

Parents: Will Your Kids Use Drugs?

Like the risks involved in heart disease, there is research that shows that certain *risks* may be present in a young person's life that increase the possibility of that youth becoming involved in substance abuse or other problem behaviors. Likewise, there are *protections* that may exist in a young person's life or that we can cause to occur that act as a buffer for a child impacted by risks.



Why would I, as a parent, want to take the protection and risk quizzes on the following pages?

- Research has shown that kids want to listen to their parents about the important issues in their lives. Parents of elementary school students can use this quiz to gauge the protections and risks that exist in their childrens' lives related to substance abuse.



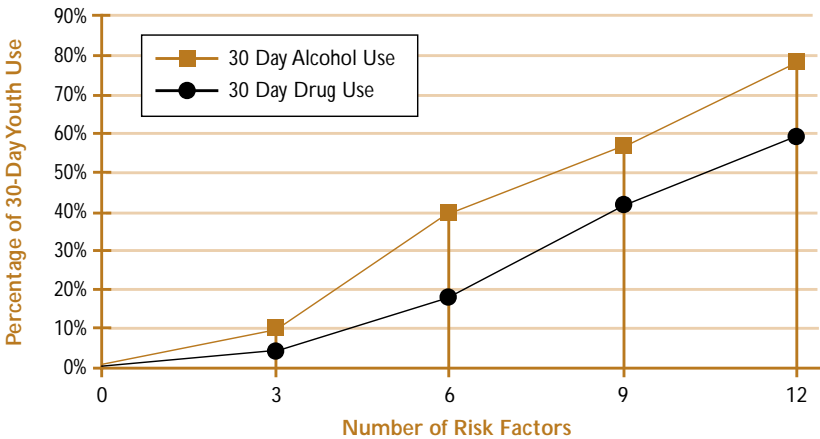
- The 1998 Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behaviors assessed students' attitudes and behaviors regarding, among other things, alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. Some recent significant findings are cause for concern:
 - Among 6th graders, half of those who drink get their alcohol at home and their parents know about it.
 - Nearly one out of every eight 12th grade students smokes at least 5 cigarettes a day.
 - Use of marijuana has risen sharply – more than 25% of tenth and twelfth grade students report current use of that drug.

Two important notes about this quiz:

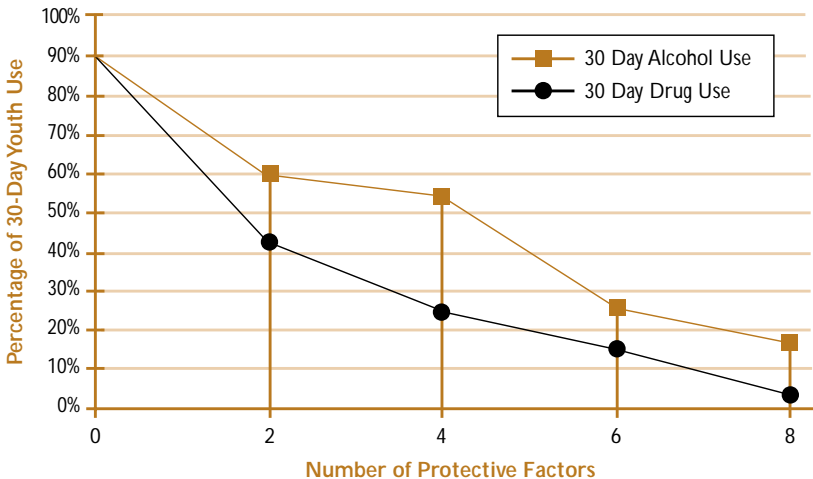
1. Alcohol and nicotine are drugs; anytime you see the word drug, it can refer to a beer or a cigarette, as well as "hard liquor" or illicit drugs.
2. If you have more than one child in this age group, you'll want to answer separately for them, as each child in a family will likely have different risks.

■ The Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behaviors results demonstrate the relationship between the number of risk and protective factors present in a young person's life and the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATOD). It is clear in graph 1 that, as the number of risks affecting an individual increases, the more likely he/she is to use substances. On the other hand, graph 2 shows that the presence of protective factors is clearly associated with lower rates of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use.

