

# Be Aware: Prescription Opioids

Coach's Resource



Department of Community  
and Human Services

## Availability and Accessibility

- Commonly prescribed by doctors for teens as pain relief for sports injuries – 1 in 10 athletes report misusing painkillers. <sup>1</sup>
- Prescribed for oral surgery (wisdom teeth).
- Nearly half of students in grades 7 - 12 have been prescribed opioids. <sup>2</sup>
- Half of teens who misuse opioids get them from friends, family and acquaintances. <sup>4</sup>

## Names to look out for

Hydrocodone (Zohydro), Vicodin, Oxycodone, Oxycontin, Roxycodone, Percocet, Codeine, Morphine, Fentanyl

## What is the danger?

- Danger of Dependence: Opioids are highly addictive and users can quickly develop a tolerance, requiring higher and stronger doses, which can lead to heroin use.
- Physical Danger: Misuse of opioids can cause dramatic increases in blood pressure and heart rate, organ damage, difficulty breathing, seizures and even death.

## Signs of dependence and/or misuse:

- Drowsiness
- Nausea
- Constipation
- Slowed breathing
- Slurred speech
- Flushing of the face
- Small pupils
- Lower grades
- Loss of interest
- Skipping class
- Acting out in class
- Sleeping in class

If you notice any of these signs, please talk to athletes about their injury and treatment and encourage them to talk to their physician about alternatives to opioids. Do not wait.

## What can coaches do?

- Athletes should not be pressured to return to play too soon, as they may seek out pain medications to play through the pain.
- Early return to play can be associated with repeat injury and increased likelihood or length of prescribed opioid use.
- Communicate with athletes about injuries and treatment plans.
- Talk to athletes about the dangers of opioids and encourage them to talk to their physicians about alternate forms of pain relief.

## IMPORTANT

Allow athletes to heal after injuries. It is better to miss a game than risk missing a season – or worse.



## What to do in the event of an OPIOID OVERDOSE

### Know the signs

- |              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| Pale face    | Drowsiness      |
| Limp body    | Unconsciousness |
| Blueish lips | Slow breathing  |
| Vomiting     | Slow heart rate |
| Gurgling     | Muscle spasms   |

### CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY!

Do not wait! Call at the first signs!

### Be Prepared with Narcan

- Naloxone (Narcan) can immediately reverse an overdose.
- Available without prescription for free at all pharmacies and at the Alexandria Health Department (4480 King Street).
- Anyone who assists a person in need is protected from liability by the Good Samaritan Law.
- Narcan is NOT a substitute for emergency care. Those suffering from an overdose will still need emergency medical attention.

If you or someone you know needs help with addiction, call:

Outpatient Substance Use Treatment  
**703.746.3535**

Alexandria Residential Treatment Center  
**703.746.3636** Call 24/7

Opioid Treatment Program  
**703.746.3610**

Intake line for those who wish to stop using opioids/heroin.

## Recommend Alternatives

Encourage athletes to talk to their doctors and parents about opioid alternatives and safety. Below are questions athletes are encouraged to ask:<sup>3</sup>



- Is a prescription opioid necessary to treat my pain? Could an over the counter (OTC) pain reliever such as acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) in combination with a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) be just as effective? For chronic pain, can we explore alternative treatments such as physical therapy, biofeedback or massage?
- How many pills are being prescribed and over how long a period? Is it necessary to prescribe this quantity of pills?
- What are the risks of misuse? The prescriber should be able to answer this question for the specific drug being prescribed.
- Should I be screened to determine my risk of substance use disorder (SUD) before this medication is prescribed? If not, why not? Common risk factors include co-occurring mental health disorders such as depression or ADHD, as well as a family history of addiction or a recent trauma such as a death in the family or a divorce.

## Permanent Drop Boxes

56% of individuals who misused pain relievers got them from friends or relatives.<sup>4</sup> The best way to prevent this is to dispose of prescription drugs at Alexandria's permanent drop boxes.

### **The Neighborhood Pharmacy of Del Ray**

2204 Mount Vernon Avenue  
Drop off medication during the following times:

Monday - Friday: 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Saturday: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Sunday: 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

### **Inova Alexandria Hospital**

4320 Seminary Road - located in the visitor's lobby next to the cashier's window  
Drop off medication from 5 a.m. - 9 p.m.

