

CHEMICAL HEALTH TREND CORNER:



Safe Use • Safe Storage • Safe Disposal

McLeod County **MEDICATION** Safety Program



By Partnership Staff Dec. 2019 DrugFree.org

[To read about McLeod County's program for safe disposal of unneeded medications, click here](#)



What Are the Current Drug Trends Among Teens and Young Adults?

Drug trends among teens today still include marijuana, opioids, and hallucinogens, but now include substances like kratom, K2/Spice, Dabs that can be purchased online. Microdosing LSD has been gaining popularity around the US.

Kratom Use Increasing in Popularity

Use of kratom, a psychoactive plant, is becoming increasingly popular despite its potential for addiction, according to an expert at the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation.

“What we’re seeing is regular use of it, especially in adolescents and young adults,” said Dr. Martin Seppala, Chief Medical Officer. “It fits in with alcohol, marijuana and tobacco. It’s legal, so it’s really easy for kids to get a hold of, and they’ll try it to see what it does to them.”

Kratom is legal in most states, and is available in many convenience stores, gas stations and head shops, [USA Today](#) reports.



In September, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) warned consumers not to use kratom, a plant that grows naturally in Southeast Asian countries. The FDA said it is concerned that kratom, which affects the same opioid brain receptors as morphine, appears to have properties that expose people to the risks of addiction, abuse and dependence.

What is kratom?

(NIH) National Institute of Drug Addiction, 2020



Photo by DEA

Kratom is a tropical tree (*Mitragyna speciosa*) native to Southeast Asia, with leaves that contain compounds that can have psychotropic (mind-altering) effects.

Kratom is not currently an illegal substance and has been easy to order on the internet. It is sometimes sold as a green powder in packets labeled "not for human consumption." It is also sometimes sold as an extract or gum. Kratom sometimes goes by the following names:

- Biak
- Ketum
- Kakuum

- Ithang
- Thom

How do people use kratom?

Most people take kratom as a pill, capsule, or extract. Some people chew kratom leaves or brew the dried or powdered leaves as tea. Sometimes the leaves are smoked or eaten in food.

How does kratom affect the brain?

Kratom can cause effects similar to both opioids and stimulants. Two compounds in kratom leaves, *mitragynine* and *7- α -hydroxymitragynine*, interact with opioid receptors in the brain, producing sedation, pleasure, and decreased pain, especially when users consume large amounts of the plant.

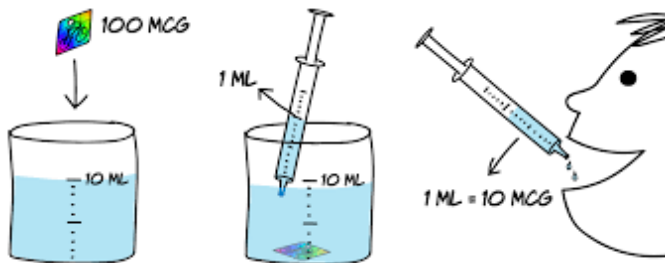
[Read more here](#)

What Is Microdosing LSD?



In recent years, a new form of substance abuse is becoming increasingly common among stay-at-home moms and CEOs alike:

microdosing LSD. Microdosing refers to taking a small fraction of what is considered a recreational dose of LSD or other hallucinogen (like psilocybin mushrooms, also known as magic mushrooms). Reportedly, microdosing certain psychedelic drugs can improve mood, induce physical and mental stimulation, and encourage creative thinking. Emerging studies support the notion that hallucinogenic drugs, taken in small doses or under the supervision and guidance of a medical professional, can be used to treat mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD. However, taking consistent and frequent doses of any drug, especially one as potent as LSD, is by no means safe for all individuals and may put certain people at a high risk for developing addiction.



[Read more here](#)

HOLIDAY HIGHS AND LOWS

Written by: Fractl, June 3, 2020

For many Americans, the end of the year brings images of happy families gathered around a Christmas tree, big dinners of turkey and stuffing, holiday music, and cozy fires. For others, the holidays can be a much darker and more difficult time – a time of family conflict, financial strain, loneliness, grief, and seasonal affective disorder. The emotional strains of the holidays and winter weather take a grave toll – during the holiday months of December and January, the CDC reports that alcohol-and-drug-induced deaths spike.

If you find the holidays to be an emotionally difficult time, you are certainly not alone. A Google search for “grief and the holidays” shows nearly 2.2 million results. Seasonal affective disorder (also known as SAD and seasonal depression) affects 6 percent of Americans. Another 14 percent experience a lesser form of seasonal mood change known as the winter blues.

