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# Parenting for Prevention

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## Summer Safety



Most of us look forward to the summer for the warmer weather and a more casual atmosphere, but if you have teens, the summer brings its own set of challenges. The unstructured summer months can require the need for more supervision of your teen to make sure that they are not gathering with their friends in an unsupervised setting without a responsible adult present.

Each summer seems to have a special concern and this year it is the significant increase of vaping by teens. There are new worries about the dangers of using e-cigarettes and how their use will impact the health of teens now and in the future. Medical professionals are very concerned about the epidemic of health issues which are becoming more common. There has been widespread awareness of people who smoked cigarettes when they were younger, and then developing lung cancer and other respiratory diseases when they grew older. Teens need to understand that using e-cigarettes now puts them at risk for significant problems now and in the future.

The staff of Student Assistance Services wishes you a restful, happy and safe summer.

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## Keeping Teens Safe, Part II

This newsletter and the May newsletter are focused on information for parents to help students be safe and healthy this summer. With school closed, students spend more time in potentially dangerous situations where they may encounter sexual abuse, second hand smoke, drunk or drugged driving, easy access to alcohol, etc. Unfortunately, these situations can occur in a relative's or close friend's home, a camp, a summer internship or even a religious retreat. Youth and families who will be visiting friends and relatives in states that do not prohibit indoor smoking, or smoking at public arenas or parks need to be aware of the dangers of second hand smoke.

### Second Hand Smoke

The harmful effects of secondhand cigarette smoke have been known for years. However, a recent study, published in *Pediatrics*, June, 2018, shows that efforts to decrease secondhand smoke exposure may be complicated by increases in marijuana use among parents.

The study from researchers at Columbia University found that marijuana use is increasing among parents 18 and older who smoke cigarettes, as well as among those who do not. The findings revealed cannabis use is nearly four times more common among cigarette smokers, as was daily cannabis use, compared with nonsmokers.

Renee Goodwin, PhD, lead author of the study said "The key finding is that although there has been a decline in cigarette use among parents with children in the home, we saw an increase in daily marijuana use among adults with children in the home." She went on to say that "second to that was that cannabis use is much more common among adults who smoke cigarettes, so now the child who is exposed to one is more likely exposed to both."

Researchers analyzed results from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health to estimate associations between cigarette smoking and any past month and daily past-month cannabis use among parents with children in the home from 2002 to 2015.

Past-month cannabis use among parents with children in the home increased from 4.9 % in 2002 to 6.8 % in 2015, while cannabis use increased from 11 % in 2002 to 17.4 % in 2015 among cigarette-smoking parents. Additionally, cannabis use jumped from 2.4 % to 4 % among non-cigarette-smoking parents.

**Goodwin hopes her findings will get parents thinking about the risks of secondhand smoke to children. Since smoking marijuana in public is prohibited in every state, people use it in their home endanger children and others in their home.**

## New Research on Vaping

E-cigarettes first appeared several years ago and they were originally marketed as a sleek, discreet technology that could help adults quit smoking. However, an article published in the Winston-Salem Journal on January 20, 2019, based on information from Nielson, says that the Juul device which is the most popular e-cigarette on the market, has a 46% share of the market and instead of catering to adult smokers, the e-cigarette industry appears to overwhelmingly targeting nonsmoking youth.

Maciej Goniewicz, one of the leading e-cigarette researchers based at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in Buffalo, New York, has watched the volunteers who come forward for his e-cigarette studies seem to be getting younger. “These are people who were breathing pure air for a long time and have never smoked tobacco cigarettes, who now have started using e-cigarettes,” Goniewicz said.

He and other researchers around the world are now trying to determine how this new habit might impact developing bodies and brains in the long term. And he and his researchers are finding that e-cigarettes may be more dangerous than were originally thought, especially for hearts, lungs, and brains. There’s also a growing body of research suggesting that vaping can lead to smoking.

## Burns

University of Arizona trauma surgeons have noticed a rise in the number of burn injuries as a result of lithium-ion battery failure in e-cigarettes and vapes. Their research, which investigates the surprising safety hazard of the battery-powered alternative to tobacco products, can be found in a new study published in the May 2017 issue of the journal *Burns* Opens a New Window.

About a year and a half ago, Dr. Gary Vercruyse, a burn surgeon at the Banner–University Medical Center in Tucson, treated a 58-year-old man with nasty burns on his left thigh. Weeks later, Vercruyse saw a similar burn injury, and then another, prompting him to figure out why all of these patients had such similar cases. “They all told me basically the same thing: They had an electronic cigarette in their pocket, then they started feeling a lot of heat in their pocket and then they couldn’t get their pants off or get the device out of their pocket quickly enough.”

## Cardiovascular System

There are also new concerns about nicotine’s impact on the heart . “Nicotine in e-cigarettes does the same thing as cigarettes,” said Neal Benowitz, a professor of medicine at the University of California San Francisco.

He has been studying the link between e-cigarettes and heart health. He reports that e-cigarettes can increase the adrenaline circulating in our bodies and activate the sympathetic nervous system, our “fight or flight” response which raises blood pressure, speeds up the heart rate, and cause the arteries that carry blood to narrow.

Dr. Joseph Wu, director of the Stanford Cardiovascular Institute, published a new study in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*. Dr. Wu and colleagues studied six of the most common flavorings in e-cigarettes to begin to determine the biological effects of the flavorings.

Dr. Wu and his team used cells in tissue cultures as proxies for what might be happening in people inhaling the flavorings. They exposed cells grown to resemble those that line blood vessels in the body to the six flavorings and found significant toxic effects on the cells, the worst being cinnamon flavoring. The concern of the researchers is how these cellular effects will translate into human health effects down the road. “We could see an epidemic of cardiovascular disease in people who vape, 20, 30, 40 years down the road,” Dr. Wu said.

