using drugs or alcohol and live a healthier life. It can take time and support from others.

## ► Why It Matters:

Having friends and family who care makes recovery easier. Support helps people stay strong and feel hopeful.

## ► What to Do:

- Listen and be kind; don't judge.
- Celebrate small goals and progress.
- Offer help, like going to meetings or finding resources.
- Be patient; recovery takes time.
- Encourage healthy habits like exercise, hobbies, and good sleep.



# What to Do in a Drug-Related Emergency

## ▶ What Is It?

A drug-related emergency happens when someone's body reacts badly to drugs or alcohol. This could be an overdose, passing out, or trouble breathing.

## ▶ Why It Matters:

Knowing what to do can help save someone's life. Acting fast and calling for help can stop serious harm or death.



## ▶ What to Do:

- Stay calm and call 911 right away.
- Try to keep the person awake and breathing.
- If they stop breathing, start CPR if you know how.
- Give naloxone (Narcan) if you have it and you are comfortable administering it.
- Don't leave the person alone until help arrives.





# Law Enforcement and Public Safety



## ► What Is It?

Law enforcement and public safety mean keeping people and communities safe. Police officers, firefighters, and other helpers work to stop crime, prevent drug misuse, and keep everyone protected.

## ► Why It Matters:

They help save lives, reduce drug harm, and make neighborhoods safer. Working with the community helps stop problems before they happen.



## ► Key Facts:

- Police and public safety teams help keep the community safe.
- They connect people who use drugs to get help and treatment.
- Safety and respect are important for everyone.





# Resources



**Name:** Fountain Centers (Mayo Clinic Health System)

**Address:** 404 W Fountain St. Albert Lea, MN

**Phone Number:** 507-377-6411

**Website:** <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/locations/albert-lea/services-and-treatments/addiction-treatment>

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**Name:** Ulstad Alano Society AA/NA Meetings

**Address:** 1005 Ulstad Ave. Albert Lea, MN

**Phone Number:** 507-373-7850

**Website:** Freeborn County and surrounding areas,  
<https://www.riverland.edu/student-services/basic-needs-resources/substance-use-resources/>

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**Name:** Independent Management Services

**Address:** 709 Algon St, Albert Lea MN 56007

**Phone Number:** 507-396-4477

**Website:** <https://www.imsofmn.com/>

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**Name:** Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

**What is it:** SAMHSA is a U.S. agency that provides resources and support for mental health and substance use prevention and treatment.

**Website:** <https://www.samhsa.gov/>

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**Name:** Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

**Phone Number:** 988

**What is it:** The Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (988) is a 24/7 hotline that provides immediate support and resources for anyone in emotional distress or suicidal crisis.

**Website:** <https://988lifeline.org/>

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# Resources: Websites



**Name:** National Institute on Drug Abuse

**What is it:** The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) provides research-based information and resources on drug use, addiction, and treatment.

**Website:** <https://nida.nih.gov/>

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**Name:** Know the Dangers

**What is it:** Know the Dangers offers information and resources to help people understand substance use risks and support recovery.

**Website:** <https://knowthedangers.com/recovery>

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**Name:** Minnesota DHS (Alcohol, drugs, and addictions: web resources)

**What is it:** The Minnesota DHS web resources provide information and support for alcohol, drug, and addiction services for individuals and families.

**Website:** <https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/children-and-families/health-care/alcohol-drugs-addictions/resources/web-resources.jsp>

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**Name:** MN Prevention Resource Center

**What is it:** The MN Prevention Resource Center offers resources, training, and support to prevent substance use and promote healthy communities in Minnesota.

**Website:** <https://www.mnprc.org/>

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**Name:** Dose of Reality

**What is it:** Dose of Reality provides information and resources to prevent underage alcohol use and raise awareness about its risks.

**Website:** <https://doseofreality.mn.gov>

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**Name:** Fast Tracker MN

**What is it:** Fast Tracker MN connects people to substance use and mental health treatment quickly, helping them access care and support efficiently.

**Website:** <https://fasttrackermn.org/>

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