

VAPING AND SUBSTANCE USE IN YOUTH

TIPS FOR TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT THE DANGERS OF SUBSTANCE USE



HIGHLIGHTS

APPROXIMATELY 19,800 CT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS USED A TOBACCO PRODUCT AT LEAST ONCE IN THE PAST 30 DAYS (2023).

USE OF VAPING PRODUCTS WAS MORE THAN TWO TIMES HIGHER AMONG CT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO REPORTED POORER MENTAL HEALTH (2023).

IF YOU SUSPECT THAT YOUR CHILD MAY BE ADDICTED TO NICOTINE OR ANOTHER SUBSTANCE, CALL 211 FOR 24/7 INFORMATION AND REFERRALS OR VISIT 211CT.ORG FOR SUBSTANCE USE RELATED SERVICE LISTINGS.

References

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2025). [How to talk with your teen about drugs & alcohol: What I tell every parent.](#)

U.S. Food & Drug Administration. (n.d.). [Vaping prevention & education.](#) HHS.gov.

Sorosiak, D., Peng, J. (2024). Connecticut Youth Risk Behavior Survey; Tobacco Use Behaviors and Related Findings; 2023 Surveillance Report. Hartford, CT: Connecticut Department of Public Health.

Vape Free CT. (n.d.). [Support for parents.](#) CT Department of Public Health.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

- Learn about the dangers of certain substances, including nicotine, cannabis, pills, and fentanyl, and their various presentations
- Understand why many youth begin smoking and/or vaping (e.g. peer pressure, media influence, lack of education, desire for independence)
- Know the warning signs of addiction (e.g. jittery, anxious or depressed mood, irritability)

STARTING A CONVERSATION

- Pick a natural time to talk and ask open-ended questions (e.g. “What do you know about vaping?”)
- Use news stories about vaping and smoking to start conversations rather than using your child’s friends as examples (e.g. “I read an article today about vaping. Do kids at your school vape?”)
- Popular media makes drug and alcohol use seem harmless- be clear about your expectations and desire for your child to be safe

KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

- Frequent, short conversations are more effective and less pressure than long conversations
- Discuss the effects of smoking that matter to youth (financial cost, lack of energy for sports, trouble concentrating in class)
- It’s okay if you don’t have all the answers- stay informed and have consistent, open conversations

This resource is provided on behalf of the partnership between your child’s school and the School-Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI).

To learn more about SBDI and how it improves student outcomes, please visit ctsdbi.org or email Gianna Mendes at gmendes@chdi.org.

