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Prescription/OTC  
Misuse**

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We're All in This Together!

## AVOIDING TEEN MEDICATION MISUSE SIMPLE STRATEGIES FOR KEEPING IT SAFE

On any given day, most local teenagers are typically doing school work, watching Netflix, scrolling on their phones, and if we're being honest, sleeping. What's atypical for youth is the use of alcohol and other drugs. Underage alcohol use has slowly and steadily declined locally, statewide, and nationwide in recent years. Because alcohol and other drugs change the brain in ways that can lead to addiction, the trend is encouraging.

Parents know this doesn't mean kids aren't thinking about it. TikTok videos gone viral show teens disguising their age with scarves and masks, trying to purchase alcohol. Remaining vigilant with teens is all about keeping the conversations going. It doesn't necessarily involve distrustfulness. It's more about staying plugged into their lives during the developmental period when their adolescent brain is prone to taking risks. In a pandemic, misusing over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription medication may be easier to conceal from parents than telltale smell of alcohol. With social distancing, however, this is debatable with fewer goodnight hugs from mom and dad. Retailers confirm masked teens trying to pass for legal age, whether alcohol, cannabis, or cough medicine from the pharmacy. Clerks concerned about a safe and quick transaction may let ID verification slide. The tactic that keeps youth safe, despite accessibility, is their own decision to stay substance-free. Here are simple ways parents support their teens in practicing medication safety.

1. **Talk with teens about the importance of not sharing medicine with friends.** Talk about the risks associated with giving their medicine to someone, or using a medication not prescribed to them. It's illegal, could be addictive, side effects can be dangerous, and use with other medication can result in hazardous interactions including overdose.

2. **Discard medicine no longer used.** Store medicine out of sight and promptly dispose of [extra](#).

### RESOURCES FOR YOU

- Surgeon General
- Food & Drug Administration
- National Institute on Drug Abuse
- The Power of Choice
- Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- The Center for Tobacco Policy and Organization

### IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

The Power of Choice is a project of 360 Youth Services, Naperville School District 203, Indian Prairie School District 204, Naperville Police Department, KidsMatter and District 203 and 204 Parents. Survey and data analysis provided by Center for Prevention Research and Development (CPRD) at the University of Illinois.

### POWER OF CHOICE CONTACT

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**I LIKE MYSELF JUST THE WAY I AM**



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



**82% of our students choose to be alcohol-free (past 30-day use rate)**

Source: 2018 Illinois Youth Survey District 203 & District 204 high school students. Survey and data analysis provided by CPRD at the University of Illinois.

The Power of Choice is a project of 360 Youth Services, Naperville School District 203, Indian Prairie School District 204, Naperville Police Department, KidsMatter and District 203 & 204 parents. For more resources visit: [thepowerofchoice.info](http://thepowerofchoice.info)

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**CHECK OUT THESE COMMON WAYS TO MANAGE STRESS**

- Unplug from media
- Meditate
- Keep a journal
- Hydrate
- Take a power nap
- Listen to music
- Video chat a friend
- Take a mindful walk outside
- Take stretch breaks throughout the day
- Ask for help
- Read your favorite book
- Clean your living space

**TEEN ZOOMS**

School District 203 & 204 high school students are invited to contact these groups about upcoming zooms.

**Youth Advisory Committee (YAC):** Diverse group of students meeting to impact the community through substance use prevention activities. Meets the 2nd Tuesday evening of the month. Contact Sarah: [sindelcoffer@360youthservices.org](mailto:sindelcoffer@360youthservices.org).

**Snowball:** Leadership empowerment program with fun, peer-led activities and workshops. Questions? Contact Kate: [kkeir@360youthservices.org](mailto:kkeir@360youthservices.org).



YAC members requested dogs (plural) for the winter meme to match the Power of Choice theme: We're All in This Together. Locally, 82% of our students choose to be alcohol-free (past 30-day use rate). Source: 2018 Illinois Youth Survey (IYS) District 203 & 204 High Schools Report, N=11,127 District 203 & 204 high school students. Survey and data analysis provided by CPRD at the University of Illinois.

Connect with us on social media to enhance parenting for prevention!

**PREVENTION TALKING TIPS**

**Parents, discuss medication misuse.** Get informed and talk with teens about misperceptions. It is a myth that many teens use drugs that are not prescribed to them for nonmedical reasons, such as studying, recreation, or to enhance sports performance. On the 2018 IYS, 98% of our local students said they had not used a prescription drug not prescribed to them (past 30-day use rate).

**Talk with teens about taking care of their health to manage stress.** Adequate sleep, occasional exercise, balanced diet, study buddies, tutoring, and taking time for fun, help. Often, a prescription-free, healthy option will suffice. If problems persist, evaluate the situation, don't be afraid to seek help.



Internet connectivity on zoom can sometimes make for spontaneous fun during meetings. This picture was a screenshot of a leadership zoom meeting to prepare for the upcoming YAC meeting. Learn more about YAC at: <https://www.communityallianceforprevention.org/youth-advisory-committee>.