

A close-up, profile view of a young woman with long, light-colored hair. She is holding a lit cigarette in her right hand and a lit lighter in her left hand. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting her face and the smoke from the cigarette against a dark background.

How you as a parent can reduce
the risk of your child starting with

drugs

Your attitude and your actions are crucial

Did you know that one of the biggest reasons why young people don't try tobacco, alcohol and drugs is that they don't want to make their own parents disappointed? If you are clear about your attitude your child will be far more likely not to try it.

Research shows that young people who succeed and thrive in school have structured leisure activities and socialise with their family and therefore become less likely to start with alcohol and other drugs.

Eight important efforts YOU can do

1. Talk to your child every day, be curious and ask questions. Keep the dialogue alive. Build a relationship of trust.
2. Don't offer alcohol at home and never buy alcohol for them.
3. Set clear limits at home and for the child – include older siblings and friends in the conversation.
4. Get to know your child's friends and their parents.
5. Stay informed about where your child is at any given time. Keep track of cash, banking and swish account and internet activity.
6. Interact with other parents. Agree on common rules regarding alcohol and tobacco and preferably about how long to stay out with friends.
7. Help your youth – give him/her a ride and pick up, stay in touch, stay up in the evening and wait for your child to come home. Let friends of your child/teen hang out at your house.
8. Be extra present in case of major changes and watchful about truancy, deteriorating school performance and hanging out with drug-liberal Buddies.



Foto: Carina Andreasson

What you as a parent need to know about tobacco, alcohol and drugs

Tobacco

Tobacco is usually the first drug that children encounter. Nine out of ten people who start to smoke do so before the age of 18. There is a strong link between tobacco use and use of alcohol and drugs. The earlier a youth starts smoking nicotine, the faster an addiction occurs that often can be lifelong. Research shows that young people who don't use tobacco at a young age are at much lower risk of trying other drugs (in particular cannabis). As a parent your attitude to tobacco and your ability to set clear boundaries is crucial – be restrictive.

Snus

Snus is highly addictive and the earlier a person starts using - the greater the risk of encountering other drugs. There are also nicotine products without tobacco, also called "white snus". A common misconception among teenagers and even adults is that white snus is completely harmless, this is NOT the case. Nicotine contains several harmful substances and since teenager brains are much more sensitive than adults, the risk of becoming addicted is also particularly high. The marketing of white snus as a fresh alternative is strongly aimed at young people, and especially women.

Vape

E-cig or vapes come in thousands of flavourings, often candy-like flavours. Many vapes are completely odourless, making it easy for a teen to hide using from their parents. The use of e-cigs has increased exponentially among children and young adults in recent years. Vapes often contain nicotine, which is a toxic substance and highly addictive. It contains substances that can damage both lungs and blood vessels. Despite the age limit of 18+, youngsters manage to get a hold on vapes much earlier - via Snapchat, Tik-Tok and Instagram or through friends and older siblings. Talk to your teenager, explain the risks and be clear about your restrictive position on the matter.

Nitrous oxide

More and more teenagers are being lured into inhaling nitrous oxide to get a high. It is not illegal; it is easy to get hold of and gives a quick high. What many teenagers do not know is that it can entail major health risks. The greatest risk with inhalation is lack of oxygen. Using nitrous oxide can also lead to unconsciousness, a temporary weakening of the heart muscle and weakening of the body's protective reflexes. Prolonged and repeated use of nitrous oxide can cause permanent damage, even deaths. It is therefore incredibly important that you, as an adult, pay attention, act in case of suspicion and talk to your teenager about it.

Alcohol

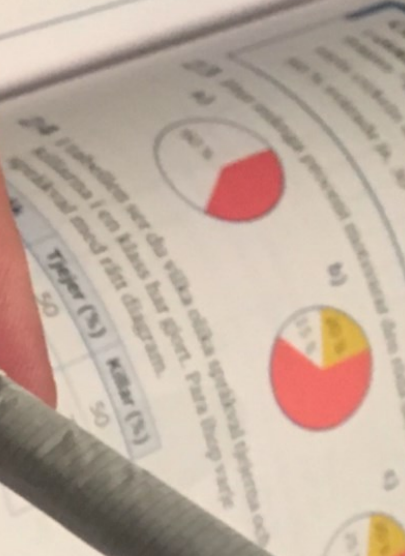
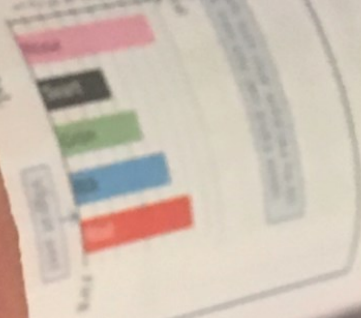
We know that the brain sustains a lot of damage from alcohol. Due to the fact the brain develops until the age of 25, young people's brains are extra sensitive. Research shows a clear link between alcohol consumption at early age and increased risk of developing risk use and abuse. Research also shows that children who are not invited to drink alcohol by their parents drink less. Early alcohol use is shown as a gateway to other drugs. Your ability as a parent to set clear limits and be restrictive with alcohol is therefore crucial for the future of your youth.

Drugs

Cannabis in the form of marijuana or hashish, is by far the most common illicit drug among adolescents. The drug is today much stronger than before as THC content has increased due to processing. Cannabis use can cause blackouts, difficulty concentrating, anxiety, feelings of panic, depression, cancer, psychosis, and schizophrenia. It is significantly more common among tobacco smokers that they have used cannabis than among those who never smoked. The most common way to obtain cannabis is from friends or friends of friends, not infrequently in connection with private parties.

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skicka
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Show that you care

Adolescence is a sensitive period when your youth for the first time may be exposed to different types of drugs. That's why it is especially important that you are present in your child's life. As parent, you are a very important support for your children and you have great opportunities to influence your child's attitude to drugs, according to all research in the field.

It's never too late to seek help

If you suspect that your child has started using tobacco, alcohol, cannabis or other substances – make it more difficult to continue. Seek help. Show that you care, hold on and don't give up. Experiences of parents who have had trouble with their child/teenager shows that it is important to seek help early and to trust your gut feeling. It is easier to get someone to stop using drugs early in an addiction. Talk to the school and other activities where your child/teenager is attending. It's never too late to get help.

You're not alone.

For support and advice

Familjeteamet – support for children, teenagers and families based on your needs at Kungsgatan 10c in Sollefteå.

Opening hours: 08:00 – 16:30

Contact: 070-261 05 14

Individ och familjeomsorg – for emergency support if you or someone close to you needs help due to violence, abuse, mental illness etc.

Contact: 0620-68 20 97 or 0620-68 20 00

MIND – national helpline for parents who have questions or are worried about their children.

Opening hours: Mon. – Fri. 10:00 – 15:00, Thur. 19:00 – 21:00

Contact: 020-85 20 00

Do you find it difficult to talk about with your teenager?

At **FULL KOLL** you will find tips and advice on how to say no to your child. There are also tools for how you can raise the conversation about alcohol and other drugs with your teenager.



In **TONÅRS PALÖREN** on IQ.se, you will find lots of facts that can facilitate the conversation about alcohol, but also advice about other things that may arise during adolescence. For example, new friends, relationships, parties, drugs, and conflicts.



More information and research

www.cannabishjalpen.se
www.myteromcannabis.se
www.drugsmart.com
www.can.se

Inform the police about private parties with minors and alcohol, or suspicion of dealing drugs and alcohol to minors, all of which are illegal in Sweden. Contact www.polisen.se or call 112.