- 1: High School Sports Participation and Substance Use: Differences by Sport, Race, and Gender. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse*. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1067828X.2012.750974#.U-Db39h0zIU>
- 2: Opioid analgesic use disorders among adolescents in the United States. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse*. 24, 28-36.
- 3: When Opioid Pain Relievers Are Prescribed For Your Child: What You Should Know. *Partnership for Drug-Free Kids*. [https://drugfree.org/parent-blog/parents-know-opioids-pain-relievers-prescribed-child/?&utm\\_campaign=when-opioids-prescribed](https://drugfree.org/parent-blog/parents-know-opioids-pain-relievers-prescribed-child/?&utm_campaign=when-opioids-prescribed)
- 4: 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings . *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*

# Be Aware: Vaping



## What is vaping?

- Vaping (or JUULing) is the use of e-cigarettes, a product that often contains nicotine and may also contain marijuana. Vaping devices produce an aerosol when the inserted liquid is heated.
- E-cigarettes come in a wide range of sizes. Some look like cigarettes while others look like USBs or pens.
- They often smell of fruit or candy due to flavoring.
- Includes: Mods, vapes, e-pens, e-cigs, e-hookahs, JUULs.



## The Guinea Pig Generation

Because they are new, there is no data on e-cigarettes' long term effects. However, vaping can cause coughing and wheezing and may exacerbate asthma. Teens who vape are at risk of health effects, both known and unknown. **The U.S. is dangerously addicting a whole generation to nicotine without knowing the cost.**

Vaping is relatively new so many teens do not know the risks. Some teens think vapes produce water vapor and do not know that one unit of 'E-juice' has as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes. Injuries and poisonings have also resulted from devices exploding and direct exposure to liquids.

## Vaping: Addressing the Threat

- In Virginia, individuals must be 21 to purchase e-cigarettes. Please note that some minors are illegally buying them online using a debit card, Visa gift card, PayPal or Amazon.
- E-cigarette users are 31% more likely to start smoking tobacco cigarettes.<sup>8</sup>
- Second hand 'vape' is a real threat and can pass the negative effects of e-cigarettes to bystanders.<sup>5</sup>
- 20% of those who smoke e-cigarettes will try tobacco cigarettes in the following year.<sup>4</sup>

## Who is vaping?



- In 2016, 7.5% of Alexandria high schoolers used e-cigarettes.<sup>1</sup>
- Nationally, e-cigarette use is growing quickly; as of 2018, 37.3% of U.S. 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported any vaping.<sup>2</sup>
- It is positively portrayed in social media and used by a wide range of high school social circles, including athletes.
- Because devices are easy to conceal, they are often used in school bathrooms, locker rooms and even classrooms.

## What is the danger?



- Nicotine use can impair prefrontal brain development in teens, leading to attention deficit disorder and poor impulse control.<sup>6</sup>
- Many flavored e-cigarettes, often marketed to young people, contain a chemical compound (diacetyl) that can cause permanent damage to the respiratory system.<sup>6</sup>
- The vapor contains known carcinogens and toxins as well as potentially toxic metal particles from the vaporizer.<sup>7</sup>
- Nearly 805 cases of severe lung illness, and 12 deaths, have been associated with vaping nicotine and dabbing (vaping marijuana).

## What can coaches do?



- Coaches need to make their stance on vaping clear and ensure athletes know it is not allowed.
- Most athletes do not know the dangers of vaping. Coaches need to inform athletes of the risks.
- Do not ignore overheard plans to vape or use e-cigarettes. If students do not hear from coaches on these issues, they will assume they are acceptable.
- Ask older non-vaping athletes to tell younger athletes why they abstain and encourage positive peer pressure.

