



Empowering Parents To Raise Their Children To Be Substance-Free

Talk early and often about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Even when it gets tough.



Click here to print a PDF of this article so you can start a conversation with your child

Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.

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Prevention Action Alliance
6171 Huntley Road, Suite G
Columbus, Ohio 43229
PH: (614) 540-9985
FX: (614) 540-9990

Know! What's Hidden in Plain Sight – Part II

This Know! Tip reveals some of the tools and tactics teens may use to hide drug use. If you suspect your child is using drugs, you should contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357).

Hidden in Plain Sight is a substance misuse awareness program for parents and other adults that helps uncover signs of trouble. In the previous Tip, **Know! What's Hidden in Plain Sight - Part I**, we learned the importance of being aware of every child's risk for drug use, and we discovered the key role electronics play in drug-related communications.

In continuing with information presented by Officer Ben Boruchowitz of the Powell Police Department in central Ohio, we take a look at where young people get drugs, where they hide them and what parents and other caregivers can do to prevent use or intervene if needed.

Depending on the type of drug, young people get a hold of them most commonly through:

- Friends from school;
- Home medicine cabinets that are unlocked and unmonitored;
- Mid-level dealers where they meet up at gas stations, restaurants and grocery stores.

Young people hide drugs anywhere they can fit that they don't think you will look, including:

- Return air vents in their room;
- Cans, highlighters, pens, personal hygiene products, makeup, books, mattresses, toilets, etc.;
- Vehicles – if they are old enough to drive and if they have a car that is only used by them.

When it comes to monitoring your child's activities for substance misuse prevention or if need be, intervention, Officer Boruchowitz shares the following tips:

- Lock your home medicine cabinets; get rid of expired, unused, or unwanted medicines; and monitor your over-the-counter and prescription medications – especially pain meds.
- Know who your child is with and their whereabouts at all times.
- Track your child's cash very carefully, or take it one step further: Instead of handing over cash to your son or daughter who plans on going to the movies, use a preloaded debit card and then require receipts in return.
- Search your child's room (and car – if it applies) without their knowledge – it is your right as a parent. If you warn them you are going to check, they will get rid of any evidence. If you search and find nothing, consider it great news.



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- Search their phones and devices regularly, checking browser history, text messaging, social media accounts, etc. Make them give you their passwords. Reconsider allowing your child to access Snapchat, because it is so risky.
- Check your network at home for connected devices that you have not authorized.
- Don't be afraid to use drug tests if you suspect your child may be using drugs. In fact, some parents keep a drug test in the home and the teens are aware that at any given time, mom or dad could choose to do a random drug test. The other benefit here is that this gives kids an out when it comes to peer pressure. If offered drugs, they can say, "No way, my parents do random drug tests. I'd be busted."
- Be aware that every child – even your child – could be influenced to use drugs.
- Let your child know you realize their peers are using and why you don't want them to use.

Education and open dialogue with your children about drugs is key. In fact, children whose parents talk with them regularly about the dangers and consequences of drug use are up to 50% less likely to use them in the first place.

If you suspect your child is involved in substance abuse that is beyond control, seek immediate intervention. You can start with your pediatrician and they can direct you to the best help locally.

Source: *Hidden in Plain Sight. Presented by Officer Ben Boruchowitz of the Powell Police Department - 47 Hall Street, Powell, OH 43065 - Sept. 2017. Contact at bboruchowitz@cityofpowell.us*

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