

Summer Safety PARENT TOOLKIT



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We know this summer will be unique for you and your kids and we want you to know we're in this together. This toolkit is chock full of ideas and ways to keep you and your family healthy, strong and safe in this season.



SECTION 1 **How to help your teen cope with social distancing**

1 Embrace technology

This might be a first, but we're encouraging families to embrace technology. It's okay to relax the rules around the use of technology so that teens can text, Facetime, use group video chats, and social media. Be aware of what platforms your children are using and make sure they are being safe, but social distancing does not have to mean social isolation.

2 And then unplug

Take walks. Enjoy the weather. Explore a new trail. Plant vegetables. Chalk inspirational messages on sidewalks and driveways. Cook. Eat together. Dance. Play games. Talk. Allow your teens to initiate the activities. For all age groups, and especially adolescents and teens, 30-60 minutes a day of outside time is valuable to their physical and mental health, says Terrill Bravender, M.D., M.P.H. chief of adolescent medicine at Michigan Medicine C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. "Outside activity helps regulate day and night cycles and reset your brain."

3 Inspire your teen to make a difference

Studies have shown that people who feel that they have a purpose feel happier in life. How can your family make a difference this summer? Could you volunteer at a food shelter? Offer virtual tutoring for students? Donate blood? Brainstorm with your teen as to how they or the whole family can help during the pandemic. "Teenagers sometimes have this reputation of being self-centered or not caring about other people, but in reality they are often the most altruistic of any of us," Bravender says.

4 Be empathetic

This spring, some teens are missing life milestones like prom and graduation. To some, this may seem like a small sacrifice during a global pandemic, but the key here is to show your teen empathy. Instead of dismissing their feelings, acknowledge and validate them. Key phrases like, "That must feel frustrating" or "I can see why that makes you sad" are ways to let your child know you hear them and care.

5 Be aware of the signs of depression, anxiety, or substance use

While occasional bad moods or acting out is to be expected during the teenage years, teen depression symptoms may include loss of energy, insomnia or sleeping too much, changes in appetite, restlessness, unexplained body aches or headaches, social isolation. Anxiety symptoms include rapid heartbeat, insomnia, digestive issues, frequent worry and social isolation. Teens may begin to abuse substances to cope with anxiety or depression. If you notice any of these signs in your child, many therapists and providers are offering virtual telehealth visits.

Alcohol

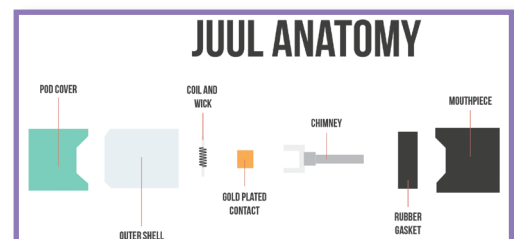
According to Nielsen, sales of alcoholic beverages in the United States have increased 55% and online sales are up 243% compared to this time last year. Alcohol misuse makes the body more susceptible to viral infections. Alcohol in the body at the time of exposure to a pathogen tends to impair the body's immediate immune response to pathogen, making it easier for an infection to develop. Longer term, excessive alcohol consumption impairs immune cell functions in the lungs, making the body's immune response less effective. Increased consumption in the home may also affect youth perceptions and access to alcohol. Here are helpful recommendations to keep youth safe in this season:

- Have an adult sign for and open all packages that arrive at the house to deter youth from attempting to purchase alcohol or marijuana online
- Monitor supplies of alcohol closely and consider keeping it locked either in a liquor cabinet, file cabinet or other storage/box with an attachable lock
- Use a marker to indicate the amount left in bottles/containers
- Have conversations with your kids about healthy coping methods and not using alcohol using the resources provided in this toolkit
- "Availability makes it very difficult to maintain abstinence," said Dr. Danish Alam, addiction psychologist at Northwestern Medicine. "If you think of it purely from an addiction doctor perspective, availability is the number one risk factor." Instead of purchasing mass quantities of alcohol, consider purchasing smaller quantities and storing them in a secure location within the home.

E-Cigarettes/Tobacco

The coronavirus attacks the lungs and smoking and vaping can increase the risk of getting the virus and spreading the disease. People may share their vapes with others or may not wash their hands or disinfect the device, which increases the risk of contracting the virus. Smoking and vaping can also lower a person's immunity to respiratory infections. One study even found that e-cigarettes suppress immune cells in the nose and destroy the cilia in lungs. Cilia are tiny, hair-like structures that trap viruses and debris and sweep them out of airways. They're one of your body's main defenses against infection. When they're damaged, they're less able to prevent the virus from settling into the lungs.

