

May is:

- Mental Health Month
- National Foster Care Month



- Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month
- Cystic Fibrosis Awareness Month
- Hepatitis Awareness Month
- Lupus Awareness Month



- National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month
- Children's Mental Health Awareness Week (**May 7-13**)
- National Alcohol/Drug-Related Birth Defects Awareness Week (**May 13-19**)
- HIV Vaccine Awareness Day (**May 18**)
- National Missing Children's Day (**May 25**)
- World No Tobacco Day (**May 31**)



ASTHMA

◆ 7.1 million children under age 18 suffer from asthma, resulting in 10.5 million school days missed each year



The Dark Side of Prom



- **DRUGS/ALCOHOL:** For many students, prom is one of the pinnacles of their high school days but for others, it's an invitation to get drunk. An American Automobile Association (AAA) survey of teens aged 16 to 19, published in February 2014, found that 41 percent admitted that it was likely that they or their friends would use drugs or alcohol on prom night. And, not just one or two drinks; excessive imbibing seems to be the norm. According to a Liberty Mutual Insurance study, 54 percent of teens who admitted to drinking during or after the prom consumed four or more alcoholic beverages.
- **TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS:** Statistics show roughly a third of teen traffic fatalities between April and June (peak of prom season) involve alcohol. Approximately 300 teens died in drunk driving accidents during prom weekends over the past several years, reports the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. An inquiry by AAA found that 87 percent of teens said their friends are more likely to drive after drinking than to call home for a ride. Another 22 percent stated that they'd ride in a car with someone who was impaired instead of contacting their parents.
- **UNAWARE OF RISKS:** Despite the numbers, the majority of high school students don't seem to understand the danger of driving under the influence. A Liberty Mutual investigation of nearly 2,300 juniors and seniors found that only 20 percent believe being on the roads on prom night is hazardous. Six percent admitted to driving under the influence after the event.
- **PEER PRESSURE:** The desire to fit in with friends often leads teens to do things they normally wouldn't, including drinking or using drugs. Data from Mothers Against Drunk Driving and Chrysler Automobile Company discovered that nearly 75 percent of teens felt pressured to use alcohol during prom while another 49 percent said their friends encouraged them to try drugs.
- **SEXUAL BEHAVIOR:** In a joint survey of 12,843 high school students by *Seventeen* magazine and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 14% of girls reported having sex on prom night, while 5% of the girls and 3% of the boys lost their virginity. Nearly 53% of those surveyed also reported consuming alcohol, which makes the risk greater for sexual assault. An article published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, reported that 1 in 5 female high school students is the victim of physical or sexual abuse at the hands of her date. In addition, the CDC reports that 1 in 4 teens contract a sexually transmitted disease or infection annually.
- **PARENTAL ADVICE:** According to the CDC, when parents view underage drinking as unacceptable, 80% of teens are less likely to drink compared to those with less strict parents. Discussions about the dangers of underage drinking and other drugs, including medical emergencies like alcohol poisoning, should take place regularly, not just during prom time. In addition, parents need to ask about post-prom celebrations, get a planned itinerary, find out who is driving, request text updates, and provide their children with emergency money for a taxi.

(Sources: <http://powertotheparent.org/parenting/prom-safety/>. <https://cornerstonerecoverycenter.com/parenting-tips-prom-night-drug-alcohol-use/>. <https://www.statisticbrain.com/prom-night-statistics/>. Rebecca Lake. "23 Prom Night Statistics Every Parent Should Read". <http://www.creditdonkey.com/prom-night-statistics.html>. May 6, 2013. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/teen-angst/201703/prom-and-the-afterparty>)

"Nothing Dangerous...Just Water"



More than 60 percent of JUUL users don't know that the e-liquid always contains nicotine, reveals a recent *Truth Initiative* study. Touted as a "satisfying alternative to cigarettes," a single cartridge is equal to one pack of cigarettes. "This escalates the urgency for Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulation and public education regarding the risks for young people," emphasizes Robin Koval, CEO and President of *Truth Initiative*. The FDA does plan to take enforcement actions to target companies that make vaping products appealing to children, reported the agency's commissioner, Dr. Scott Gottlieb, in a recent CNN interview. Gottlieb intends to have conversations with companies to try "to inspire them to take more corrective actions on their own."

The US Surgeon General cited a 900% increase in e-cigarette use by high school students from 2011 to 2015, and the 2016 National Youth Tobacco Survey noted that 1.7 million high school students used e-cigarettes in the previous 30 days before the survey. The number was 500,000 for middle schoolers. "No kid should be using any tobacco product," asserted Gottlieb.

(Source: Roni Selig, Davide Cannaviccio, and Charlotte Hawks. "Vaping Now an Epidemic Among US High Schoolers." www.cnn.com. April 6, 2018.)

