

TIPS for TEENS

UNDERAGE DRINKING

THE TRUTH ABOUT UNDERAGE DRINKING



**SLANG¹: BOOZE/BREW/
LIQUOR/SAUCE**

GET THE FACTS

UNDERAGE DRINKING IS DANGEROUS. Drinking alcohol can result in poor decision making which can make you less aware of your actions and unable to recognize potential danger. Drinking may also lead to impaired motor coordination, placing you at a greater risk of being injured from falls or vehicle crashes. While intoxicated, you are more likely to engage in unsafe behavior, including drinking and driving, unprotected sex, and aggressive or violent actions.²

UNDERAGE DRINKING CAN BE FATAL. When a person has an alcohol overdose, their breathing and heart rate slows down to dangerous levels. Symptoms include confusion, being unconscious, vomiting, seizures, and trouble breathing. Overdosing on alcohol can lead to permanent brain damage or death. In addition, driving after drinking alcohol can lead to vehicle accidents and deaths.³

UNDERAGE DRINKING CAN BE ADDICTIVE. When someone is unable to stop or control their alcohol use—even when facing serious health, social, or academic consequences—they have an alcohol use disorder that requires treatment. Talking with a counselor, psychologist, psychiatrist, or other trained professional can help.⁴

? Q&A

Q. IS IT REALLY UNSAFE TO DRINK UNTIL I'M 21?

A. YES. The risks of underage drinking are high. Research suggests that drinking during the teen years could interfere with normal brain development and increase the risk of developing an alcohol use disorder later in life.⁵

Q. WHY DO MY FRIENDS DRINK ALCOHOL IF IT IS UNSAFE?

A. Many teens experience peer pressure to drink alcohol, and some are looking for a way to cope with stress; however, underage drinking will result in more problems—not fewer. In 2019, about 4.2 million young people aged 12 to 20 reported binge drinking (for males, 5 or more drinks, and for females, 4 or more drinks on the same occasion within a few hours) at least once in the past month.⁶

Q. MY PARENTS USED TO DRINK WHEN THEY WERE UNDERAGE. WHY CAN'T I?

A. Minimum drinking age laws exist for a reason—they help keep everyone safer. After states increased the legal drinking age to 21, there were fewer car crashes. Also, drinking during the previous month for 18- to 20-year-olds declined after all states adopted a minimum legal drinking age of 21, from 59 percent in 1985 to 40 percent in 1991.⁷

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Underage drinking is dangerous and can be deadly. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust if you have questions.

LEARN MORE:

Get the latest information on how underage drinking affects the brain and body at teens.drugabuse.gov.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT UNDERAGE DRINKING PREVENTION, CONTACT:

SAMHSA

1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) (English and Español)

TTY 1-800-487-4889

www.samhsa.gov | store.samhsa.gov



BEFORE YOU RISK IT!

1

KNOW THE LAW. The minimum drinking age in the United States is 21. Having a national minimum drinking age saves lives and improves health. There is even evidence that the law protects people from other drug dependence and suicide.⁸

2

KNOW THE RISKS. Underage drinking contributes to more than 4,300 deaths among people below the age of 21 in the U.S. each year.⁹ Drinking under age 21 is also strongly linked with death from alcohol poisoning.¹⁰

3

LOOK AROUND YOU. Although alcohol is the most commonly used substance by teens, most teens don't drink. Each year, teens' alcohol use continues to drop—in 2019, rates of past-year alcohol use by students in 10th and 12th grades were at a 5-year low.¹¹



MORE INFORMATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR FOR RESOURCES USED IN THIS

"TIPS for TEENS,"

visit store.samhsa.gov or call
1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)
(English and Español).

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KNOW THE SIGNS

How can you tell if a friend is using alcohol? Potential side effects and symptoms include:¹²

- **Changes in mood, including anger and irritability**
- **Academic and/or behavioral problems in school**
- **Changing groups of friends**
- **Less interest in activities and/or care in appearance**



WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP SOMEONE WHO IS USING ALCOHOL?

BE A FRIEND. SAVE A LIFE.

Encourage your friend to stop drinking or seek help from a parent, teacher, or other caring adult.