To better understand the emotional toll of the holiday season and how it affects those who are struggling with drug or alcohol dependency, we surveyed more than 2,000 people about their emotional state during the holidays. Our results indicate that the majority of Americans are either overwhelmingly or moderately stressed during the holidays. For someone struggling with drug or alcohol addiction, the holidays can be an especially trying time to maintain sobriety.

THE MOST DANGEROUS TIME OF THE YEAR



According to the CDC, the most dangerous times of the year for drug-and-alcohol-related deaths are December, January, and March. Nearly 91,000 deaths have been reported for the month of December since 1999.

What is causing this uptick in drug and alcohol-related deaths? We asked our survey respondents about their holiday drinking habits to better understand the seasonal trends reported by the CDC.

[To read the survey results, click here](#)

The Fastest-Growing Drug Problem in the United States isn't Cocaine, Heroin, or Methamphetamines. It is Prescription Drugs, and it is Profoundly Affecting the Lives of Teenagers.

Rise in Prescription Drug Misuse and Abuse Impacting Teens

By, SAMHSA Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administrations

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) DrugFacts, prescription drug misuse and abuse is when someone takes a medication inappropriately (for example, without a prescription) Sadly, prescription drug misuse and abuse among young people is not an insignificant problem. According to National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) data on youth and young adults, more than 5,700

youth in 2014 reported using prescription pain relievers without a doctor's guidance.

A common misperception is that prescription drugs are safer or less harmful to one's body than other kinds of drugs. However, there is a range of short- and long-term health consequences for each type of prescription drug used inappropriately.

As with any type of mind-altering drug, prescription drug misuse and abuse can affect judgment and inhibition, putting adolescents at heightened risk for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, misusing other kinds of drugs, and engaging in additional risky behaviors. Solutions-Here are several ways to minimize prescription drug misuse and abuse among young people:

Education, Safe medication storage and disposal, Prescription drug monitoring

[Click here to learn more](#)

COVID-19 and Substance Use

AAMC, Article by; STACY WEINER JULY 27, 2020

Across the United States, as the COVID-19 pandemic has collided with the substance use epidemic, experts worry about the vast numbers of people suffering from the impact.

COVID-19 and the Opioid Crisis: When a Pandemic and an Epidemic Collide

More than 20 million people in the United States have a substance use disorder. Now, COVID-19 has left many locked down, laid off,

and flooded with uncertainty. So far, experts see signs of relapses, rising overdoses, and other worries.

Anxiety, grief, isolation, financial worries, changes at home and work, and an ongoing sense of uncertainty can all threaten people with a substance use disorder (SUD) as well as those at risk of developing one.

Researchers say it's too soon to have definitive data on the pandemic's effects, but early numbers are concerning. So far, alcohol sales have risen by more than 25%. A recent analysis of 500,000 urine drug tests by Millennium Health, a national laboratory service, also showed worrisome trends: an increase of 32% for non prescribed fentanyl, 20% for methamphetamine, and 10% for cocaine from mid-March through May. And suspected drug overdoses climbed 18% in the same period, according to a national tracking system run out of the University of Baltimore.

What's more, drug use during COVID-19 can be particularly deadly. As the pandemic hobbled illicit drug supply chains, people with SUDs sometimes turned to new dealers or unfamiliar drugs — with unforeseen and dangerous consequences.. Drug overdose deaths increased more than 11% in the first four months of 2020 compared to last year, according to government data.

[Click here to read more](#)

What to Do (and Not Do) When Kids Are Anxious

How to respect feelings without empowering fears.

When children are chronically anxious, even the most well-meaning parents can fall into a negative cycle and, not wanting a child to suffer, actually exacerbate the youngster's anxiety. It happens when parents, anticipating a child's fears, try to protect her from them.

Here are pointers for helping children escape the cycle of anxiety.

1. The goal isn't to eliminate anxiety, but to help a child manage it.

None of us wants to see a child unhappy, but the best way to help kids overcome anxiety isn't to try to remove stressors that trigger it. It's to help them learn to tolerate their anxiety and function as well as they can, even when they're anxious. And as a byproduct of that, the anxiety will decrease or fall away over time.

2. Don't avoid things just because they make a child anxious.

Helping children avoid the things they are afraid of will make them feel better in the short term, but it reinforces the anxiety over the long run. If a child in an uncomfortable situation gets upset, starts to cry—not to be manipulative, but just because that's how she feels—and her parents whisk her out of there, or remove the thing she's afraid of, she's learned that coping mechanism, and that cycle has the potential to repeat itself.