The State of Mental Health

About 15 million children ages 3 to 17 have a diagnosable mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder in a given year, reports the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Only 20 percent of these children are identified and treated, leaving about 12 million undiagnosed. "Child and adolescent mental health disorders are the most common illnesses that children will experience under the age of 18. It's pretty amazing, because the number's so large that I think it's hard to wrap our heads around it," states Dr. Harold Koplewicz, founding president of *The Child Mind Institute*, a nonprofit children's mental health advocacy group. About 50 percent of mental illness cases begin by age 14, notes the American Psychiatric Association. However, mental health problems may actually start much earlier than previously thought. Research suggests that 1-2 percent of children 2 to 5 years old have depression, says Dr. Joan Luby, director of the Early Emotional Development program at the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. "Young children are more cognitively and emotionally sophisticated than we previously understood. They have complex emotions. They're aware of emotions in their environment," says Luby. "They have all the prerequisites of what depressive symptoms are." It may show up as constant sadness and low self-esteem. A child may not want to play with a favorite toy or with friends over a sustained period of time. Luby believes untreated depression in toddlers can lead to more depression later in life.

"Teenagers have a different kind of bile," points out Dr. Koplewicz. This affects their ability to continue playing sports and hang out with friends. A tendency to develop depression and moodiness and that adolescence is one of the most vulnerable periods to develop anxiety and depression. At least 25 percent of high school students exhibit some mild symptoms, confirms the National Institute of Mental Health Disorders.

1 in 5 American children suffer from a mental health disorder

depression. They don't seem sad. They seem irritable, have difficulty concentrating and in turn, school. It impacts their relationships with friends. He notes that teens are known for their most vulnerable periods to develop anxiety and depression. Numbers doubled for girls and jumped by more than 30 percent for teen boys and young men between 2007 and 2015, reports the CDC. Possible explanations include substance abuse history, mental health stigma, and lingering economic instability.

Anxiety disorders, next to depression, are among the most common mental health disorders in young people. An estimated 10 percent suffer from phobias, panic disorder, social anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder or obsessive-compulsive disorder. One of the more common mental health conditions, ADHD, affects approximately 8.6 percent of adolescents ages 8 to 15 years. The number slightly increases to 9 percent among teenagers 12 to 17 years old. ADHD is becoming more and more prevalent across the US, according to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and can be identified in many cases long before adolescence.

Teenagers also think about suicide more often; 5,000 young people take their own lives every year in the US, Koplewicz added. The suicide rate among teen girls continues to rise and hit a 40-year high in 2015. Numbers doubled for girls and jumped by more than 30 percent for teen boys and young men between 2007 and 2015, reports the CDC. Possible explanations include substance abuse history, mental health stigma, and lingering economic instability.

For mental health resources, children's activities, and awareness week events, visit <https://www.ffcmh.org/awarenessweek-2018> (National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health).

(Sources: Snow, Kate and Cynthia McFadden. "Generation at Risk: America's Youngest Facing Mental Health Crisis." <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/kids-health/generation-risk-america-s-youngest-facing-mental-health-crisis-n827836>. December 10, 2017. www.dualdiagnosis.org/mental-health-and-addiction/common-young-adults/)



Tainted Drugs

Synthetic marijuana, marketed as "Spice" or K2, mixed with rat poison killed three people in Illinois. Another 85 drug users in Wisconsin, Indiana, Maryland, and Missouri (plus a suspected case in Pennsylvania) have shown up at ERs with vomiting or coughing up blood and bleeding gums. The CDC is investigating and public warnings have been issued in many states as the epidemic spreads. Additionally, the US Drug Enforcement Administration reported that a wave of addicts is using and dying from cocaine laced with fentanyl, either with or without their knowledge. Drug traffickers often use fentanyl, a synthetic opioid more powerful than morphine, to strengthen the potency in heroin and keep users coming back for more and higher dosages. Heroin was responsible for the majority of overdose deaths in 2015 in Philadelphia. Black market painkillers containing fentanyl, which killed the music artist Prince, also are claiming a significant number of lives.

(Sources: Siemaszko, Corky. "Two Deaths, 54 other Cases of Severe Bleeding Tied to Fake Weed in Illinois." *nbcnews.com*. April 11, 2018; Howard, Jacqueline and Marlena Baldacci. *cnn.com*. April 2, 2018; Whelan, Aubrey. "Cocaine-fentanyl Deaths in Philly Show Fatal Unpredictability in Drug Supply." *The Inquirer*. February 20, 2018; www.dispatch.com/news/20180406/ohio-health-officials-synthetic-marijuana-laced-with-rat-poison-causing-severe-bleeding-in-other-states; www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/no-criminal-charges-prince-s-overdose-death-prosecutor-announces-n867491; www.thetreatmentcenter.com/blog/overdoses-deaths-on-the-rise-in-philadelphia-pa/)

Parent Resource Corner

The American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry website has a list of fact sheets for families on a wide array of topics. There are links to printer-friendly PDF copies on the site.

https://www.aacap.org/aacap/families_and_youth/facts_for_families/Facts_for_Families_Keyword.aspx

Thank you to our newsletter sponsor—the Lehigh County Department of Human Services, Drug and Alcohol Division!

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