

Substance Use Q & A

How can I help someone with a substance problem?

Supporting a loved one through a struggle with substance use can be difficult for adults and teens alike. This process can be especially complicated when someone is resistant to getting help.

While you may not have control over someone else's substance use, support is available to cope with how that substance use may affect you.

For more help, Visit

<https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/children-and-families/coping-resources>
or Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Can you get addicted to ADHD meds?

Many teens who have been diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) take prescription stimulants like Adderall® or Ritalin® to help treat their symptoms. When taken as directed, these medications can be helpful and safe, and have a very low risk for addiction. If your doctor prescribes stimulants, it's important to follow the instructions and to discuss any concerns about addiction or dependence.

Sometimes people who don't have ADHD take drugs like Adderall® or Ritalin® in an attempt to get high, to stay awake longer, or to stay focused while studying.

This can be especially harmful because people often take these medications at a higher dose or through a different route than prescribed. Misusing ADHD medications can cause headaches, nausea, feeling anxious, and sleeping problems. Misusing prescription stimulants can also lead to addiction. These drugs can also make you feel paranoid, cause your body temperature to get dangerously high, and make your heart beat too fast. While stimulants may help with a lack of focus in some people, they may diminish other skills (like creative thinking).



Is vaping bad for you even if it's just flavoring?

It can be. Research shows that many teens and young adults don't realize that the flavors they use actually can contain nicotine, an addictive compound found in tobacco. Many vapes also contain propylene glycol, glycerin, chemical flavorings, and other compounds with unknown health effects. As a result, people who vape—even just flavoring—may inhale and ingest potentially harmful chemicals.

Recent studies showed that students who had already used any type of e-cigarette by the time they started 9th grade were more likely than others to start smoking cigarettes and other smokable tobacco products within the next year. And we know that cigarette smoking is a leading cause of cancer and other illnesses, causes harm to unborn babies, and harm due to secondhand smoke exposure.

Other vaping products can also cause harm. In 2020, thousands of people got sick and dozens died from an illness called EVALI, which stands for e-cigarette or vaping-use associated lung injury. Vitamin E acetate, an additive in some THC-containing vaping products, is strongly linked to EVALI. When heated and inhaled, vitamin E acetate can damage the lungs.

What is the worst drug?

In the case of drugs and alcohol, there isn't a "worst" just as there isn't a "best" drug. All drugs have the potential to produce negative health effects or lead to a dangerous situation in the short or long term. Whether a drug causes a serious health issue—like a life-threatening overdose—can depend on how much a person uses, how they consume it, and other factors.

Some drugs are so potent that a life-threatening overdose can occur the first time a person uses them. For example, the synthetic opioid fentanyl is 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin. Injecting potent drugs can be particularly dangerous because this route delivers the compounds more directly to the brain, and it carries the risks of injury and infection. Some drugs are more frequently associated with addiction and dependence than others. For example, more than half of people who regularly use cigarettes meet the criteria for a tobacco use disorder, while only about 1 in 11 people who regularly use marijuana (cannabis) meet the criteria for a cannabis use disorder. Certain drugs can have a stronger effect on the brain than others, and can cause long-term problems. A person's other illness, their age, and their family history also play a role in the effects a drug will have.