

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT VAPING?

By Nadia Busekrus, HRCPD Jesuit Volunteer, Health Media Club Coordinator

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In the past several months, “vaping” has been in the news **a lot**. Vaping is the use of an electronic cigarette that heats up pods of liquid that a user breathes in as an aerosol vapor. The vapor is made of chemicals and flavorings – it is not water vapor. Some of the chemicals in vape liquid are known to cause cancer. Because vape liquid does not have tobacco in it, some people believe that vaping is safe. This is not true. Although the Food and Drug Administration has now started to regulate e-cigarettes, there is no way for them to completely monitor what chemicals get put in vape liquid. Also, because this is new technology, we do not yet know how it may affect the body in the long term.

Vape liquid also contains nicotine – a chemical that is very addictive, especially for teenagers. Why is nicotine more dangerous for young people? Because before the age about 25 the brain is still growing and reaching its full potential. Nicotine can change the brain and negatively affect its development. That is one reason that it is illegal for anyone under the age of 21 to vape (or smoke tobacco cigarettes).

Unfortunately, not many people seem to know the truth about how dangerous vaping can be.

For example, according to the Oregon Student Wellness Survey of 11th graders from Hood River Valley High School, 86% of students think that smoking cigarettes has a high risk of harm but only 47% think the same thing about vaping. These students report that 50% of them have tried vaping. The dangerous thing is that because there is so much nicotine in vape liquid, trying to vape can lead to a life-long addiction to nicotine.

Now that you know some of the facts about vaping, it's your decision – will you choose nicotine addiction, cancer-causing chemicals, and (if you are under 21) an illegal habit? Or will you choose to live a life free from vaping?

WHAT'S INSIDE



PERCEPTION MATTERS

By Kathy Smith, HRCPD Office Manager / 541-386-2500 / Kathy.smith@co.hood-river.or.us

Since the legalization of recreational marijuana in Oregon in 2014, there has been a change in youth perception that marijuana is harmful. Now, less than 1 out of 3 11th graders in Hood River County believe that using marijuana once or twice a week is a moderate or great risk.¹ But according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), using marijuana can have harmful and long-lasting effects on a teen's health and well-being.²

Marijuana use has been linked to a range of mental health problems in teens such as depression and anxiety.³ Research shows that about 1 in 6 teens who repeatedly use marijuana can become addicted. When addicted, teens might make unsuccessful efforts to quit using marijuana or give up important activities with friends and family in favor of using marijuana.²

About one in four 11th graders in Hood River County say they have used marijuana in the past 30 days.¹ What do we do? The Prevention Department educates youth about marijuana through the TMEC (Teen Marijuana Education Course) in partnership with the Hood River County School District. TMEC provides facts so teens can make informed, healthy decisions.

What can you do? Research shows that parents have a major influence on their teens.⁴ Talk to your teen. Tell them you are interested in them. Go to parent/teacher conferences and get involved. Build a positive relationship with your teen. Parents who are involved with their child lower the risk that their child will engage in unhealthy, risky behavior.⁵

Sources:

1. Oregon Health Authority. "2018 Oregon Student Wellness Survey." 2018.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Marijuana Use and Teens." 2017.
<https://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/toolstemplates/entertainment/tips/marijuana-teens.html>
3. National Institute on Drug Abuse. "Is there a link between marijuana use and psychiatric disorders?" 2018.
<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/there-link-between-marijuana-use-psychiatric-disorders>.
4. Ask, Listen, Learn. "Safekeeping: Know the Rules, Know the Resources." N.d. <https://asklistenlearn.org/parents/keep-them-safe/>
5. Youth.gov. "Risk & Protective Factors." 2010.
<https://youth.gov/youth-topics/substance-abuse/risk-and-protective-factors-substance-use-abuse-and-dependence>.

HOLIDAY UNDERAGE DRINKING

By Kathy Smith, HRCPD Office Manager / 541-386-2500 / Kathy.smith@co.hood-river.or.us

The holidays are a busy time for all. Kids are out of school, college students are home for the holidays, and there are happy family and friend get-togethers. During this busy time of year, there may be many opportunities and temptations for young people to drink underage.

