

WHAT ARE COMMON SUBSTANCES USED BY YOUTH IN THE UNITED STATES?



MOST COMMON SUBSTANCES

This information is based on [Your Room](#).

ALCOHOL



A substance that slows down the brain and body and can lead to physical dependence.

Examples: Beer, wine, liquor (vodka, rum, tequila, and others)

MARIJUANA



A substance that affects how a person thinks, feels, and reacts. It can impact memory, learning, and mood.

Examples: Dried cannabis plants, edibles (foods or candies made with marijuana), products containing THC, spice (synthetic marijuana)

NICOTINE



A highly addictive substance that can make it hard to stop using and affects the brain and heart.

Examples: Cigarettes, vapes or e-cigarettes, nicotine pouches or gum (when not used as directed)

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS



Medications that require a healthcare provider's authorization and supervision to be used safely and effectively. When misused, they can be dangerous, sometimes leading to physical dependence or life-threatening overdose.

Examples: Pain medications (including opioids such as oxycodone and fentanyl), anxiety medications (Klonopin, Xanax), ADHD medications (Adderall, Ritalin), sleep medications

STIMULANTS



Substances that speed up communication between the brain and body. Misuse can strain the heart and affect mental health.

Examples: Energy pills and drinks, methamphetamine, caffeine, cocaine

For more information about specific drugs and their effects click [here](#).

WAYS SUBSTANCES MAY BE CONSUMED



Substances can come in many different forms. This information is designed to help youth and caregivers recognize how substances may be used or misused. Using these substances in unsafe ways can be harmful to the body and brain and may lead to serious health risks.



	Eat/ Chew	Drink	Smoke/ Vape	Absorb	Sniff/ Snort	Inject
Alcohol	●	●				
Marijuana	●	●	●	●		
Nicotine	●	●	●	●	●	
Prescription Drugs	●	●	●	●	●	●
Stimulants	●	●	●	●	●	●



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RISKS OF SUBSTANCE USE



Using substances at a young age can disrupt brain development, making it harder to think clearly, manage emotions, and make healthy decisions. It can also increase the risk of long-term physical and mental health problems.



The misuse of all the substances below may lead to **physical dependence**, in addition to the following risks:

ALCOHOL



Injuries (vehicle crashes, falls), high blood pressure, liver disease, depression, cardiovascular problems, memory loss, legal issues

MARIJUANA



Depression, organ damage (lungs, brain), high blood pressure, anxiety, cardiovascular issues, legal issues

NICOTINE



Organ damage (lungs, brain), high blood pressure, cancer, fertility issues, cardiovascular issues, dental health problems, difficulty breathing

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS



Organ damage (liver, kidneys, brain), lung infections, life-threatening overdose, legal issues

STIMULANTS



High blood pressure, organ damage (heart, brain, lungs, liver, kidneys), dental health problems, cardiovascular issues, anxiety, paranoia, psychosis, legal issues

SUBSTANCE USE SUPPORT

If you or someone you care for is affected by substance use, help is available.
Talking to a trusted adult is an important first step.



988 Lifeline

Provides 24/7
crisis support



Substance Use Support Plan

A tool to support reducing or
preventing substance use



USCRI's Community Resource Directory

Information on free and
low-cost resources



refugees.org
refugee-youth.org
ucresourcecenter.org