- 1: Alexandria Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2016-2017 *Alexandria City Public School, Alexandria Health Department*. <https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/health/info/AlexYRBS.pdf>
- 2: Teens Using Vaping Devices in Record Numbers. *National Institute on Drug Abuse*. <https://www.drugabuse.gov/news-events/news-releases/2018/12/teens-using-vaping-devices-in-record-numbers>
- 3: Monitoring the Future Survey: High School and Youth Trends. *National Institute of Drug Abuse*. <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/monitoring-future-survey-high-school-youth-trends>
- 4: Youth Using Alternative Tobacco Products Are More Likely to Smoke 1 Year Later, including E-cigarettes and Smokeless Tobacco. *Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education*. <https://tobacco.ucsf.edu/youth-using-alternative-tobacco-products-are-more-likely-smoke-1-year-later-including-e-cigarettes-and-smokeless-tobacco>
- 5: E-Cigs and Second-Hand Vaping. *Scientific American*. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/e-cigs-and-second-hand-vaping/>
- 6: E-cigarettes: Good News, Bad News. *Harvard Health Publishing*. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/electronic-cigarettes-good-news-bad-news-2016072510010>
- 7: Electronic Cigarettes (E-cigarettes). *National Institute on Drug Abuse*. <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/electronic-cigarettes-e-cigarettes>
- 8: Teens using e-cigarettes may be more likely to start smoking tobacco. *National Institute on Drug Abuse*. <https://www.drugabuse.gov/news-events/news-releases/2015/08/teens-using-e-cigarettes-may-be-more-likely-to-start-smoking-tobacco>

# Be Aware: Underage Drinking

## Why student athletes are at risk:

- Athletes are more likely to abuse alcohol and participate in binge drinking.<sup>2</sup>
- Athletes are often encouraged by peers to consume alcohol to celebrate wins and kill the pain of defeat.
- Athletes remain one of the highest at-risk groups for substance abuse.

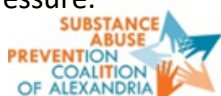
## What is the danger?

- Underage drinking is a leading contributor to death from injury, including drunk driving, the main cause of death for people under 21.<sup>3</sup>
- Athletes who drink regularly are twice as likely to be injured as non-drinkers.<sup>4</sup>
- Drinking alcohol prior to or during puberty can affect the hormonal balance necessary for normal development of organs, muscles and bones.<sup>5</sup>
- Underage drinking has long lasting effects on brain health.<sup>5</sup>
- Underage drinking plays a significant role in risky sexual behavior – increasing the risk of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

It is important that coaches demand student athletes do not drink alcohol.

## What can coaches do?

- Use your influence - Studies show coaches have a lot of influence in reducing drinking among their athletes.<sup>6</sup>
- Speak up - Athletes may think underage drinking is acceptable if coaches do not make it clear that this behavior is not allowed.
- Immediately address overheard plans for parties or post game activities that involve alcohol and tell athletes that these plans are forbidden.
- Have older non-drinking players on the team address younger athletes and discuss why they abstain from alcohol to encourage positive peer pressure.



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## A Trend to Get Behind

Among Alexandria City Public Schools high school students, underage drinking has decreased 42% since 2011. The majority of high schoolers don't drink. Help encourage your athletes to get behind this trend.<sup>1</sup>

## Know VA Drinking Laws

If you hear that parents are providing teens with alcohol, let them know the law: It is a Class 1 Misdemeanor for adults to provide alcohol to any person under age 21. There is a \$2500 fine per minor, loss of adult driver's license for one year and up to one year of jail time.

## Alcohol and Athletes A BAD COMBINATION

- Alcohol decreases athletic ability and judgment for 72 hours after drinking.<sup>7</sup>
- Alcohol decreases the ability to efficiently build, repair and maintain muscle mass.<sup>8</sup>
- Alcohol suppresses the immune system, so athletes who drink are sick more often.
- One night of binge drinking causes an athlete to lose the equivalent of 14 days of training.<sup>9</sup>

## Coaches Influence Athletes' Drinking Decisions

Recent studies report coaches actively communicating disapproval of underage drinking to their athletes significantly affects athletes' alcohol consumption.<sup>6</sup>

