

October's Healthy Habits Campaign Message is:

**Take responsibility for a drug free life!**

Being aware of beneficial and harmful substances is important for kids and adults alike. Students need to learn about the importance of living drug free and how to use common household products and medications safely. This information can help them make healthy and safe choices about the world around them and the situations they face.

To help you promote October's healthy habit, this packet contains:

<b>Substance Use Activities and Resources</b>	<b>Time needed:</b>	<b>Page Number:</b>
Teacher Resource: <i>Substance Use Basics</i>		1
<b>Educational Game:</b> Risky or Not?	10-15 Min.	2
<b>Academic Connections:</b> Substance Abuse Writing Prompt	10-15 Min.	3
Equipment: <i>"Risky" and "Not Risky" signs for "Risky or Not?" activity</i>		4-5

***The key points to focus on this month are:***

- **Common things we find around the house can hurt us if we're not careful.** Even things that seem healthy can be harmful, if we don't use them the right way. Be sure to follow the guidance of an adult or the directions on the package when using things like cleaning products or when taking prescription medications or common medications, like for a headache or cold.
- **Drugs are bad for our bodies, minds, and friendships.** Using drugs like cigarettes and alcohol can have immediate effects that make our bodies hurt, our minds fuzzy, and put our friendships at risk.
- **Making safe choices is the responsible thing to do.** Knowing about whether substances you encounter are helpful or harmful, and how to use helpful substances safely, can do a lot to help keep you healthy. Making safe choices is one important way to take responsibility for your health.

**Thank you for your help promoting the health of Chatham County's students this month!**

## Substance Abuse Basics

**What are some common beneficial substances?** Some common beneficial substances include over-the-counter and prescription medications. These substances are only beneficial when taken according to a doctor or nurses instructions, and/or the instructions included on the package.

**What are some common harmful substances?** Harmful substances include legal and illegal drugs and any other substances that are used in a way contrary to product directions or professional instructions (i.e., abusing over-the-counter or prescription drugs or inhaling common household products).

**How common is substance abuse among Chatham County's students?** A recent survey of 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students in Chatham County found that:

- 38.9% of those students had ever used alcohol
- 23% of those students had ever used tobacco
- 16% of those students had ever used marijuana
- 10.2% of those students had ever used an inhalant

More information about this survey can be found at: [www.chathamnc.org/schoolhealth](http://www.chathamnc.org/schoolhealth)

### What are the most common health effects of these legal and illegal drugs?

**Tobacco** – Smoking increases the risk of: developing coronary artery disease, developing lung and esophageal cancer, having a stroke, and suffering from emphysema, bronchitis, and reduced circulation.

For more information: <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/index.htm>

**Alcohol** – Drinking alcohol increases the risk of: developing liver disease, neurological problems, cancers such as mouth and throat cancer, and anxiety and depression. It is also associated with a variety of unintentional injuries (i.e., motor vehicle crashes, drowning, falls) as well as risky sexual behaviors and violence (intimate partner violence and child maltreatment). For more information: <http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/alcohol-use.htm>

**Marijuana** – Side effects of smoking or ingesting marijuana include: slowed thinking/reaction time, confusion, poor coordination, impaired memory and learning, increased heart rate, and anxiety. In the long-term, use of marijuana can increase respiratory infections. For more information: <http://drugabuse.gov/infofacts/marijuana.html>

**Inhalants** – Using inhalants can cause: headache, nausea or vomiting, slurred speech, loss of coordination, unconsciousness, cramps, weight loss, depression, memory impairment, damage to cardiovascular and nervous systems, and sudden death. For more information: <http://www.drugabuse.gov/infofacts/inhalants.html>

### What are some effective ways to talk with kids about the dangers of substance abuse?

From the Partnership for a Drug Free America - <http://parent.drugfree.org/Home/>

Emphasize current impacts of drug use more than future impacts. For example, focus more on the fact that cigarettes can make you cough and gag and make your hair and clothes smell bad, and less on the risk of cancer down the road.

Focus on how drug use can impact things that are important to your students. For example, that using drugs can make it hard for them to do things they like to do like playing sports, or that drug use can hurt their relationships with their friends and family.

