

Drug abuse is the use of illegal drugs, or the use of prescription or over-the-counter drugs excessively or for purposes other than how they are meant to be used. Knowing the trends, and educating your children on the dangers related to drugs, can help keep your family safe. Here's what's trending in 2020:

- Marijuana use among high school seniors is currently the highest its been since 1979. Of those students who used marijuana in the past month, 23.5% used it from 10 to 39 times, and 18% used it 40 or more times. Twenty or more times a month signifies addiction.
- Vaping skyrocketed from 13.2% in 2017 to 32.7% in 2019. Nearly 11% of youth e-cigarette users reported using at least 20 days a month.
- Methamphetamine made to look like pastel-colored bits of candy or Flintstone children's vitamins is convenient to ship. Drug traffickers have increasingly produced meth in pill form over the last few years.
- Over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription drugs are responsible for a growing number of overdoses.
 - Antidiarrheal Loperamide (Immodium): Larger-than-recommended doses can cause opioid-like effects, similar to fentanyl, heroin, or oxycodone. Loperamide overdoses have been steadily increasing in incidence and severity.
 - "Benadryl challenge." Teenagers have been hospitalized after overdosing on diphenhydramine (Benadryl). They got the idea after watching videos on TikTok that claimed teens could get high and hallucinate if they took a dozen or more Benadryl tablets. Benadryl is also dangerous when combined with pain medications and decongestants; taking Benadryl with either type of medication can lead to an unintentional overdose.
- Three powerful synthetic opioids not authorized for medical use are causing overdoses and even death - isotonitazene, xylazine, and bromphine.
 - Isotonitazene ("iso") is a white or off-white powder form or pressed into counterfeit opioid pills to look like Oxycodone and identical to an 8mg Dilaudid (hydromorphone) tablet. The pills may have an M or 8 stamped on one side. It can also be mixed with other drugs such as cocaine. The potency of this drug is similar to or greater than fentanyl.
 - Xylazine ("tranq dope") was initially discovered as an antihypertensive agent in 1962, but due to its hazardous side effects, it was not approved by the FDA for human use. However, the FDA did approve it for veterinary use as an animal tranquilizer. Xylazine can be abused by itself but is more frequently taken with heroin, and is most frequently found in a "speedball," a combination of heroin and cocaine.
 - "Purple heroin" consists of fentanyl, acetaminophen and a new drug called bromphine, among other substances. The name "purple heroin" comes from the drug's purple hue. Bromphine is relatively new fentanyl alternative but is structurally different from fentanyl, and is not easily visible in normal blood tests.

Remember, research shows that teens who learn about the risks of alcohol and drugs from their parents are up to 50% less likely to drink alcohol or use drugs. Talking to your teen can save lives.

For more information, please visit our website at www.drugfreeadamscounty.org.