Nicotine exposure during adolescence, a critical period for brain development, can cause addiction and can harm the developing brain. According to 2018 National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS) data, current e-cigarette use—or "vaping"—among middle and high school students increased alarmingly between 2017 and 2018, with over 3.6 million kids currently using e-cigarettes in 2018. JUUL, the popular e-cigarette that tripled its market share in just over a year to own three-quarters of the entire market, is driving much of the increase in use. The new e-cigarette quit program from Truth Initiative is one way to get your child support. To access to the program, users can text "DITCHJUUL" to 88709.



Prescription Drugs

Every year thousands of children are hospitalized—and some die—after taking medicine not meant for them. Two-thirds of teens and young adults who admit to abusing prescription medications obtain them from friends, family, and acquaintances.

The most commonly misused types of prescription drugs are:

- Opioids (like Vicodin, OxyContin, or codeine) which are used to relieve pain
- Depressants (like Valium or Xanax) which are used to relieve anxiety or help a person sleep
- Stimulants (like Adderall or Ritalin) which are used for treating attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Teens are also increasingly abusing OTC meds, including cold medications and cough syrups, as recreational drugs too

What you can do:

- Take note of how many pills are in each of your prescription bottles or pill packets and keep track of refills
- Store your prescription drugs securely in a lockbox. Stand Strong Coalition provides lock boxes free of charge. E-mail standstrongcoalition@gmail.com with your address and we'll mail one to you.
- Properly dispose of extra unused prescription drugs at one of the many drop-off locations in our area. Visit <https://www.standstrongcoalition.org/rx-drop-off-locations.html> to see drop-off locations in Lake County, Illinois. Some places are closed due to Shelter-in-Place restrictions. If you cannot find a drop-off location near you, e-mail standstrongcoalition@gmail.com and we'll mail you a Detera pouch which will safely and environmentally-consciously deactivate and destroy medicines.

Marijuana

Despite much opposition from coalitions like ours, in May of 2019, the Illinois State Legislature passed House Bill 1438 creating a commercialized market for recreational marijuana. On January 1, 2020, recreational marijuana dispensaries opened allowing residents 21 and older to purchase up to 30 grams of raw marijuana, 500 mg or less of THC cannabis-infused products or 5g of cannabis product in concentrated form. After just two months in business, retail marijuana stores were unfortunately deemed essential during the COVID-19 pandemic and could remain open while other businesses closed. States with legal marijuana have seen sales spike as much as 20%.

Legal products include foods and beverages with marijuana infused in them. Some of these products may be attractive to youth and mistaken for common food and beverages. Examples include candy, soft drinks, baked goods and juices. The law did not change for people under the age of 21. Like alcohol, marijuana products are still illegal for people under the age of 21. It is illegal for adults to provide marijuana to people under the age of 21, including parents giving their own children marijuana. It is illegal for people to drive while under the influence of marijuana. It is illegal to consume (smoke, eat, drink) marijuana products in public.

It is more important than ever for youth to have accurate information to help them make healthy choices. The teen years represent a time of critical brain development. Areas of the brain that control decision making and learning are maturing. A youth's brain is uniquely vulnerable to the negative effects of any substance, including marijuana. Effects include short-term memory loss, attention, reaction time and motor skills, impaired learning, anxiety, paranoia, rapid heart rate, increased blood pressure and vomiting.

For more information about marijuana and strategies to help your child, access our **Marijuana Parent Toolkit** at standstrongcoalition.org.



Research shows that parents are the most important influence in their child's decision making. Here are five conversation goals to help your child choose not to use substances:

1. Show you disapprove of underage drinking and other drug misuse.

Over 80 percent of young people ages 10–18 say their parents are the leading influence on their decision whether to drink. Send a clear and strong message that you disapprove of underage drinking and misuse of other drugs.

2. Show you care about your child's health, wellness, and success.

Young people are more likely to listen when they know you're on their side. Reinforce why you don't want your child to drink or use other drugs—because you want your child to be happy and safe. The conversation will go a lot better if you're open and you show concern.

3. Show you're a good source of information about alcohol and other drugs.

You want your child to make informed decisions about alcohol and other drugs with reliable information about their dangers. You don't want your child to learn about alcohol and other drugs from unreliable sources. Establish yourself as a trustworthy source of information. Adding the 60 one minute talks is better than one 60 minute talk. Suggest telling your kid a fun fact about alcohol or drugs every week.

