



March: National Drugs and Alcohol Facts Week

National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week (NDAFW) is March 17-23, 2025. Led by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), NDAFW is an annual health observance dedicated to educating youth about the science of drug use and addiction. The initiative is designed to empower youth to make informed choices about substance use and provides adults with tools to support them. Early use of drugs increases the chances of becoming addicted, which means education on preventing drug use can go a long way in reducing risks.

Surprising Facts

- 13 is the average age at which youth experiment with drugs.
- 70% of users who try an illegal drug before age 13 develop a substance abuse disorder within the next 7 years compared to 27% of those who try an illegal drug after age 17.
- 47% of youth use an illegal drug by the time they graduate high school.

Practical Tips for Preventing Substance Abuse in Youth

1. **Talk Early & Often:** Have open, non-judgmental conversations about the risk of drugs and alcohol. Encourage critical thinking – ask what they know, what they believe, and how they feel.
2. **Set a Positive Example:** Be mindful of how you discuss and use substances around youth. Model healthy coping mechanisms for stress such as exercise, mindfulness, or creative activities.
3. **Know the Warning Signs:** Changes in behavior, decline in school performance, secrecy, or mood swings may indicate a problem. Stay engaged in their lives – know their friends, interests, and online activities.
4. **Create a Supportive Environment:** Encourage involvement in sports, clubs, or hobbies that promote self-esteem and discipline. Foster an atmosphere where youth feel safe seeking guidance without fear of punishment.

Additional Resources

- National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics, [NCDAS: Substance Abuse and Addiction Statistics \[2023\]](#)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, [Substance Use Prevention Resources for Youth and College Students | SAMHSA](#)

