



OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL
Email Update

New Data Show Troubling Rise in Youth Drug Use

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New [data released today](#) by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) reveal unacceptable increases in youth drug use in America, and a softening in young people's attitudes towards drugs, particularly marijuana. The Obama Administration is aggressively addressing the threat of drug use through a balanced and comprehensive [drug control strategy](#), but we need parents and other adult influencers to act immediately to prevent drug use before it starts.

In this year's Monitoring the Future survey, we are concerned about the increases in youth drug use and decrease in perceived harm, specifically:

- Marijuana is by far the most commonly used drug after alcohol and there have been increases in the daily use of marijuana among teens, particularly 8th graders.
- The number of high school seniors who see great risk in 'taking heroin occasionally' decreased from 79.7% in 2009 to 74.8% in 2010.
- Fewer students reported disapproving of drug use or believing in the risks associated with-use and past surveys have found that such 'softening' of teen's perceptions of harmfulness has-signaled future rises in the rates of drug use.

Discussions of marijuana legalization and 'medical' marijuana send the wrong message to young people about the consequences of-drug use and these mixed messages may play a role in increasing teen drug use. Research shows that [marijuana is not harmless](#) and parents and other caregivers must learn about the risks and harms associated with marijuana use among young people. Since California made 'medical' marijuana legal under state law in 1996, the state has seen a number of efforts to legalize the drug and today, almost half of the Californians who seek drug treatment cite marijuana as their primary substance of abuse are teens.

Despite these troubling data, there are things that parents and other adults who influence children can do to help prevent drug use among teens. Research shows that six out of 10 12th graders who report not using marijuana say the reason they don't use the drug is because their parents would disapprove. Here are three simple things you can do today to help keep your kids healthy:

- **Talk to your kids about drugs.** Make sure they know of the harms that can result from drug use and that you don't approve of them. For tips and parenting advice visit www.TheAntiDrug.com.

ONDCP seeks to foster healthy individuals and safe communities by effectively leading the Nation's effort to reduce drug use and its consequences.

- **Learn to spot risk factors that can lead to drug use.** Association with drug-abusing peers is often the most immediate risk factor that can lead young people to drug use and delinquent behavior. Other risk factors include poor classroom behavior or social skills and academic failure. Parents can protect their kids from these influences by building strong bonds with their children, staying involved in their lives, and setting clear limits and consistent enforcement of discipline.
- **Go through your medicine cabinet.** The data this year continues to support the finding that more than 70 percent of kids who abuse prescription drugs get them from friends or family – often from the home medicine cabinet. Immediately [remove unused or unneeded prescription drugs](#) from your medicine cabinet and dispose of them.

And the Obama Administration is working with you to help keep kids safe. ONDCP is leading an unprecedented government-wide public health approach to reduce drug use and its consequences. This effort includes a request in the President’s FY2010 budget to increase funding for treatment programs by \$137 million, placing a heavier emphasis on early intervention programs in healthcare settings, aligning criminal justice policies and public health systems to divert non-violent drug offenders into treatment instead of jail, funding scientific research on drug use, and expanding access to substance abuse treatment and recovery support services.

For more information, please visit:

- [Statement from Director Kerlikowske](#)
- [Monitoring the Future 2010 fact sheet](#)
- [Consequences of Illicit Drug Use in America Fact Sheet](#)

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