Producers and advocates say that e-cigarettes are an important tool in getting adults to either switch from real cigarettes or to quit altogether, but sweet flavorings and the perception that vaping is safer has led to a nearly 80 % increase in the use of e-cigarettes among high schoolers and 50% increase among middle schoolers in the past year alone. And we don’t know what the long-term effects of that trend will be.

## Lungs

The American Lung Association reports that in January, 2018, the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine ([www.nap.edu/](http://www.nap.edu/)) published a consensus report that reviewed over 800 studies about the impact of e-cigarettes on the lungs.

That report made clear that using e-cigarettes causes health risks as they contain and emit a number of potentially toxic substances. The report also concluded that there is evidence that young people who use e-cigarettes are at increased risk for coughing and wheezing and exacerbating asthma.

- A study from the University of North Carolina found that two of the primary ingredients in e-cigarettes, propylene glycol and vegetable glycerin are toxic to cells (Sassano MF, Davis ES, Keating JE, Zorn BT, Kochar TK, Wolfgang MC, et al. 2018).
- E-cigarettes produce dangerous chemicals including acetaldehyde, acrolein, and formaldehyde which can cause lung and heart disease (Ogunwale, Mumiye A et al., 2017).
- Another study said that acroli-en, a which is a herbicide primarily used to kill weeds, can cause acute lung injury, COPD, asthma and lung cancer. (Bein K, Leikauf GD, 2011) .

## Seizures

When an e-cigarette is turned on, it is heating a liquid that contains flavors and other chemicals, and usually nicotine. Some devices, in particular, a Juul, deliver very high doses of nicotine. Juul says one of its e-liquid pods is equal to a pack of cigarettes in terms of nicotine.

The Food and Drug Administration has been warning that nicotine-induced seizures could be a rare side effect of vaping. Over the past decade, there have been at least 35 reports of seizures, sudden and uncontrolled disturbances in the brain, which occurred after e-cigarette use. The cases were reported through the FDA's adverse event reporting system, a database of voluntary reports from patients, product manufacturers, and health professionals, and to poison control centers across the country.

“While 35 cases may not seem like much compared to the total number of people using e-cigarettes, we are nonetheless concerned by these reported cases,” FDA’s former director Scott Gottlieb said in a press release. “We also recognize that not all of the cases may be reported

## Sexual Violence

**It is important for parents and caregivers to know that the majority of children and teen victims of sexual assault know the perpetrator.** Of sexual abuse cases reported to law enforcement, 93% of juvenile victims knew the perpetrator as reported by the Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Sexual Assault of Young Children as Reported to Law Enforcement.

- 59% were acquaintances
- 34% were family members
- 7% were strangers to the victim

This information should expand the conversation that parents have with their children about being aware and careful during the summer of anyone having inappropriate interactions with them at an environment like a camp, job, interning, sports camp or practice facility, religious or scouting retreat, family gatherings and other venues where there may be people who are there because of the opportunity to interact with a teen.

Teach teens the language they need to talk about their bodies and information about boundaries to help them understand what is allowed and what is inappropriate. These lessons help them know when something isn't right and give them the power to speak up.

- **Some parts of the body are private.** Let your teen know that other people shouldn't touch or look at those areas. If a healthcare professional has to examine these parts of the body, be present.

- **Talk about secrets.** Perpetrators will often use secret-keeping to manipulate a teen. Let children know they can always talk to you, especially if they've been told to keep a secret. If they see someone touching another child, they shouldn't keep this secret, either.

**It's OK to say "no."** It's important to let children know they are allowed to say "no" to this person, even if it is a relative.

- **Reassure your teens that they won't get in trouble.** All children often fear getting in trouble or upsetting their parents by asking questions or talking about their experiences. Be a safe place for your child to share information about things that they have questions about or that make them uncomfortable. Remind them they won't be punished for sharing this information with you.

- **When they come to you, make time for them.** If your child comes to you with something they feel is important, take the time to listen. Give them your undivided attention, and let them know you take their concerns seriously. They may be more likely to come to you in the future if they know their voice will be heard.

- Notice if there is a change in behavior, especially not wanting to visit someone, have someone known come to your home, or attend an event.



### Strategies to Keep Teens Safe

Michael Nerney, prevention specialist, recommends the following parenting strategies that can be implemented to help keep children safe during the summer.

#### Aware

Every family should have a strategy in place so that they know where their teen is and who they are with during the day and at night. Empty houses with no adult supervision are very dangerous places for teens. **Teens are much more likely to try alcohol, vaping use other drugs or have their first sexual encounter during the summer months.**

#### Awake

When your children get home, give them a hug or a kiss and talk to them for a few minutes to make

sure they are not under the influence of any substance. It may be a deterrent for your children to use alcohol or other drugs if they know that they will have to pass the "hug/kiss/talk" test later on in the evening. If anything in their behavior concerns you, make sure they are safely in bed and wait until the morning to address the issue. Important note: If your teen seems impaired, **DO NOT LEAVE THEM ALONE.**

#### Assertive

Make sure you and your child have discussed appropriate consequences for inappropriate and unhealthy behavior. The consequences should be timely, time appropriate, firm, respectful and related to the behavior. Furthermore, although this can be difficult, the consequences must be enforced.

#### Affirming

Let your children know that you love them and want them to have a wonderful summer. Help them understand that they are the most precious people in your life and if they feel that you are being too protective, it is because it is your job to keep them safe.