

Drug & Alcohol Education Newsletter

Upcoming Trainings in McLeod County and Surrounding Areas

[Check out the calendar for National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\) Minnesota](#)

[2B Continued Events](#)

Drug-Impaired Driving Language

Overview

You can't drive safely if you're impaired. That's why it's illegal everywhere in America to drive under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, opioids, methamphetamines, or any potentially impairing drug—prescribed or over the counter. Driving while impaired by any substance—legal or illegal—puts you and others in harm's way. Learn the latest research on drug-impaired driving, misconceptions about marijuana use, and what you can do to make smarter choices to drive safely.

Many substances can impair driving, including alcohol, some over-the-counter and prescription drugs, and illegal drugs.

Alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs can impair the ability to drive because they slow coordination, judgment, and reaction times. Cocaine and methamphetamine can make drivers more aggressive and reckless. Using two or more drugs at the same time, including alcohol, can amplify the impairing effects of each drug a person has consumed. Some prescription and over-the-counter medicines can cause extreme drowsiness, dizziness, and other side effects. Read and follow all warning labels before driving, and note that warnings against "operating heavy machinery" include driving a vehicle. Impaired drivers can't accurately assess their own impairment – which is why no one should drive after using any impairing substances. Remember: If you feel different, you drive different.

Marijuana Impairs

There are many misconceptions about marijuana use, including rumors that marijuana can't impair you or that marijuana use can actually make you a safer driver.

Several scientific studies indicate that this is false. Research shows that marijuana impairs motor skills, lane tracking and cognitive functions (Robbe et al., 1993; Moskowitz, 1995; Hartman & Huestis, 2013). A 2015 study on driving after smoking cannabis stated that



Many Substances Can Impair Driving

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THC in marijuana also hurts a driver's ability to multitask, a critical skill needed behind the wheel.

NHTSA continues to conduct research to better understand the relationship between marijuana impairment and increased crash risk. NHTSA's Drug and Alcohol Crash Risk Study found that marijuana users are more likely to be involved in crashes. However, the increased risk may be due in part because marijuana users are more likely to be young men, who are generally at a higher risk of crashes.

Research indicates drug prevalence is on the rise among drivers. NHTSA's 2020 study of seriously or fatally injured road users at studied trauma centers (Thomas et al., 2020) suggested that the overall prevalence of alcohol, cannabinoids and opioids increased during the public health emergency compared to before.

While evidence shows that drug-impaired driving is dangerous, we still have more to learn about the extent of the problem and how best to address it. In January 2018, NHTSA launched a new initiative to address drug-impaired driving. NHTSA's National Drug-Impaired Driving Initiative brings together experts, including law enforcement officials, prosecutors, substance abuse experts and others, to discuss strategies that can reduce drug-impaired driving.

It's Illegal

Driving impaired by any substance—alcohol or other drugs, whether legal or illegal—is against the law in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Law enforcement officers are trained to observe drivers' behavior and to identify

impaired drivers. Even in states where marijuana laws have changed, it is still illegal to drive under the influence of the drug.

NHTSA's National Roadside Survey conducted in 2013-2014 (PDF, 173 KB) found that 20 percent of surveyed drivers tested positive for potentially impairing drugs.

Surveys conducted by NHTSA show the number of drivers testing positive for marijuana increased between 2007 and 2014. In 2007, NHTSA's National Roadside Survey (PDF, 1 MB) found that 8.6 percent of weekend nighttime drivers tested positive for marijuana. In the 2013-2014 survey, 12.6 percent of weekend nighttime drivers tested positive for marijuana. That's a 48-percent increase in less than 10 years.

While the presence of a drug in a driver's system doesn't necessarily mean that they're impaired, these findings show the importance of raising awareness about the risks of drug-impaired driving.

Responsible Behavior

We can all save lives by making smarter choices.

Plan ahead for a sober driver, if you plan to use an impairing drug.

Don't let friends get behind the wheel if they're under the influence of drugs.

If you're hosting a party where alcohol or other substances will be used, it's your job to make sure all guests leave with a sober driver.

Always wear your seat belt—it's your best defense against impaired drivers.

