

• *Communicate*

• *Role Model*

• *Become Involved*

### Who is Your Child's Drug Dealer?

You may be surprised to know that you could be your child's drug dealer. Inhalants, also known as solvents, (usually household products) and prescription drugs are among the drugs of choice for some children and youth. It is important that you take steps to ensure that these items are safely stored in your home to prevent their misuse.

Canadian secondary school surveys indicate that the majority of youth who abuse inhalants are between the ages of 10 and 17, with peak use between 12 and 15. Inhalants can be found in virtually every room of your home. They include nail polish remover, cleaning fluids, hair spray, gasoline, the propellant in aerosol whipped cream, spray paint, fabric protector, modeling glue, air conditioner fluid (freon), cooking spray and correction fluid. Inhalants are misused by sniffing, snorting, inhaling from a plastic bag ("bagging") or "huffing" from an inhalant-soaked rag, sock, or roll of toilet paper. They can also be sniffed directly from the container. They don't look like drugs, but the reality is that inhalants can kill, and they have also been linked to brain damage, liver and kidney problems, hearing loss and limb spasms - all risks linked to chasing a high that often lasts just a matter of minutes.

Another group of drugs to be aware of are prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs. Prescription drugs include painkillers, such as those drugs prescribed after surgery;

depressants, such as sleeping pills or anti-anxiety drugs; and stimulants, such as those drugs prescribed for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). In the US, every day 2,500 youth age 12 to 17 abuse a pain reliever for the very first time. When taken properly and under a medical provider's supervision, prescription drugs can have many benefits. However, when abused, a single large dose of prescription or over-the-counter painkillers or depressants can cause breathing difficulty that can lead to death. Stimulant abuse can lead to hostility or paranoia, or the potential for heart system failure or fatal seizures. Even in small doses, depressants and painkillers have subtle effects on motor skills, judgment, and ability to learn.

Because inhalants and prescription drugs are easy to get, are unmonitored by parents, and are believed to be safer than illicit drugs such as marijuana, cocaine and crystal meth, teens who wouldn't otherwise use illicit drugs might abuse these substances.

Young people are getting these drugs from their own homes, grandparents or other relatives, friends, and online pharmacies. It is important that you pay attention to these products in your home and talk to your children about the dangers of their misuse. Remember, as a parent, you are a very powerful influence in your child's life.

### TIPS FOR PARENTS

#### Tips for the Prevention of Prescription Drug Abuse

- 1. Safeguard all drugs at home. Monitor quantities and control access.** Take note of how many pills are in a bottle or pill packet, and keep track of refills.
- 2. Set clear rules for teens about all drug use, including not sharing medicine and always following the medical provider's advice and dosages.** Make sure your teen uses prescription drugs only as directed by a medical provider and follows instructions for over the counter (OTC) drugs products carefully.
- 3. Be a good role model by following these same rules with your own medicines.** Examine your own behavior to ensure you set a good example.
- 4. Properly conceal and dispose of old or unused medicines.** If you are unsure of how to safely dispose of prescription or over the counter drugs, consult your local pharmacist.
- 5. Ask friends and family to safeguard their prescription drugs.** Make sure your friends and relatives, especially grandparents, know about the risks, too, and encourage them to regularly monitor their own medicine cabinets.

Source: Parents. The Anti-Drug

[Click here](#) for more information about inhalant abuse

If your community has a substance abuse prevention event or activity you'd like to share with our readers, please contact Cathy Mah at [cathymah@ades.bc.ca](mailto:cathymah@ades.bc.ca) © 2007

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**"Don't worry that children never listen to you; worry that they are always watching you."**

**Robert Fulghum**

## ASK AN EXPERT

### My daughter is starting to go to more parties and social gatherings since she has entered high school. How can I support her in not using alcohol or other drugs?