- 1: Alexandria Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2016-2017. *Alexandria City Public School, Alexandria Health Department*. <https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/health/info/AlexYRBS.pdf>
- 2: Binge Drinking and Sports Participation in College: Patterns Among Athletes and Former Athletes. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* . <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.900.5419&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- 3: Underage Drinking. *National Institute of Health*. <https://report.nih.gov/NIHfactsheets/ViewFactSheet.aspx?csid=21>
- 4: Alcohol and the Athlete. *Sports Medicine*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10840864>
- 5: Alcohol Alert: Underage Drinking. *National Institute of Health*. <https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/AA67/AA67.html>
- 6: Do coaches make a difference off the field? The examination of athletic coach influence on early college student drinking. *Addiction Research and Theory*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3955173/>
- 7: Alcohol and Athletic Performance. *National Collegiate Athletic Association*. <https://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/Alcohol%20and%20Athletic%20Performance%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>
- 8: Effect of Alcohol on sleep and nighttime plasma growth hormone and cortisol concentrations. *Endocrine Society*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7419664>
- 9: Pure Performance: the Way to Success. *The American Athletic Association*. <http://www.americanathleticinstitute.org/>

# Be Aware: Marijuana Use

## Who is using it?



- In Alexandria City Public Schools, 8% of 10th grade students and 21% of 12th grade students have used marijuana.<sup>1</sup>

The number one danger of marijuana is misinformation. Because it is legal in some states, teens falsely think that using marijuana lacks risks or dangers.

## Know the Facts:



### **Marijuana does not help make athletes play better on the**

**FACT:** Marijuana causes skill impairment that may last up to 24 to 36 hours after usage, but athletes may think they are performing better because of how the drug makes them feel.<sup>3</sup>

### **Synthetic cannabis is not safer than marijuana.**

**FACT:** Synthetic cannabis is very dangerous and consumption has resulted in numerous hospitalizations. These drugs have been reported to cause hallucinations, increased heartbeat and blood pressure, aggressive behavior, anxiety, muscle spasms and vomiting.<sup>3</sup>

### **Smoking marijuana is harmful to your health.**

**FACT:** Smoking marijuana can be more harmful than using tobacco and can deliver more carcinogens. In terms of lung cancer risk, one joint of

## What can coaches do?



- Coaches have a big impact on athletes' lives. Make it clear that the use of marijuana and other drugs is not allowed.
- Educate athletes about the health risks associated with marijuana and the damage it can cause to their academic and athletic performance.
- Inform students of both school and legal consequences that are at stake for possession of marijuana.
- Encourage positive peer pressure by having older student athletes talk to younger athletes about why they abstain from drugs.
- Talk to your team - 89% of student athletes report coaches have talked to them about drinking and substance use, yet about 30% of athletes with



all about these issues with the  
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and Human Services

## A Trend to Get Behind

In Alexandria City Public Schools, 14% of students currently use marijuana. This is a 42% decrease since 2011. Help encourage student athletes to get behind this trend!<sup>1</sup>

## Marijuana is Illegal

- In Virginia, possession of marijuana can result in up to 30 days in jail and a substantial fine.
- Intent to distribute marijuana has severe consequences ranging from one to 30 years in prison.

## Marijuana

- High school drop-out and failure rates increase with marijuana use.<sup>8</sup>
- Students who regularly use marijuana by age 15 are more likely to develop mental illness such as schizophrenia.<sup>6</sup>
- About 1 in 6 teens who regularly use marijuana become addicted.<sup>5</sup>
- After alcohol, marijuana is the leading drug found in the blood of drivers after crashes.<sup>7</sup>
- Mixing alcohol and marijuana has an increasingly negative effect on impaired driving.<sup>7</sup>

"It's important for coaches to take an active part in their players' lives— both on and off the field. Positive role models are needed in our children's lives and coaches have a special opportunity to deliver a powerful and consistent message about the dangers of drugs."



Darrell Green: Defensive  
Back Washington Redskins

- 1: Alexandria Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2016-2017. *Alexandria City Public School, Alexandria Health Department*. <https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/health/info/AlexYRBS.pdf>
- 2: Cannabis use and risk of lung cancer: a case–control study. *European Respiratory Journal*. <http://erj.ersjournals.com/content/31/2/280?maxtos=>
- 3: Marijuana FAQ. *USADA*. <https://www.usada.org/substances/marijuana-faq/>
- 4: Mind, Body and Sport: Substance use and abuse. *NCAA*. <http://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/mind-body-and-sport-substance-use-and-abuse>
- 5: What You Need to Know About Marijuana Use in Teens. *CDC*. <https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/factsheets/teens.htm>
- 6: Cannabis and Mental Health. *British Medical Journal*. <https://www.bmj.com/content/325/7374/1183>
- 7: Drug Facts: Drugged Driving. *National Institute on Drug Abuse*. <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/drugged-driving>
- 8: Marijuana Use and High School Dropout: The Influence of Unobservables. *Health Economics*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2910149/>



