



KEEPING KIDS SAFE
A Guide to Drug and Alcohol Prevention

Red Ribbon Week 2019

This year, Red Ribbon Week is tapping out a text. The theme is “Send a message. Stay drug free.”

It is the brainchild of Izabella Ware from Griswold Middle School in Griswold, Connecticut, and was one of thousands of entries judged by students, parents, educators and others. The school will receive \$500 in Red Ribbon merchandise from Nimco Inc. to help it celebrate the week, which is Oct. 23-31.

STAYING DRUG FREE

Red Ribbon Week celebrates America's students making healthy choices about staying off drugs. The theme, the National Family Partnership says, sends a message about how much students value themselves, their health, their community and their future. The campaign is expected to reach more than 80 million people each year across the country.

Ware is the first Griswold student to win the National Red Ribbon Theme contest. She learned about it from health teacher Kristen Butremovic, who has celebrated Red Ribbon Week for 21 years.

THE HISTORY

Red Ribbon Week began in 1985 in response to the murder of DEA Agent Enrique Camarena, the website



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RedRibbon.org says. Camarena joined the DEA to make a difference, his mother said, even though he was only one person.

On Feb. 7, 1985, he left his office to meet his wife for lunch. Five men shoved him into a car. His body was found a month later, tortured to death. Friends, neighbors and

others began wearing red satin ribbons in Camarena's memory and, as a movement grew against drugs in America, other groups adopted the ribbon as a symbol against drug use.

NATIONAL FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

In 1988, the NFP, then the

National Federation of Parents for Drug Free Youth, sponsored the first national Red Ribbon Week.

Since then, the campaign has reached millions of children and families.

Today, the NFP partners with around 100 organizations, including local coalitions, parent-teacher organi-

zations, parent committees, and NFP state and community partners.

In addition to Red Ribbon Week, the NFP also acts as a national clearinghouse of all kinds of prevention literature. Other NFP campaigns include Red Ribbon Certified Schools, Lock Your Meds and Safe Homes/Safe Parties.

Alcohol Use

It's never too early to start talking to your children about alcohol use.

According to the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, children as young as 9 start viewing alcohol in a positive light. About 10% of 12-year-olds say they've tried alcohol and, as startling as that number is, it jumps to about 50% by age 15. And by the time they are seniors, almost 70% will have tried booze.

EFFECTS OF UNDERAGE DRINKING

SAMHSA says that underage drinking can be bad for a child's growing brain and interfere with judgment. Ensuing poor decisions can have severe consequences: a horrific injury in a drunk-driving crash, an STD, a teen pregnancy. It also can exacerbate mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, and bring down your grades. It also can make young people physically ill.

COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE

The key to preventing children from abusing alcohol, SAMHSA says, is to keep talking about it and keep lines of communication open. Have short but frequent conversations about drinking and the effects alcohol and ensuing poor decisions can have on



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their lives. Having lots of little talks, the agency says, is more effective and less stressful than having one big talk. Also, make your rules, views and expectations crystal clear. Most importantly, listen to what your child tells you about alcohol. Answer their questions and listen to

what they have to say.

WHAT IF YOU DRINK?

Model good behavior and never, ever drink and drive. Make sure your children know that the alcohol in the house is off limits. If you drank when you were underage, be honest.

Let them know it is risky and emphasize how views have changed and how much more we know now about the effects of underage drinking.

Explain to your children why you drink — to celebrate a special occasion, to enhance a meal — and emphasize that

drinking in moderation is not thought to be harmful to adults. Adults are mature mentally and physically, so can handle the effects of alcohol consumption. Tell them that some people, including all underage children, should not drink at all.

Impaired Driving

One of the worst decisions an underage drinker can make is to get behind the wheel — or to get in the car with a driver that’s been drinking.

On average, the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration says, three in five people will be involved in a crash caused by impaired driving in their lifetime. Also remind children that drug use, vaping and other activities also can cause impairment.

FAST FACTS

Consider these alarming facts about drunk driving, according to SAMHSA:

- One in every four teen car crashes involves an underage drinking driver.
- About 800 people are injured in a drunk driving crash every day.
- One person dies every 50 minutes as a result of an impaired crash.

• Thirteen percent of weekend nighttime drivers have marijuana in their system.

• Marijuana users are about 25% more likely to be involved in a crash than a driver with no evidence of marijuana use.

KEEPING KIDS SAFE

Talk to your children, SAMHSA says, early and often.



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Lay down rules and expectations clearly. Discuss impaired driving whenever your child borrows the car, at dinner, when a child leaves with a friend, running errands, at the grocery store. Everywhere. All the time.