For 24/7 free and confidential information and treatment referrals in English and Español, call SAMHSA's National Helpline at:

1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)

or visit the SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator at: findtreatment.samhsa.gov

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^{1,3,11} National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). (2020). Drug Facts: Alcohol. Retrieved from <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/alcohol>

^{2,5,9} U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2018). *Report to Congress on the Prevention and Reduction of Underage Drinking*. Retrieved from <https://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/resources/reporttocongress/rtc2018.aspx>

^{4,12} National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). (2020). Underage Drinking. Retrieved from <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets/underage-drinking>

⁶ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2020). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*. (HHS Publication No. PEP20-07-01-001, NSDUH Series H-55). Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/>

^{7,10} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2020). *Age 21 Minimum Legal Drinking Age*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/minimum-legal-drinking-age.htm>

⁸ Ibid.

TIPS for TEENS

MARIJUANA



THE TRUTH ABOUT MARIJUANA

SLANG: WEED/POT/GRASS/ REEFER/
GANJA/MARY JANE/BLUNT/JOINT/TREES

GET THE FACTS

MARIJUANA AFFECTS YOUR BRAIN. Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the chemical responsible for most of marijuana's psychological effects, affects brain cells throughout the brain, including cells in circuits related to learning and memory, coordination, and addiction.¹

MARIJUANA AFFECTS YOUR SELF-CONTROL. Marijuana can seriously affect your sense of time and your coordination, impacting things like driving.

MARIJUANA AFFECTS YOUR LUNGS. Marijuana smoke deposits four times more tar in the lungs and contains 50 percent to 70 percent more cancer-causing substances than tobacco smoke does.²

MARIJUANA USE IS NEGATIVELY LINKED WITH OTHER ASPECTS OF YOUR HEALTH. Chronic marijuana use has been linked with depression, anxiety, and an increased risk of schizophrenia in some cases.³

MARIJUANA IS NOT ALWAYS WHAT IT SEEMS. Marijuana can be laced with substances without your knowledge.⁴ "Blunts"—hollowed-out cigars filled with marijuana—sometimes contain crack cocaine.

MARIJUANA CAN BE ADDICTIVE. Not everyone who uses marijuana becomes addicted, but some users develop signs of dependence.

? Q&A

Q. ISN'T SMOKING MARIJUANA LESS DANGEROUS THAN SMOKING CIGARETTES?

A. NO. Both marijuana and cigarette smoke can be harmful. More research is needed to fully understand the connection between marijuana and long-term effects such as cancer.⁵

Q. CAN PEOPLE BECOME ADDICTED TO MARIJUANA?

A. YES. Marijuana use can lead to a marijuana use disorder, which takes the form of addiction in severe cases.⁶

Q. WHAT ARE THE OTHER RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH MARIJUANA USE?

A. In addition to the physical and mental risks associated with marijuana use, people who use marijuana have also reported less academic and career success, as well as lower life satisfaction and more relationship problems.⁷

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Marijuana affects the development of teen brains. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust if you have questions.

LEARN MORE:

Get the latest information on how drugs affect the brain and body at teens.drugabuse.gov.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MARIJUANA, CONTACT:

SAMHSA

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BEFORE YOU RISK IT!

- 1 KNOW THE LAW.** Marijuana is a Schedule I drug.⁸ According to federal law, it is illegal to buy or sell marijuana.
- 2 GET THE FACTS.** Using marijuana can cause memory problems and mood changes, and long-term use may lower intelligence.^{9,10}
- 3 STAY INFORMED.** Research suggest that teens usually try alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana before other drugs, though most people who use marijuana do not use other drugs.¹¹
- 4 KNOW THE RISKS.** Marijuana affects your coordination and reaction time, raising your risk of injury or death from car crashes and other accidents. Co-use of alcohol or other drugs heightens crash risks.¹²
- 5 LOOK AROUND YOU.** Most teens aren't smoking marijuana. In fact, only 6.5 percent of youth ages 12 to 17 said that they had smoked marijuana in the past month.¹³



KNOW THE SIGNS

How can you tell if a friend is using marijuana? Symptoms of marijuana use may include:¹⁴

- **Poor physical coordination**
- **Red eyes**
- **Unusual smell on clothing**
- **Problems with short-term memory**
- **Anxiety**



WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP SOMEONE WHO IS USING MARIJUANA?