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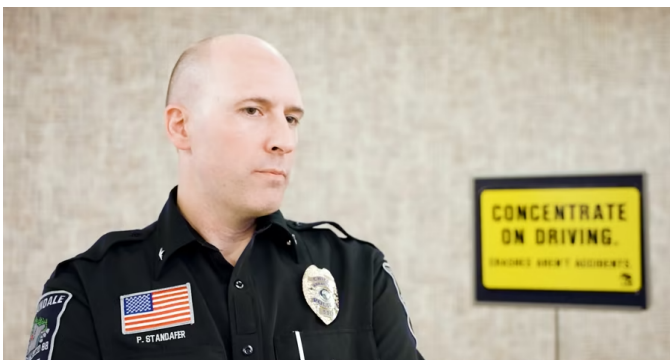
NHTSA's National Drug-Impaired Driving Initiative

NHTSA has launched If You Feel Different, You Drive Different campaign to educate Americans about the dangers of driving while impaired by drugs, and to promote safer choices. Also, each year we team up with law enforcement for our If You Feel Different You Drive Different, Drive High Get a DUI campaign to remind drivers that drug-impaired driving isn't a mistake; it's a crime.

Those who drive under the influence of drugs, whether obtained legally or illegally, pose a danger to themselves, their passengers, and other road users.

NHTSA is determined to put an end to impaired driving — to save lives. Remember: Impairment is impairment, no matter the substance.

[Source](#)



[Watch the Impaired Driving PSA](#)

What Does Vaping Do to Your Lungs?

Stephen R Broderick, M.D.

By now, it seems pretty clear that using e-cigarettes, or vaping, is bad for your lungs. But research about exactly how vaping affects the lungs is in the initial stages, says Johns Hopkins lung cancer surgeon Stephen Broderick.

“In the last 24 to 36 months, I’ve seen an explosive uptick of patients who vape,” reports Broderick. “With tobacco, we have six decades of rigorous studies to show which of the 7,000 chemicals inhaled during smoking impact the lungs. But with vaping, we simply don’t know the short- or long-term effects yet and which e-cigarette components are to blame.”

Although there’s no definitive answer at this point, experts do have a theory about how vaping harms lungs.

What Happens When You Vape

Both smoking and vaping involve heating a substance and inhaling the resulting fumes. With traditional cigarettes, you inhale smoke from burning tobacco. With vaping, a device (typically a vape pen or a mod — an enhanced vape pen — that may look like a flash drive) heats up a liquid (called vape juice or e-liquid) until it turns into a vapor that you inhale.

“Vaping is a delivery system similar to a nebulizer, which people with asthma or other lung conditions may be familiar with,” says Broderick. “A nebulizer turns liquid medicine into a mist that patients breathe in. It’s a highly effective way of delivering medicine to the lungs.”

The Chemicals You Inhale When Vaping

Instead of bathing lung tissue with a therapeutic mist, just as a nebulizer does,

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vaping coats lungs with potentially harmful chemicals. E-liquid concoctions usually include some mix of flavorings, aromatic additives and nicotine or THC (the chemical in marijuana that causes psychological effects), dissolved in an oily liquid base. “We think that some of the vaporized elements of the oil are getting deep down into the lungs and causing an inflammatory response,” explains Broderick.

The substance at the center of investigation is vitamin E. It’s often used as a thickening and delivery agent in e-liquid. And, while it’s safe when taken orally as a supplement or used on the skin, it’s likely an irritant when inhaled. It’s been found in the lungs of people with severe, vaping-related damage.

Other common substances found in e-liquid or produced when it’s heated up may also pose a risk to the lungs. These include:

- **Diacetyl:** This food additive, used to deepen e-cigarette flavors, is known to damage small passageways in the lungs.
- **Formaldehyde:** This toxic chemical can cause lung disease and contribute to heart disease.
- **Acrolein:** Most often used as a weed killer, this chemical can also damage lungs.

How Vaping Can Affect Your Lungs

Over time, as e-cigarette use continues, experts will gain a better understanding of how vaping affects the lungs. What we do know right now is that several lung diseases are associated with vaping:

Vaping and Popcorn Lung

“Popcorn lung” is another name for bronchiolitis obliterans (BO), a rare condition that results from damage of the lungs’ small airways. BO was originally discovered when popcorn factory workers started getting sick. The culprit was diacetyl, a food additive used to simulate butter flavor in microwave popcorn.

Diacetyl is frequently added to flavored e-liquid to enhance the taste. Inhaling diacetyl causes inflammation and may lead to permanent scarring in the smallest branches of the airways — popcorn lung — which makes breathing difficult. Popcorn lung has no lasting treatment. There are, however, treatments that manage BO symptoms, such as:

- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath

Vaping-Related Lipoid Pneumonia

Unlike the classic pneumonia caused by infection, lipoid pneumonia develops when fatty acids (the building blocks of fat) enter the lungs. Vaping-related lipoid pneumonia is the result of inhaling oily substances found in e-liquid, which sparks an inflammatory response in the lungs.