Most importantly, help them build an exit plan. Your child may not know what to

do if an impaired person they would normally trust offers them a ride. Let them know it's OK to say no, and help them think of ways they can find a safe ride home, including:

- Calling a taxi or a ride-share service;
- Calling a sober person; or
- Staying the night where

they are.

Also talk to them about how to convince an impaired person not to drive. And remember to model good behavior. If you drink, never drink and drive.

IT'S PREVENTABLE

Impaired driving is an entirely preventable crime.

And it is a real crime with real consequences that won't just go away when you turn 18. Every state in the U.S. has a zero tolerance policy when it comes to underage intoxicated driving. Penalties vary by state, but can include juvenile detention time, suspended licenses, impounded vehicles and big fines.

Red Ribbon Week Activities

You don't just have to celebrate Red Ribbon Week at school.

There's lots you can do at home, parents, or even on your own, students, to support making good choices when it comes to drugs and alcohol. Keep reading for more ideas from RedRibbon.org.

FOR STUDENTS

Enter the Red Ribbon photo contest on the RedRibbon.org website for a chance to win an iPad and \$1,000 for your school.

Make a drug-free pact with your friends and hold each other accountable.

Write an article about the importance of Red Ribbon Week in your school or local newspaper.

Contact local government officials about declaring Oct. 23-31 Red Ribbon Week in your community.

Organize or participate in themed days during Red Ribbon Week. Some examples include Put a Cap on Drugs Day, where you wear a hat; Shade Out Drugs, where everyone dons their sunnies; or Wear Red Day.

Join or start a Students Against Drunk Driving chapter at your school.



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FOR EDUCATORS

Work with the parent-teacher organization to plan a school-wide Red Ribbon rally.

Organize an essay contest around this year's theme: Send a message. Stay drug free.

Hold a door decorating contest.

Plan a Walk Out on Drugs walk-a-thon.

Make a meal or a snack out of all red foods.

FOR PARENTS

Use Red Ribbon Week to start a conversation about alcohol and drugs.

Secure and take inventory of your medicine cabinet.

Wear and bring red ribbons to your work.

Get to know the parents of your children's friends. Work together to set boundaries.

Talk to neighbors about any drug use in your neighborhood.

FOR BUSINESSES

Sponsor a local school with Red Ribbon merchandise.

Use Red Ribbon Week to talk to staff and reiterate policies on drug and alcohol use.

Hold a fundraiser for a local prevention organization.

Distribute and wear red ribbons.

Volunteer to speak about Red Ribbon Week at a business gathering or Chamber of Commerce meeting.

FOR MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

Organize a Miles of Quarters Campaign to support prevention.

Display Red Ribbon Week posters and literature in your clinic or office.

Volunteer to speak about drug and alcohol use to a group of parents or another community group.

Incorporate Red Ribbon Week into your newsletters.

What Is Vaping?

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E-cigarettes are electronic devices that heat a liquid and produce an aerosol that users inhale. The use of e-cigarettes rose 900% among U.S. middle and high school students from 2011-2015.

Some devices look like regular cigarettes, cigars or pipes, while others look like pens or other everyday objects. Larger e-cigarettes with tank mods, don't look at all like any other tobacco products.

Vaping is the use of an e-cigarette to partake in nicotine or other, more dangerous, compounds.

TOBACCO

E-cigarettes, such as the JUUL pen,

are designed to deliver flavored nicotine aerosols, sometimes in kid-friendly flavors. That in itself is harmful. Nicotine is highly addictive and can harm adolescent brain development, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says, and they may contain other harmful substances like ultra-fine particles, chemicals that can damage the lungs and heavy metals.

MARIJUANA

The U.S. Surgeon General's Office says that, in 2016, a third of U.S. middle and high school students who ever used e-cigarettes had used marijuana in them. In 2017 and 2018, the National Institute on Drug Abuse reported a significant increase in marijuana vaping.

Vaping marijuana or THC oil can be more dangerous than smoking the drug, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration says. The oil contains a higher concentration of THC, the drug

in marijuana that causes users to get high. This increases the likelihood of addiction and negative health effects.

NEW CDC WARNING

In August 2019, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a warning in response to the rise in vaping-related lung sicknesses arising in two dozen states, The New York Times reported.

The warning, which urged people not to use vaping or e-cigarette products, specifically targeted vaping products purchased on the street such as nicotine or cannibas. It also warned people not to modify vaping or e-cigarette devices.