BE A FRIEND. SAVE A LIFE.

Encourage your friend to stop using or seek help from a parent, teacher, or other caring adult.

For 24/7 free and confidential information and treatment referrals in English and Español, call SAMHSA's National Helpline at:

1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)
or visit the SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator at:
findtreatment.samhsa.gov

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^{1,2,3,5,12} National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). Research Reports: Marijuana. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/letter-director>

⁴ Gilbert, C. R., Baram, M., & Cavarocchi, N. C. (2013). Smoking wet: Respiratory failure related to smoking tainted marijuana cigarettes. *Texas Heart Institute Journal*, 40(1): 64-67.

⁶ Medical News Today. (2017). Marijuana 'may be worse than cigarettes for cardiovascular health'. Retrieved from <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/318854.php>

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⁸ Drug Enforcement Administration. (2018). Drug Scheduling. Retrieved from <https://www.dea.gov/druginfo/ds.shtml>

⁹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017). Marijuana and Public Health. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/health-effects.html>

¹⁰ Meier, M. H., Caspi, A., Ambler, A., Harrington, H., Houts, R., Keefe, R. S. E., McDonald, K., Ward, A., Poulton, R., & Moffitt, T. E. (2012). Persistent cannabis users show neuropsychological decline from childhood to midlife. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 109(40), E2657-E2664. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3479587/>

¹¹ National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2015). Marijuana: Facts for Teens. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/marijuana-facts-teens/want-to-know-more-some-faqs-about-marijuana>

¹³ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2018). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (HHS Publication No. SMA 18-5068, NSDUH Series H-53). Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/cbhsq-reports/NSDUHFFR2017/NSDUHFFR2017.pdf>

¹⁴ American Addiction Centers. (2018). What Are the Signs That Someone Is High? Retrieved from <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/marijuana-rehab/how-to-tell-if-someone-is-high/>

TIPS for TEENS

OPIOIDS

THE TRUTH ABOUT OPIOIDS

**SLANG: O.C./OXY/PERCS/VIKE/M/MONKEY/
WHITE STUFF/LEAN/SCHOOLBOY/SIZZURP/
PURPLE DRANK/LOADS**

GET THE FACTS

OPIOIDS AFFECT YOUR BRAIN. Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription, such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, morphine, and many others.¹ They affect both the spinal cord and brain to reduce the intensity of pain-signal perception as well as brain areas that control emotion.² They can also affect the brain to cause euphoria or “high.”³

OPIOIDS AFFECT YOUR BODY. Opioids slow down the actions of the body, such as breathing and heartbeat. Even a single dose of an opioid can cause severe respiratory depression (slowing or stopping of breathing), which can be fatal; taking opioids with alcohol or sedatives increases this risk.⁴

OPIOIDS ARE ADDICTIVE. Even though heroin is highly addictive, more people struggle with addiction to prescription pain relievers.⁵ Many young people who inject heroin report misuse of prescription opioids before starting to use heroin.⁶

OPIOIDS CAN KILL YOU. Drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the United States, with 68,690 drug overdose deaths between March 2017 and March 2018.⁷ More than 46,000 of those deaths involved opioids.⁸

OPIOID ADDICTION IS TREATABLE. Methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone are medications that are FDA-approved to treat opioid use disorder. For more information, visit <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/medications-to-treat-opioid-addiction/efficacy-medications-opioid-use-disorder>.

? Q&A

Q. MY DOCTOR PRESCRIBED ME OPIOIDS. DOESN'T THAT MEAN THEY'RE SAFE?

A. Prescription opioids—when used long term or incorrectly—can cause the brain to become reliant on the drug and are addictive.⁹

Q. IF I USE OPIOIDS, WILL I BECOME ADDICTED?

A. Prescription opioids can cause physical dependence when used as directed or addiction if misused; illegal opioids such as heroin are also highly addictive. People who regularly use prescription opioids or heroin often develop tolerance, which means that they need higher and/or more frequent doses of the drug to get the desired effects.¹⁰

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Many people are prescribed opioids out of medical necessity, but opioids can still be dangerous and addictive. Even if someone is prescribed one of these medications—such as hydrocodone, oxycodone, and morphine—misuse of these substances is rampant. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust if you have questions.