# Be Aware: Tobacco

## Why are athletes at risk?

- High school athletes are more likely to use smokeless tobacco (chew, dip, snuff) than non-athletes.<sup>7</sup>
- The more sports an athlete plays, the more likely they are to use smokeless tobacco.<sup>2</sup>
- Despite hurting athletic performance, some student athletes still smoke cigarettes.

## What is the danger?

### Long term

- Smoking has been proven to lead to cancer of the lungs, throat and mouth.
- Tobacco kills more people than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders and suicides combined.<sup>4</sup>

### Short term

- Rapid addiction in youth due to on-going brain development.<sup>5</sup>
- Decreased physical performance due to stunted lung growth, coughing and increased phlegm.<sup>6</sup>
- More shaky movements, slower and more irregular movements and less accurate overall performance.<sup>6</sup>
- Hindrance of testosterone production in both men and women and interference with the body's capacity to build muscle.<sup>6</sup>

Smokeless tobacco is not just a threat for baseball players. It has a high usage rate in football, hockey and other sports.<sup>6</sup> Talk to athletes in all sports about smokeless tobacco.

## Prevention:

- Coaches can influence athletes not to use tobacco.
- Talk to athletes about the health effects of tobacco. Remember they will relate more to messages about the immediate effects of tobacco use than the long-term health effects.
- To encourage positive peer pressure have older athletes talk to younger athletes about why they do not use tobacco.



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## A Trend to Get Behind

Among Alexandria City Public Schools students, 3% currently use cigarettes. Help encourage student athletes to get behind this trend! <sup>1</sup>

Additionally, as of July 1, 2019, it is illegal to purchase any tobacco products in Virginia before age 21

## Smokeless Tobacco The Threat

- Use of smokeless tobacco is higher among athletes.<sup>2</sup>
- Smokeless tobacco delivers more nicotine than cigarettes.
- It leads to numerous types of cancers.



## Vaping is Changing Old Patterns

Players who coaches claim would "never smoke" are now using e-cigarettes because players believe they are "safe."

Within one year, 20% of those who "vape" or use e-cigarettes will use tobacco cigarettes.<sup>3</sup>

## Expose the Myth Nicotine and Sports

Despite misconceptions, nicotine is not a performance enhancing drug and can negatively impact athletic performance.

Nicotine causes less accurate physical movements and reduces testosterone in both men and women, interfering with the body's ability to build muscle.<sup>6</sup>



- 1: Alexandria Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2016-2017. *Alexandria City Public School, Alexandria Health Department*. <https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/health/info/AlexYRBS.pdf>
- 2: High School Athletes Using Smokeless Tobacco More than Non-athletes. *Center for Disease Control and Prevention*. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2015/p0903-athlete-tobacco.html>
- 3: Youth Using Alternative Tobacco Products Are More Likely to Smoke 1 Year Later, including E-cigarettes and Smokeless Tobacco. *Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education*. <https://tobacco.ucsf.edu/youth-using-alternative-tobacco-products-are-more-likely-smoke-1-year-later-including-e-cigarettes-and-smokeless-tobacco>
- 4: The Toll of Tobacco in the United State. *Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids*, <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us>
- 5: Short- and Long-Term Consequences of Nicotine Exposure during Adolescence for Prefrontal Cortex Neuronal Network Function. *Cold Spring Harbor Perspectives in Medicine*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3543069/>
- 6: A Coach's Guide to Spit Tobacco Education. *Alberta Health Services*. <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/rl/hi-rl-tobac-spit-module-4.pdf>
- 7: Combustible and Smokeless Tobacco Use Among High School Athletes—United States. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6434a2.htm?s\\_cid=mm6434a2\\_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6434a2.htm?s_cid=mm6434a2_w)