



Cause for Concern: National Study Shows Reversal in Decade-Long Declines in Teen Abuse of Drugs and Alcohol

After a decade of consistent declines in teen drug abuse, a new national study released today by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America® points to marked upswings in use of drugs that teens are likely to encounter at parties and in other social situations. According to the 2009 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATS), the number of teens in grades 9-12 that used alcohol in the past month has grown by 11 percent (from 35 percent in 2008 to 39 percent in 2009), past year Ecstasy use shows a 67 percent increase (from 6 percent in 2008 to 10 percent in 2009) and past year marijuana use shows a 19 percent increase (from 32 percent in 2008 to 38 percent in 2009). The PATS data mark a reversal in the remarkable, sustained declines in several drugs of abuse among teens: methamphetamine (meth) was down by over 60 percent and past month alcohol and marijuana use had decreased a full 30 percent over the past decade from 1998-2008. **For more on this go to:** [http://www.drugfree.org/Portal/DrugIssue/Research/Teen Study 2009/National Study](http://www.drugfree.org/Portal/DrugIssue/Research/Teen_Study_2009/National_Study)



For more information on HCTC, the latest on upcoming HCTC Meetings and Activities **Go To:** <http://www.gvhp.org/Home/OurProjects/HealthyCommunities/>

Danger Signs: When to Worry

As a parent, it's sometimes tricky to discern between ordinary moodiness in your child and the beginnings of a problem. Throughout childhood, kids go through stages where they become more moody and more argumentative, but knowing what's normal and what's not can help you figure out what's going on. Consider these ideas:

Tips for all parents:

- Keep in touch with your child. The more day-to-day contact you have, and the more you know your child, the better you'll be able to figure out if he or she is having problems.
- Don't be ashamed of your child occasionally having problems. Every child will encounter difficulties. Deal with problems right away, and help your child learn how to cope and deal with difficulty.
- Model appropriate ways of dealing with difficulty. Your child watches you when you have a bad day.

For more tips go to: <http://www.mvparents.com/resources/enewsletter/archive/danger-signs#allparents>



FOCUS ON ALCOHOL AND POPULAR CULTURE

When crafting prevention messages and programs, it is important to understand that popular culture plays a powerful role in young people's lives. Youth between the ages of 8 and 18 spend almost 7 hours per day with various types of media. Through movies, television, music, advertising, and other outlets, youth are exposed to an extraordinary array of messages—many of which glamorize alcohol use. Drinking is frequently portrayed in the media as cool, sophisticated, or humorous. Rarely are the negative consequences or health risks of alcohol use shown. Young people need to learn how to be critical thinkers about media messages, to question sources of information, and to look for missing information. Community groups can help youth understand the risks associated with alcohol use and resist pressures to drink.

Facts

- More than 9 out of 10 (93%) of the 200 most popular movie rentals in 1996 and 1997 included depictions of alcohol use. When alcohol use was portrayed, no consequences were associated with consumption in over half (57%) of the movies (Roberts, DF, April 1999)
- A review of top-selling popular songs found alcohol mentioned in 47% of rap musing lyrics
- In recent television programs, 9 out of 10 drinkers are portrayed as either experiencing no effects at all or only positive personal and social outcomes from their alcohol consumption

What to Do

- Write an article for a local parenting section of a newspaper, PTA newsletter or faith community bulletin encouraging adults in your community to watch television, attend concerts, and go to the movies with young people. Urge adults to note when underage drinking is portrayed in the media and to use these experiences as opportunities to talk with youth about the real consequences of alcohol use. Remind adults to be respectful of young people's opinions and to listen to their observations.
- Invite local agencies such as the Department of Health to teach media literacy in the school and community to help youth and adults learn how to analyze messages that glamorize unhealthy behaviors