LEARN MORE:

Get the latest information on how drugs affect the brain and body at [teens.drugabuse.gov](https://www.teens.drugabuse.gov).

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OPIOIDS, CONTACT:

SAMHSA
1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)
(English and Español)

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store.samhsa.gov


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BEFORE YOU RISK IT!

- 1 KNOW THE LAW.** Heroin is illegal and addictive.¹¹ If you are caught with prescription opioids that are not yours, you can be imprisoned, fined, or both.¹²
- 2 KNOW THE RISKS.** Using opioids repeatedly can lead to higher tolerance.¹³ Other risks include addiction and overdose death.
- 3 LOOK AROUND YOU.** A recent study found that 38.5 percent of the people who misused prescription pain relievers got them from a friend or relative for free; 34.6 percent were prescribed the medication by one doctor.¹⁴



KNOW THE SIGNS

How can you tell if a friend is using opioids?

Side effects of opioid use include:¹⁵

- **Constipation, nausea, vomiting, and dry mouth;**
- **Sleepiness and dizziness;**
- **Confusion;**
- **Decreased breathing; and**
- **Itching and sweating.**

Behavioral signs and symptoms of opioid addiction include:¹⁶

- **A change in peer group;**
- **Carelessness with grooming;**
- **Decline in academic performance;**
- **Missing classes or skipping school;**
- **Loss of interest in favorite activities;**
- **Changes in eating or sleeping habits; and**
- **Deteriorating relationships with family and friends.**



WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP SOMEONE WHO IS USING OPIOIDS?

BE A FRIEND. SAVE A LIFE.

Encourage your friend to stop using or seek help from a parent, teacher, or other caring adult.

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¹ National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). Opioids. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids>

² National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). Misuse of Prescription Drugs. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/misuse-prescription-drugs/which-classes-prescription-drugs-are-commonly-misused>

³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2014). The Facts About Buprenorphine. Retrieved from <https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma14-4442.pdf>

⁴ Jones, C. M., Paulozzi, L. J., & Mack, K. A. (2014). Alcohol involvement in opioid pain reliever and benzodiazepine drug abuse-related emergency department visits and drug-related deaths - United States, 2010. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 63(40), 881-885. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6340a1.htm>

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¹¹ Addiction.com. (2015). Before You Share That Pain Medication. Retrieved from <https://www.addiction.com/12040/before-you-share-that-pain-medication/>

¹² Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2016). Opioids. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/atod/opioids>

¹³ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2018). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/2017-nsduh-annual-national-report>

¹⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017). Opioid Overdose. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/opioids/prescribed.html>

¹⁵ National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2014). *Principles of adolescent substance use disorder treatment: A research-based guide*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/principles-adolescent-substance-use-disorder-treatment-research-based-guide/frequently-asked-questions/what-are-signs-drug-use-in-adolescents-what-role-can-parents-play-in-getting-treatment>

MORE INFORMATION



Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR FOR RESOURCES USED IN THIS "TIPS for TEENS," visit store.samhsa.gov or call 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) (English and Español).



SILENCE HELPS NO ONE

A TEXT IS ALL IT TAKES

TEXT YOUR SCHOOLCODE TO 1-844-201-9946 FOR HELP GET A PROFESSIONAL RESPONSE IN MINUTES

TEXT HELP

TIPS for TEENS

TOBACCO USE

THE TRUTH ABOUT TOBACCO USE

SLANG FOR CIGARETTES:
SMOKES/CIGS/BUTTS

SLANG FOR SMOKELESS TOBACCO:
CHEW/DIP/SPIT TOBACCO/SNUFF

GET THE FACTS

TOBACCO USE DAMAGES YOUR HEALTH. Smoking, which is the most common cause of lung cancer, is also a leading cause of cancer of the mouth, throat, bladder, pancreas, and kidneys.¹

TOBACCO USE AFFECTS YOUR BODY'S DEVELOPMENT. Smoking—including vaping, cigars, and hookah use—is particularly harmful for teens because your body is still growing and changing. Evidence shows that smoking has an impact on nearly every organ in a person's body.²