Many factors contribute to the choices youth make during the critical years of adolescence. Decisions pertaining to alcohol and other drug use are no exception. Fortunately, parents still have influence. Prevention research clearly identifies family “protective factors” and family “risk factors” that impact the overall resilience of young people and their ability to navigate the challenges of adolescence, including alcohol and other drug use. Some examples of “protective factors” include a high degree of family support, positive family communication, family involvement in schooling, setting clear boundaries within the family about rules and expectations, positive adult role models, and values that encourage the constructive use of time (sports, clubs, music lessons, volunteer work). Conversely, “risk factors” include poverty and economic deprivation, poor family communication and conflict,

association with anti-social peers, family alcohol or other drug use, poor parent-child bonding, and overall poor family management. Regardless of one’s circumstances, however, it’s never too late to begin strategic parenting. The following 7 practical strategies will help parents delay their children’s first exposure to alcohol or other drugs and hopefully “buffer” them from any significant problems associated with substances:

1. Increase supervision: the more youth are monitored, the less trouble they get into.
2. Communicate and connect: share “comfort time” together, be curious and ask questions about today’s youth culture, know your child well
3. Network with other parents: good relationships with other parents will help keep you “in the loop”
4. Provide your child with opportunities

that promote competence and confidence: success helps empower youth, boosting their self esteem

5. Get educated: familiarize yourself with the signs and symptoms of problematic drug use
6. Monitor money spent: request receipts if necessary
7. Stop enabling: let your child experience the natural consequences of their choices, don’t rescue.

Though youth might indicate otherwise, parents and family are still highly valued by young people. Leverage your relationship accordingly.

**Terry Bulych, MA**  
Supervisor and Addictions Counsellor  
Jump Start Program  
Vancouver Coastal Health

## COMMUNITY CORNER

### Tobacco Free Sports Athlete Ambassador Program

This is a new program featuring some of Canada’s top athletes. It promotes the message “be your best. be tobacco free”. The Tobacco Free Sports (TFS) Athlete Ambassador program is a joint initiative driven by the Canadian Sport Centre Pacific in partnership with Pacific Sport, the Ministry of Health, Alcohol-Drug Education Service and regional Health Authorities that will be offering schools and community events an opportunity to have a high performance athlete relay this important life message.

TFS Athlete Ambassadors will be available to speak or make appearances at a variety of community events and individual school visits (grades 6-9) in each region of the province. For information on having the program come to your community or school, please contact Janet Filipenko (Program Coordinator) at [jfilipenko@cscpacific.ca](mailto:jfilipenko@cscpacific.ca), or phone 604-730-7273. As the program is funded provincially, there is no charge to book an athlete, however due to training and competition schedules advanced notice is recommended. For more information [click here](#).



### Available Resources & Workshops

#### Making Decisions Series

A leading education initiative to combat drug and alcohol abuse and encourage social responsibility.

Grades 4, 6, 7, 8 & 9 [<more info](#)

#### Parents as Preventors™

Workshops designed for parents, emphasizing the central role parents play in influencing their children to make healthy choices regarding alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. [<more info](#)

[drugfacts.ca](http://drugfacts.ca)

[tobaccofreesports.ca](http://tobaccofreesports.ca)

For more information  
please visit our website  
or contact our office.

For a regular subscription to this newsletter [click here](#) or contact our office.

To enjoy all the benefits of an Alcohol-Drug Education Service membership [click here](#) or contact our office.

## RESOURCES

### 1. Alliance for Consumer Education, What Every Parent Needs to Know About Inhalant Abuse

[Click Here](#) for PDF

### 2. Parents.The Anti-Drug, 2006, The Abuse of Prescription and Over The Counter Drugs

[Click Here](#) for PDF

#203-2550 Shaughnessy Street  
Port Coquitlam BC V3C 3G2  
Tel: 604 944-4155 • Fax: 604 944-4149  
[info@ades.bc.ca](mailto:info@ades.bc.ca) • [www.ades.bc.ca](http://www.ades.bc.ca)