"E-cigarette products should not be used by youth, young adults, pregnant women, as well as adults who do not currently use tobacco products. If you use e-cigarette products, monitor yourself for symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, chest pain) and

promptly seek medical attention if you have concerns about your health," the CDC warning said.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Parents, as always, talk to your children. It doesn't have to be one big conversation. Maybe when you pass a vape shop while you're out running errands. Let your kids know how harmful e-cigarettes and nicotine can be. Also, learn about the shapes and forms of e-cigarettes and look for signs of use.

Educators, also be on the lookout for vaping in classrooms and around campus. Reject tobacco prevention programs sponsored by the tobacco industry, the CDC says, as they have been found to be ineffective. Instead, talk to your students about the risks associated with vaping both nicotine and marijuana.

All adults should set a good example by being tobacco free.

Prescription Medication

After marijuana and alcohol, the National Institute on Drug Abuse says prescription drugs are the most commonly misused substances by Americans 14 and older.

These drugs may be opioids, depressants, stimulants or other strong prescription medication. And they may not come from a dark alley. They might be coming from your medicine cabinet.

HOW DRUGS ARE MISUSED

When a doctor prescribes you medication, they take into account lots of things. Your height and weight. Previous medical conditions. How long it will take you to metabolize the drug. When a drug is misused, all of these safeguards go out the window.

According to the NIDA, drugs are misused when:

The drug is taken by someone other than who it was prescribed for, even if for the same reason.

The drug is taken in a way other than it was prescribed, such as crushing a pill and snorting it.

The drug is taken to get high rather than to cure a condition.

The drug is mixed with other drugs and/or alcohol.



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SIDE EFFECTS

We've all heard commercials for drugs that include a litany of side effects. Most of those are, at best, unpleasant. And at worst, you're dead. When prescription drugs are misused, the worst tends to happen.

Opioids, like painkiller oxycodone, can make you sick to your stomach and constipated.

They can also make it difficult to breathe and kill you. Stimulants like Adderall can make you feel paranoid. It can also make you feel hot and make your heart beat too fast. Depressants like barbiturates can cause sleepiness and shallow breathing. They can also cause you to stop breathing, especially when mixed with

alcohol.

More than half of the drug overdose deaths in the U.S. each year are caused by prescription drug misuse. Half of those are the result of opioid misuse.

LOCK YOUR MEDS

The same people who put on Red Ribbon Week, the

National Family Partnership, also sponsor the Lock Your Meds campaign (www.lockyourmeds.org) that encourages people to talk to children about prescription drug misuse. It also encourages adults to inventory and lock up their medicine cabinets. It also lists tips for safe prescription drug disposal.

Cough and Cold Medicine

It's not just prescription drugs you should be worried about. Many over the counter cough and cold medicines contain ingredients that are psychoactive when taken in higher-than-recommended doses, the National Institute on Drug Abuse says. Keep reading to learn more.

TYPES OF MISUSED COUGH AND COLD MEDICINES

Two commonly misused cough and cold medicines are better known as dextromethorphan (DXM) and promethazine-codeine cough syrup. The syrups are often mixed with soda in a concoction called lean, syrup, sizzurp or purple drank. Of the two, the NIDA says DXM is more likely to be abused by kids and teens because it can be purchased over the counter. It can be found in common drugs like Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold & Cough, Coricidin, Dimetapp DM, Robitussin, Triaminic, and NyQuil, Stanford Children's Health says.

DXM, in big doses, can cause hallucinations. Codeine-laced syrup acts like other opioid drugs. Over time, it takes larger

and larger doses to achieve the same effects. This is how addiction starts. Both kinds of medicine causes a slowdown in the central nervous system.

SIDE EFFECTS

DXM misuse can cause side effects such as a loss of coordination, a lack of oxygen to the brain and permanent brain damage. It can also cause

numbness, increased blood pressure, vision changes and slurred speech. Codeine cough syrups can cause slowed heart rate and breathing, which can lead to death.

As with any intoxicant, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration says that using illicit drugs or misusing legal ones can impair judgment and

lead to poor decisions and risky behaviors. And while the long-term effects of misusing cough and cold medicines aren't yet known, misusing these kinds of drugs can harm developing adolescent brains and can lead to lifelong addiction.

SIGNS OF USE

According to the DEA, more

than 100 over the counter medications contain DXM. Some signs of misuse include:

- Empty cough medicine boxes or bottles in a child's room, bathroom, backpack or locker;
- Child buys a lot of cough medicine even when they're not ill; and
- Missing bottles of cough medicine.



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