

Teenage drug use lower than in '70s

Talk openly with teens about drug use

(NC) Your child is growing up. In fact, she isn't a child anymore. She's a young person struggling to have her own identity and making her own choices.

Her choices cover many things, such as clothing and music, but it also includes drugs, which makes your role

as a parent much more challenging. According to the Ontario Student Drug Use Survey, conducted every two years by the Addiction Research Foundation, drug use among students in Grades 7-13 has gone up in recent years.

The percentage of students who

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

used cannabis at least once in the previous 12 months doubled between 1993 and 1995 to 23 per cent, although a more recent ARF survey found no significant change since then.

Alcohol and tobacco are the most commonly used drugs among Ontario stu-

dents. Cigarette smoking

has increased dramatically since the early 1990s.

Although the recent increase has alarmed parents and raised many questions among public health authorities, drug use today is still far lower than it was in the 1970s.

Given this, what can

parents do to help their kids? Parents can start by simply talking with their children.

This means listening and being sincere, open and honest with one another. Every member of the family should have the opportunity to express herself.

Some may express opinions that you don't agree with, but try to sort out your own feelings and try to understand the feelings of others.

You can set limits on what is acceptable and unacceptable, but make sure that you convey that message clearly.

Make sure you know the facts. If your child asks a question and you don't know the answer, say so. Perhaps you can look for the answer together. It's also important for everyone in the family to support one another. Your family could recognize achievements and give praise when someone does well.

If your child does something that worries you, talk to her when you are calm.

Taking Tylenol with alcohol can damage the liver

(NC) According to a recent survey, many Canadians are confused about how to use common over-the-counter medications.

For headache relief:

- ✓ Don't put off taking a pain reliever in the hopes that the pain will subside on its own; headaches usually get worse before they get better.
- ✓ Don't take drugs containing acetaminophen such as Tylenol with alcohol because this combination can damage the liver.

For those at risk of heart attack:

- ✓ Don't take analgesics containing acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil); they don't have a preventative effect.
- ✓ Take a daily dose of ASA. This helps prevent blood clotting and is the only pain reliever with this indication.
- ✓ Enteric-coated tablets are easier on the stomach.

For indigestion:

- ✓ Use an antacid to relieve occasional heartburn.
- ✓ Don't use antacids for more than a week without consulting a physician; you may be masking more serious conditions such as an ulcer.

For constipation:

- ✓ Use a mild laxative to relieve occasional constipation.
- ✓ Don't assume that you must have at least one bowel movement every day; constipation is only a problem if you feel abdominal pain, discomfort or bloating.
- ✓ Use laxatives sparingly as over-dependence can lead to lazy bowels.

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