<i>Educational Game</i>	<b>Risky or Not?</b>
<p><i>Standard Course of Study Objectives and Health Education Essential Standards</i></p>	<p>3<sup>rd</sup> grade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.01, 5.02, 5.03</li> <li>• 3.ATOD.1.2</li> </ul> <p>4<sup>th</sup> grade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.01</li> <li>• 4.ATOD.1.1</li> </ul> <p>5<sup>th</sup> grade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.02</li> <li>• 5. ATOD.1.1</li> </ul>
<p><i>Time Needed</i></p>	<p>10-15 minutes</p>
<p><i>Organization/ Equipment</i></p>	<p><i>Organization:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sign that says “risky” on one wall (e.g., something bad, scary, or harmful could happen to you if you do this) and a sign that says “not risky” on another wall</li> <li>• Students start sitting/standing in between the two signs/walls</li> </ul> <p><i>Equipment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The signs mentioned above (see pages 4-5)</li> <li>• List of substances (see below)</li> </ul>
<p><i>Rules/Directions</i></p>	<p>This exercise provides students with a chance to identify and think critically about what they consider to be “risky” and “not risky” substances.</p>
<p><i>Teacher Introduction</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell students that this exercise is to get them thinking about what substances might be harmful to them if they were to ingest them and why.</li> <li>• Introduce the concepts of “risky” (e.g., something bad, scary, or harmful could happen to you if you do this) and “not risky” (you can do this and stay safe). Go through one example of something that might be risky to do and something that would be safe, or ask students for examples.</li> <li>• Tell the students that when you name a substance, such as soda, each student will need to move to the “risky” area or the “not risky” area, depending on what they think about using the substance.</li> <li>• Set the ground rules for the students (Talking? No talking? Can they comment on where people are going?).</li> <li>• After each substance, one or two students should explain why they are standing where they are. The teacher will clear up misconceptions about the risk of substances if necessary throughout the game and help clarify in cases in which a substance could be either/or (for example, aspirin could be risky if it was not taken according to the directions, or orange juice could be risky if someone is allergic to it). Also, be sure to review the risks of alcohol and tobacco use, when substances in those categories are being discussed.</li> <li>• After the game, ask students what they will remember from this activity to help them make responsible and safe choices. Also, take this time to review the rules for taking medicine at school and ask students why they think these rules are in place given the game the just played.</li> </ul> <p><b>List of substances</b> (Use those that you feel are appropriate for your group or add your own): milk, aspirin, shampoo, motor oil, cough medicine, cleaning supplies from under the sink, marijuana, coffee, dishwashing liquid, wine, tea, orange juice, an unlabeled bottle of pills, your dad’s pain medication, bleach, soda, gasoline, cigarettes, drinks with caffeine, insulin for your grandma who has diabetes, hand sanitizer</p>
<p><i>Variations</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do as a written exercise</li> </ul>

<b>Academic Connections</b>	<b>Writing Prompt: What are some responsible choices you can make to stay safe and drug free?</b>
<i>Standard Course of Study Objectives and Health Education Essential Standards</i>	4 <sup>th</sup> grade: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.03</li> <li>• 4.ATOD.2.1</li> </ul> 5 <sup>th</sup> grade: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.02, 5.04</li> <li>• 5.ATOD.2.1</li> </ul>
<i>Time Needed</i>	10-15 minutes
<i>Organization/ Equipment</i>	<i>Organization:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is an individual activity at first</li> <li>• Students can pair up after they’ve written and discuss their thoughts</li> </ul> <i>Equipment:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journals</li> <li>• Pen/pencil for each student</li> </ul>
<i>Rules/Directions</i>	The purpose of this activity is for students to reflect on ways they can take responsibility for not using risky substances.
<i>Teacher Introduction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell students that they are going to do a writing exercise. At first they will respond to the writing prompt individually, and then will pair up to talk about their responses.</li> <li>• Ask students what some influences are that cause people to use tobacco and alcohol or make other irresponsible choices.</li> <li>• Tell students that they will reflect on the discussion they just had and think about their own lives, to respond to the following question. <b>The writing prompt is:</b> “What are some responsible choices you can make to stay safe and drug free?”</li> <li>• Clarify what the question is asking. Ask the students for some examples of what they might write about. Explain that the question is really about what choices they can make to keep them happy and healthy. Do fun activities like playing sports or hanging out with friends help with not using risky substances like alcohol and tobacco?</li> <li>• After students have 5-10 minutes to write, they can pair up to discuss their thoughts.</li> <li>• After they have talked in their pairs for a few minutes, have a few groups share what they talked about.</li> <li>• If there are misconceptions, try to clarify them.</li> </ul>
<i>Variations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skip the pairs discussion or do the whole activity in pairs - students can talk through their thoughts rather than writing. Students can rotate through numerous partners to hear different perspectives.</li> <li>• Lead a group brainstorm around the prompt. Then, as a class write a letter to the editor about the importance of staying drug free.</li> <li>• Ask groups of students to compile their ideas/writing to write a set of “instructions” for their peers/younger students to follow for staying responsible and drug-free. The instructions could be turned into posters for the classroom or the school hallways.</li> </ul>

**RISKY**

**NOT RISKY**