3. Express positive—but realistic—expectations.

You can't promise a child that his fears are unrealistic—that he won't fail a test, that he'll have fun ice skating, or that another child won't laugh at him during show & tell. But you can express

confidence that he's going to be okay, he will be able to manage it, and that, as he faces his fears, the anxiety level will drop over time. This gives him confidence that your expectations are realistic, and that you're not going to ask him to do something he can't handle.

[For more tips, click here](#)

What Do You Need to Know About College Binge Drinking?



To some parents, it might be tempting to think that you can “teach” your child how to drink responsibly by allowing them to drink before going to college. Many parents also think that not allowing their children to drink turns alcohol into “forbidden fruit,” increasing the child’s interest in drinking. Instead, research has shown that having parents who communicate clear expectations against using alcohol during high school is associated with a lower chance of drinking excessively during college.

Especially now, during the time of quarantine and COVID-19, there's no better time to start a

conversation with your college student, high-schooler or even preteen.

[How to approach the topic](#)

Alcohol Abuse Minnesota Substance Abuse Statistics

July 17, 2019 Lakeview Health



Alcohol abuse is skyrocketing with more than 5 percent of adults in Minnesota abusing alcohol. About 10 percent of them are between the ages of 18 and 20, and 13 percent are between 20 and 24. The risk of both drug and alcohol abuse is highest for men and those without health insurance, and the risks decrease as education and income levels increase.

The CDC defines excessive, potentially problematic alcohol use as:

Heavy drinking, or drinking more than eight drinks a week for women or 15 drinks a week for men



Binge drinking, or drinking more than five drinks on a single occasion

An inability to limit drinking

Needing to increase alcohol use to achieve same feelings

Unable to concentrate on anything but alcohol

Drinking in spite of any personal or professional problems

Excess alcohol use is associated with an increased risk of accidents, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, child maltreatment, liver cirrhosis, alcohol poisoning and social and relationship problems.

Addiction to Inhalants

Addiction Center 2020

Even though national surveys indicate that 21.7 million Americans have used inhalants at least once in their lives, inhalant abuse is less common than other drugs, and most cases occur in more isolated regions. The danger of an inhalant addiction shouldn't be overlooked just because it is less common than others. People who use inhalants on a regular basis over a long period of time can develop a physical and psychological dependence on the substance.

Inhalant use is most prevalent among teenagers. Studies suggest that between 13.1% and 16.1% of 8 graders use inhalants, which is approximately the same percentage that use marijuana.

Understanding Inhalants

Inhalants are volatile, often flammable substances that vaporize at room temperature. Inhalants produce short-lived, mind-altering effects that can be similar to alcohol's effects.

Inhalants encompass a wide variety of chemicals and anesthetics categorized together based on their method of administration: inhalation. These substances are often referred to as whippets, laughing gas, huff or hippie crack.

[Read more here](#)

U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory: Marijuana Use and the Developing Brain

by HHS. Gov. June 2020

"I, Surgeon General VADM Jerome Adams, am emphasizing the importance of protecting our Nation from the health risks of marijuana use in adolescence and during pregnancy. Recent increases in access to marijuana and in its potency, along with misperceptions of safety of marijuana endanger our most precious resource, our nation's youth."

Marijuana, or cannabis, is the most commonly used illicit drug in the United States. It acts by binding to cannabinoid receptors in the brain to produce a variety of effects, including euphoria, intoxication, and memory and motor impairments. These same cannabinoid receptors are also critical for brain development. They are part of the

endocannabinoid system, which impacts the formation of brain circuits important for decision making, mood and responding to stress.



Marijuana and its related products are widely available in multiple forms. These products can be eaten, drunk, smoked, and vaped. Marijuana contains varying levels of delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the component responsible for euphoria and intoxication, and cannabidiol (CBD). While CBD is not intoxicating and does not lead to addiction, its long-term effects are largely unknown, and most CBD products are untested and of uncertain purity.



Marijuana has changed over time. The marijuana available today is much stronger than previous versions. The THC concentration in commonly cultivated marijuana plants has increased three-fold between 1995 and 2014 (4% and 12% respectively). Marijuana available in dispensaries in some states has average concentrations of THC between 17.7% and 23.2%. Concentrated products, commonly known as dabs or waxes, are far more widely available to recreational users today and may contain between 23.7% and 75.9% THC.

The risks of physical dependence, addiction, and other negative consequences increase with exposure to high concentrations of THC and the younger the age of initiation. Higher doses of THC are more likely to produce anxiety, agitation, paranoia, and psychosis. Edible marijuana takes time to absorb and to produce its effects, increasing the risk of unintentional overdose, as well as accidental ingestion by children and adolescents. In addition, chronic users of marijuana with a high THC content are at risk for developing a condition known as cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome, which is marked by severe cycles of nausea and vomiting.

[Click here to read the full report](#)