TOBACCO CONTAINS ADDICTIVE INGREDIENTS. Tobacco is a plant grown for its leaves, which are dried and fermented to put in tobacco products. It contains nicotine, an ingredient that can lead to addiction. The younger you are when you begin to smoke, the more likely you are to become addicted to nicotine.³ According to the 2014 *Surgeon General's Report*, nearly 9 out of 10 adult smokers first tried smoking before age 18.⁴

TOBACCO USE CAN KILL YOU. Cigarette smoking is responsible for about 480,000 deaths per year in the U.S.⁵ Worldwide, tobacco smoking and secondhand smoke combined cause nearly 7 million deaths per year.⁶

? Q&A

Q. ISN'T SMOKING COOL?

A. Advertisements often portray smoking as glamorous and sophisticated, but these ads are created to sell products and use youth-oriented themes.

Q. IS SMOKELESS TOBACCO SAFE?

A. NO. No form of smokeless tobacco is safe. It contains at least 30 chemicals that are known to cause cancer.⁷

Q. DO MOST TEENS SMOKE?

A. NO. Although the majority of teens don't smoke,⁸ it's important to remember that cigarette use among teens is still harmful and should be prevented from becoming more popular.

Q. DOESN'T SMOKING HELP YOU RELAX?

A. NO. Use strategies such as exercise or talking to your friends to help calm your nerves.⁹

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Tobacco use is dangerous and can be deadly. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust if you have questions.

LEARN MORE:

Get the latest information on how drugs affect the brain and body at teens.drugabuse.gov.

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BEFORE YOU RISK IT!

- 1 KNOW THE LAW.** It is illegal for anyone under 18 to buy cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, or tobacco-related products. As of September 2018, six states and at least 350 localities have raised the minimum age to 21.
- 2 STAY INFORMED.** Young people often underestimate the addictiveness of nicotine and the effect of tobacco use on their health. This is why quitting can be difficult. A recent report revealed that about 45 percent of high school cigarette smokers tried to stop smoking in the past 12 months.¹⁰
- 3 BE AWARE.** It can be hard to play sports if you use tobacco. Smoking causes diseases that result in shortness of breath and dizziness.¹¹
- 4 THINK OF OTHERS.** More than 41,000 nonsmokers die every year due to secondhand smoke exposure.¹² Secondhand smoke causes nearly 34,000 premature deaths from heart disease and more than 8,000 deaths from stroke each year in the United States among nonsmokers.¹³
- 5 GET THE FACTS.** Each day, about 1,700 people between the ages of 12 and 17 start smoking.¹⁴ Many will suffer long-term health consequences.¹⁵

MORE INFORMATION

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visit store.samhsa.gov or call
1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)
(English and Español).



KNOW THE SIGNS

How can you tell if a friend is using tobacco? Symptoms of tobacco use may include:¹⁶

- Coughing
- Bad breath
- Smelly hair and clothes
- Yellow-stained teeth and fingers
- Frequent colds
- Bleeding gums (smokeless tobacco)
- Frequent mouth sores (smokeless tobacco)

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¹ National Cancer Institute. (2017). Harms of Cigarette Smoking and Health Benefits of Quitting. Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/tobacco/cessation-fact-sheet>

^{2,4,5,12,13,15} U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2014). *The health consequences of smoking: 50 years of progress. A report of the surgeon general*. Retrieved from <https://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/50-years-of-progress/full-report.pdf>

³ American Cancer Society. (2015). Why People Start Smoking and Why It's Hard to Stop. Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/tobacco-and-cancer/why-people-start-using-tobacco.html>

⁶ World Health Organization. (2011). WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic. Retrieved from http://www.who.int/tobacco/global_report/2011/en/

⁷ American Cancer Society. (2015). Health Risks of Smokeless Tobacco. Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/tobacco-and-cancer/smokeless-tobacco.html>

^{8,14} Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2018). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (HHS Publication No. SMA 18-5068, NSDUH Series H-53). Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/cbhsq-reports/NSDUHFFR2017/NSDUHFFR2017.pdf>

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¹⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2009). What You(th) Should Know About Tobacco. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/youth/information-sheet/index.htm