According to the Oregon Healthy Teen and Student Wellness Surveys, in Hood River County the number 11th graders who have used alcohol within the last 30 days has been trending down over the past five years. Prevention messages and education are part of the reason for this trend. Another important factor is parents. The Prevention Department partnered with the School District to survey parents and found that about 79% of middle school parents talk to their kids at least once a month about alcohol use.

Education is key to helping youth make informed, healthy, safe decisions to avoid alcohol use. Parents who want to have these discussions can find help online at: <https://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking> or by contacting the Prevention Department at 541-386-2500.

HEALTH MEDIA CLUBS IN ACTION

By Nadia Busekrus, HRCPD Jesuit Volunteer, Health Media Club Coordinator
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As the first half of the school year ended, the Health Media clubs celebrated their hard work with cocoa, marshmallow snowmen, and games. The past months included several highlights. For example, the Hood River Valley High School Health Media Club ran a campaign called Sticker Shock for Halloween. They put 3,000 stickers on cases of beer at grocery stores throughout Hood River and Odell. The stickers had the message “Cower in fear if you give minors beer.” They also helped design two ads which are being shown through February at Hood River Cinemas and Skylight Theater. The ads encourage people not to drive under the influence of alcohol or marijuana and also to remember that adults’ actions set an example for the children in their lives.

In October, students from the Hood River Middle School club helped Prevention Department staff to put on HRMS Cares Week. The students hosted the “Wheel of Kindness” – a spinning wheel with various kindness challenges for their classmates. Cares Week was also supported by a variety of community partners – the School Resource Deputy, One Community Health, the Hood River Fire Department, and the School Nutritionist. Students seemed to have fun and lined up eagerly every day to participate. They also wrote letters to the editor about healthy habits and choosing not to drink and drive. Several students were published in *The Hood River News*!

Lastly, the Wy’east Health Media Club got to visit the Radio Tierra recording studio and speak on live radio about safe choices during the holiday season. They also did some fun activities and games to focus on team-building and knowing the impact of our actions in relationships. We look forward to a new year of having fun and promoting health and safety to the community.

NEWS FROM THE ODELL HISPANIC DRUG PREVENTION HEALTH PROMOTION COALITION (OHPC)

By Nubia Contreras, Coalition Project Coordinator
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We have started of the year with switching our meeting time and day. For those of you interested in being part of the coalition, we are now meeting on the third Monday of the month from 5:30pm-7pm in Odell. I would also like to introduce our new Executive Committee that took office back in October. Our new Chair is Julia Garcia-Ramirez, Co-Chair is Claudia Montaña, Co-Secretaries Victoria Arechaga and Maija Yasui, and Member at Large is Erika Villa. I also wanted to take this opportunity to thank the past Executive Committee: Juan Reyes, Paty Lara, Leti Valle, and Gladys Rivera for all the time and dedication they put towards the coalition in the past two years.

UPCOMING EVENTS

January:

2 – Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drug Coalition Meeting (China Gorge)

21 – Martin Luther King Day of Reflection with Justice Workshops and Community Potluck Dinner (Riverside Community Church)

February:

6 – Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drug Coalition Meeting (China Gorge)

21 – County Budget Town Hall (Hood River Valley High School)

26 – Healthy Active Hood River County Meeting (Providence Hospital)

Every Thursday from 5:30-7:30pm – Strong Families Workshop (Wy'east)

March:

5 – Teen Marijuana Education Course Training (Hood River Alliance Church)

6 – Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drug Coalition Meeting (China Gorge)

11-15 – Wy'east Middle School Cares Week (Wy'east Health Media Club)

15 – Hood River County Poverty Simulation (Hood River Alliance Church)

19-20 – Kick Butts Day (Wy'east, HRMS & HRVHS Health Media Clubs)



Please reach out to our office with any questions, comments, suggestions, or concerns. You can reach our main office line at 541-386-2500.

We look forward to connecting with you!