4. Show you're paying attention and you'll discourage risky behaviors.

Show you're aware of what your child is up to, as young people are more likely to drink or use other drugs if they think no one will notice. Do this in a subtle way, without prying.

5. Build your child's skills and strategies for avoiding underage drinking and drug use.

Even if you don't think your child wants to drink or try other drugs, peer pressure is a powerful thing. Having a plan to avoid alcohol and drug use can help children make better choices. Talk with your child about what they would do if faced with a decision about alcohol and drugs, such as texting a code word to a family member or practicing how they'll say "no thanks." Keep it low-key. Don't worry, you don't have to get everything across in one talk. Plan to have many short talks.

**It's not one 60-minute conversation.
It's 60 one-minute conversations.**

Building resilience helps children manage stress and feelings of anxiety. Resilience is the ability to adapt in the face of adversity, challenge, trauma and stress. Here are 10 tips to help your teen build resilience and increase their adaptability quotient:

- 1. Connect** – Encourage your child to make friends and practice the skill of empathy. Connection with others strengthens resilience.
- 2. Help others** – Engage your teen in volunteer work. It is empowering to help others.
- 3. Create a daily routine** – Inspire your teen to develop his or her own daily routine and rhythm.
- 4. Include time for breaks** – Build in unstructured time during the day. Rest and play leads to creativity and joy.
- 5. Model self-care** – You have a great influence in your teen. Help him or her see self-care through you as you model healthy diet, exercise, sleep, time for fun and rest.
- 6. Move toward goals** – Teach your child to set reasonable goals and then move toward them one step at a time. Help your teen focus on the steps he or she has accomplished rather than what is left to accomplish. Praise your teen for small and big wins.
- 7. Nurture a positive self-view** – Help your teen remember ways he or she has handled hardships in the past, solved problems and made good decisions.
- 8. Keep things in perspective** – Help your teen look at situations from a longer-term perspective, while still validating his or her feelings.
- 9. Look for opportunities for self-discovery** – Difficult times are often the times when people learn the greatest about themselves. Recognize areas your teen has grown and share those. Notice aspects of character that have been revealed through adversity.
- 10. Accept that change is a part of living** – Change can be scary for everyone. Help your teen see that change is part of life and new goals can replace goals that have become unattainable.

40 creative ways to keep your family sane during COVID-19 summer

We know this summer will be different, but that doesn't mean it won't be great! Here are some creative ways to grow closer with your family this season.

1. Create a family summer bucket list
2. Record a family podcast on your phone and send it to relatives
3. Take a virtual tour of a museum online
4. Create a family cookbook
5. Build a puzzle together
(Once you finish, glue and frame your puzzle as a reminder of this special summer!)
6. Research your family tree
7. Read a book together and talk about how it impacted each of you
8. Learn a TikTok dance. Ask your teen to show you how!
9. Download the Duolingo app and learn a new language for free
10. Choose recipes from different countries and cook a different recipe for each course
11. Make a family time capsule to open in the future
12. Write your relatives handwritten letters
13. Dress up as the characters and play the game "CLUE"
14. Learn about the star constellations at night
15. Print your family photographs and write the history on the back of them
16. Re-organize and redecorate your rooms
17. Make a family gratitude list – have each family member add one thing they are thankful for to the list each day
18. Have an indoor campout
19. Make a family timeline
20. Make your own domino set and play
21. Invent a new indoor sport
22. Build a family garden
23. Make your own homemade ice cream
24. Go to a drive-in movie together
25. Make homemade lemonade
26. Participate in a virtual 5K run/walk
27. Turn up the volume and have a family living room dance party
28. Have a themed movie marathon
29. Create a family summer music playlist on Spotify
30. Watch a TED Talk together
31. Start a family journal
32. Choose a funny object to hide around the house all summer. Whoever finds it hides it next!
33. Create a family vision board. Collect inspiring images, magazine clippings, motivational quotes or fabrics – anything that helps you visualize your family's dreams and plans.
34. Download the "1 Second Everyday" app and take a one-second video each day of the month. At the end of the month, you'll have a family movie!
35. Host a cooking challenge with another family through FaceTime or Zoom! Who can make the best chicken wings?
36. Host a socially distant block dinner party with your neighbors from your driveways
37. Make a homemade piñata
38. Host a neighborhood food drive in your driveway and donate items to a local food shelter
39. Have a Netflix party with friends and watch your favorite shows together
40. Practice mindfulness meditation together. UCLA Health has free guided meditations online.