

## Drugged Driving—What You Should Know



A recent report from the Governors Highway Safety Association linked driving with drugs in one's system to more accident deaths than driving while drunk. Get all the facts about the dangers of "drugged driving" below.

**What is drug-impaired driving?** Driving under the influence of over-the-counter medications, prescription drugs, marijuana, or illegal drugs.

**Why is drug-impaired driving dangerous?** Over-the-counter (OTC) medications and drugs affect the brain and can alter perception, mental processes, attention, balance, coordination, reaction time and other abilities required for safe driving. Even small amounts of some drugs can have a serious effect on driving ability.

**What substances are used the most when driving?** After alcohol, marijuana is the most commonly used drug. (Source: National Institute of Drug Abuse)

**What happens when you use drugs and drive?** Marijuana can decrease a person's ability to drive a car. It slows reaction time, impairs a driver's concentration and attention, and reduces hand-eye coordination. It is dangerous to drive after mixing alcohol and marijuana. Driving after using prescription drugs or over-the-counter medicine, such as cough suppressants, antihistamines, sleeping aids, and anti-anxiety medications may impair driving ability.



## Interagency Coordinating Council for Prevention

### Marijuana Abuse Fact Sheet American Adults and Marijuana

- Montana has an adult marijuana use percentage equivalent to Washington, DC. There are 81,000 adult users in Montana, 10.58% of adult population. This is much higher than the national average right around 7%.
- From August 2015 to December 2015, there were 2,437 open placements in the Montana Child and Family Services Division; 1,549 or nearly 64% of those were placements with drugs indicated. In 20.92% of those 1,549 cases marijuana was the drug type listed.
- Modern marijuana has been genetically modified to be more potent –6 to 10 times higher in THC. THC levels rise from “200 nanograms per milliliter to 500, to 1,000, to 1,750 nanograms per milliliter.
- Individuals with mental illnesses are more than seven times more likely to use cannabis weekly compared to people without mental illness.
- 50% of those using high-potency marijuana daily will experience withdrawal symptoms including poor sleep, decline in appetite, possible vomiting, and stomach pain. Side effects of this high potency marijuana include anxiety, increased irritability, muscle twitching and limb spasms.
- In Colorado, marijuana-based treatment programs are exceeded only by alcohol treatment numbers, with ages 21-25 increasing the most of the last several years. Marijuana is the most commonly cited drug among primary drug treatment admissions in Montana.

**Source:** Interagency Coordinating Council for Prevention

The council is charged with developing, through interagency planning and cooperation, comprehensive and coordinated prevention programs that will strengthen the healthy development, well-being, and safety of children, families, individuals, and communities-particularly children and families that are deemed to be at risk.

Learn More > <https://dphhs.mt.gov/boardscouncils/interagencycoordinatingcouncil.aspx>



## **Buying Drugs Online – What You Should Know & How to Protect Your Kids**

*Where are kids getting drugs?* Twenty years ago, the answer to this question would only have been: from classmates at school, from friends at a party, or from a medicine cabinet. Fast forward to today and you'll find that young people are also getting drugs online, perhaps now more than ever.

Here are some ways you can protect your kids and prevent them from purchasing drugs online:

1. **Keep the communication lines open.** Make sure to always have an open line of communication with your young loved ones. Let them keep you in the know about their friends, what's happening in their school, their interests, and more. Being close to him or her also helps you to notice changes in behavior that could point to drug use.
2. **Make sure they know the consequences.** Because the drugs can be so readily available online, kids may sometimes believe that they aren't really that dangerous. But from overdose to death to possible jail time if they are caught, using and buying drugs can lead to serious consequences. There are many cases where someone has been sentenced to prison for giving a pill to someone who later overdosed.
3. **Check out their "searches" (if you suspect drug use).** Look through their browser or Google searches (on their computer or cell phones). Keep an eye out for any "How to buy \_\_\_\_ online" -type searches. Bring up anything that causes strong suspicion. This may be an uncomfortable conversation and you may also be accused of spying (which you are technically doing). But be sure to let him or her know that you are worried and only want to keep them safe. Make sure you point out recent cases in the news about young people overdosing on drugs. You may also want to invest in one of these "Parental-Control and Monitoring Apps."
4. **Monitor their delivered packages (if you suspect drug use).** For obvious reasons, drugs are often delivered in unmarked and discreet packages. If you find your loved one getting such mail, or packages that you don't expect, ask them about it. You may want to stick around when they are opening the package.

**Source: GET SMART ABOUT DRUGS**

**- A DEA RESOURCE FOR PARENTS, EDUCATORS, & CAREGIVERS**

# HOW DO I TALK TO MY CHILD ABOUT DRUGS?



## 5 TIPS FOR TALKING TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS (6–10 YEARS OLD)

Children this age are anxious to learn. You can talk to them about the consequences of using substances, such as how it can lead to misuse and a substance use disorder. You can continue to teach and encourage good choices around healthy living.

1. Explain about good drugs versus bad drugs. Let them know that children should only take prescription medication when the adult in charge tells them to. Be sure they understand that even good medicine can make you sick or kill you if it wasn't prescribed for you or you take it for the wrong reason (to get high).
2. Repeat your message regularly. Remind these youngsters that some drugs can cause severe brain damage or cause people to die. Explain how even small amounts of alcohol can make children sick and harm their growing brain, making it harder for them to learn and remember things in school.
3. Children crave praise, so give it out freely when deserved. For example, let them know they are super smart for disliking the smell of cigarettes and that you trust their ability to make good decisions.
4. This is a good opportunity to involve others in your efforts. For example, as your child enters elementary school, offer to help with a school activity or drug education event or program that has an anti-drug or "no tolerance" message.
5. If your child does not start conversations about drugs and alcohol with you, take the lead. Begin discussions using real-life events in the news or in your own lives. This is true no matter your child's age. For example, your child tells you that a friend named Kevin rode in a car driven by his older brother and that the brother was smoking marijuana while driving. Talk about the importance of not riding in a car with someone who is using drugs, and explain what to do in that situation. You might say, "*Kevin's brother did something illegal, and he could go to jail or have a serious accident. I hope you know you can call me if someone you are riding with is drinking or using drugs. I will come and get you day or night.*" You could add, "*You'll be driving in a few years, and I'm glad you are smart enough not to drink or do drugs and drive.*"

**Source:** Growing Up Drug Free: A Parent's Guide to Prevention