Symptoms of lipoid pneumonia include:

- Chronic cough
- Shortness of breath
- Coughing up blood or blood-tinged mucus

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“There’s isn’t a good treatment for lipoid pneumonia, other than supportive care, while the lungs heal on their own,” says Broderick. “The single-most important thing you can do is identify what is causing it — in this case vaping — and eliminate it.”

Primary Spontaneous Pneumothorax (Collapsed Lung) After Vaping

Primary spontaneous [pneumothorax](#), or collapsed lung, occurs when there’s a hole in the lung through which oxygen escapes. This can be the result of an injury — such as a gunshot or knife wound — or when air blisters on the top of the lungs rupture and create tiny tears.

Those who develop these blisters are usually tall, thin people who had a period of rapid growth during adolescence, says Broderick. Because of the accelerated growth, a weak point may blister and develop at the top of the lungs. On their own, these blisters don’t typically produce symptoms. You don’t know you have them, unless they rupture. Smoking — and now vaping — are associated with an increased risk of bursting these blisters, leading to lung collapse.

“At Johns Hopkins, we’re seeing a rash of collapsed lungs in younger people,” reports Broderick. “We always ask if they’ve been smoking, and they’ll often say, ‘No, I don’t smoke. But I do vape.’ Now we tell patients not to smoke or vape if they want to avoid another lung collapse and surgery in the future.”

Signs of a collapsed lung include:

- Sharp chest or shoulder pain
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing

Oxygen treatment and rest may be all that’s need for a collapsed lung to heal. But more advanced cases require a chest tube to drain leaked oxygen from the body cavity or surgery to repair the hole in the lung.

Can Vaping Cause Lung Cancer?

Cancer is definitely a concern, given that vaping introduces a host of chemicals into the lungs. But vaping products haven’t been around long enough for us to learn whether or not they cause cancer.

“We do know that smoking tobacco forces tiny particles to be deposited deep in the bronchial tree and can lead to the development of cancer. The same may be true for vaping,” says Broderick.

Secondhand Vapor Isn’t Safe Either

It’s a myth that secondhand emissions from e-cigarettes are harmless. Many people think the secondhand vapor is just water, but this couldn’t be farther from the truth. The vapor emitted when someone exhales contains a variety of dangerous substances, which may include:

- Nicotine
- Ultrafine particles
- Diacetyl
- Benzene (a chemical found in car exhaust)

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Although secondhand vapor may not affect the lungs the same way as vaping, it is better to avoid it, if possible.

What to Do If Your Lungs Hurt

If you smoke or vape, don't brush off chest or lung pain as something that's normal. If you have pain or other symptoms associated with breathing difficulties, such as shortness of breath and chronic cough, it's important to see a doctor.

[Source](#)

Why You Should Talk With Your Child About Alcohol and Other Drugs

Parents Have a Significant Influence in Their Children's Decisions to Experiment With Alcohol and Other Drugs

One of the most influential factors during a child's adolescence is maintaining a strong, open relationship with a parent. When parents create supportive and nurturing environments, children make better decisions. Though it may not always seem like it, children really hear their parents' concerns, which is why it's important that parents discuss the risks of using alcohol and other drugs.

It's Better to Talk Before Children Are Exposed to Alcohol and Other Drugs

If you talk to your kids directly and honestly, they are more likely to respect your rules and advice about alcohol and drug use. When parents talk with their children early and often about alcohol and other drugs, they can protect their children from many of the high-risk behaviors associated with using these drugs.

Some Children May Try Alcohol or Other Drugs at a Very Young Age

It is never too early to talk to your children about alcohol and other drugs. Children as young as nine years old already start viewing alcohol in a more positive way, and approximately 3,300 kids as young as 12 try marijuana each day. Additionally, about five in 10 kids as young as 12 obtain prescription pain relievers for nonmedical purposes. The earlier you start talking, the better.

The Older Kids Get, the More Likely They'll Try Alcohol or Other Drugs

About 10 percent of 12-year-olds say they have tried alcohol, but by age 15, that number jumps to 50 percent. Additionally, by the time they are seniors, almost 70 percent of high school students will have tried alcohol, half will have taken an illegal drug, and more than 20 percent will have used a prescription drug for a nonmedical purpose. The sooner you talk to your children about alcohol and other drugs, the greater chance you have of influencing their decisions about drinking and substance use.

Not Talking About Alcohol and Other Drugs Still Sends Kids a Message

Kids don't always have all the facts when it comes to alcohol and other drugs. If parents don't talk about the risks of underage drinking and substance use, their kids might not see any harm in trying alcohol and other substances. Having a conversation allows parents to set clear rules about what they expect from their kids when it comes to alcohol and other drugs.

[Source](#)