GRAPH 1
The Relationship of ATOD Use to Number of Risk Factors



GRAPH 2
The Relationship of ATOD Use to Number of Protective Factors





What protections already exist in your child's life?

Protection Quiz

The following statements refer to aspects of a child's life that have been shown to reduce the likelihood of problem behavior. How many are true for your child?

- 1. **The school and community have clearly stated expectations for behavior for my child.**
- 2. **I clearly oppose drug use and consistently reinforce my child's healthy choices.**
- 3. **My child has opportunities to make meaningful contributions to family, teachers, and/or friends.**
- 4. **She or he is learning the skills that are necessary to be successful as a family member, student, and friend.**
- 5. **My child is recognized or reinforced for skillful participation at home, at school, and in the community.**
- 6. **My child is a girl.**
- 7. **He or she is able to bounce back from disappointments or setbacks.**
- 8. **My child is good-natured. He/she enjoys people and receives positive attention from them.**

Make a note of the number of checks you've made.
Next, take a look at the Risk Quiz.

What is the risk that your child will abuse drugs?

Risk Quiz

Each statement below refers to a known risk related to the likelihood of problems with substance abuse. Is your child affected by these?

- 1. There is a history of alcohol, tobacco, or other drug addiction in my family.
- 2. My son was/is aggressive and difficult to control when he was/is five, six, or seven and he was/is withdrawn or hyperactive. (This is the only gender specific risk factor.)
- 3. I have not made my expectations regarding use of drugs clear to my child.
- 4. I am not always sure where my child is, the kinds of things he/she is doing, or who my child's friends are.
- 5. When my child breaks family rules, I sometimes let him/her get away with it, or sometimes I overdo the punishment.
- 6. People who live in our house:
 - Use illegal drugs around the children,
 - Drink alcohol heavily, even if recreationally, in the home,
 - Express positive benefits of substance use, or
 - Involve children in their drinking or other drug use, such as asking a child to get a beer or light a cigarette.

continued...

- 7. My child failed to achieve in school beginning at age nine, ten, or eleven.
- 8. My child strongly dislikes school or has a poor attendance record.
- 9. My child does not feel part of society, does not think that rules apply to him/her, does not believe in trying to be successful, or actively rebels against society.
- 10. My child exhibits behaviors such as thrill seeking, risk taking, and an inability to control his/her temper or needs.
- 11. My child's close friends use alcohol or other drugs.
- 12. My child began to use alcohol, marijuana, or other illegal drugs before age fifteen.
- 13. Drugs are readily available at school or in our neighborhood, or my child thinks they are.
- 14. People in my community think it is OK to use drugs, or to use alcohol frequently or heavily.
- 15. My child is at one of those normal transitions (grade school to middle school, or middle school to high school).
- 16. Families in my community move frequently.
- 17. My child is living in poverty and is having behavior and adjustment problems.
- 18. Most of the people in my neighborhood do not like where they live and do not like their neighbors. They do not feel they can make a difference in their own lives.

Make a note of the number of checks you've made. The higher the number, the greater the risk of problems with alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. Next, see what steps you can take to protect your child.

How Does Your Child Measure Up?

Compare the level of risks versus the amount of protections that exist in your child's life. (But remember, this is not a scientific assessment of your child. These are only statistical probabilities. The presence of many risk factors doesn't condemn your child to be a drug abuser, nor does a low score mean a life free of such problems.) These quizzes are intended to call your attention to the risk and protective factors in your child's life so that you can make changes where you see fit.



Can you find ways in your family, community, and school system to support the positive growth of your child as well as that of other children in your community?



Please

**turn the page
for some**

answers.

What Steps Can You Take To Protect Your Child?

- Provide lots of love, support, and encouragement and help a child learn to do something well.
- Establish and enforce rules against underage drinking.
- Model low-risk alcohol use and ask others in your community to do so as well.
- Discuss alcohol and tobacco advertising and marketing with youth.
- Talk to your kids about your expectations regarding the use of alcohol and other drugs.
- Get involved in your child's education.
- Support proposed public policy changes likely to make your community a safer, healthier, and positively challenging environment.



Call the Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse at
1-800-662-9111 for more information about
families and prevention.



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