

Drinking, smoking and cannabis use among young people.

What you can do
as a parent,
teacher or
vocational trainer.

Dear parents, teachers and vocational trainers



As a mother, father, teacher or vocational trainer, you can make important contributions to prevent or curtail the development of addiction. Addiction prevention cannot solve addiction problems, but it can prevent or delay their emergence. It can be successful as a part of everyday life: in the family, at school, in vocational training, in a youth or sports club, in the grocery store and in a restaurant. Effective addiction prevention needs all of us.

There are no simple measures to keep young people away from problematic use of addictive substances. However one thing is common to all prevention efforts: they require a clear attitude from every adult. Intervention is expected, because looking away merely encourages young people's risky use of addictive substances.

About this brochure

The suggested tips show a range of proven modes of action. Undoubtedly, there are also further options worth considering. In this brochure, you will find information and prevention tips to deal with alcohol, tobacco and cannabis - the three addictive substances most commonly consumed by young people. Medicines are also quite often taken by young people. In most cases their use is justified, but sometimes it is problematic. For more information about the misuse of medicines and other addictive substances, please visit www.suchtpraevention-zh.ch.

Your information centers for addiction prevention in the Canton of Zurich.

What you can do.

Make time for young people.

It is normal that adults sometimes do not understand young people. Share your experiences with young people with your acquaintances and friends and learn of theirs. Above all: make time for children and adolescents.

Talk with young people about use of addictive substances.

Avoiding talking about drinking, smoking and cannabis use to avoid conflict is not successful in the long run. Point out abnormal behaviour. Children and adolescents need adults to react to problems. Young people are interested in addictive substances, yet they are often not well informed. Inform yourself about the specific risks of individual substances.

Support a critical attitude to addictive substances.

Children and adolescents watch how adults behave with addictive substances. As a mother, father, teacher or vocational trainer, you are always a role model. Therefore ask yourself about your own consumption and do not evade discussion of it. Young people's attitudes towards addictive substances use are not fixed. Different views about it often exist within the same group. You can support young people to develop a critical attitude and to resist peer pressure. Encourage them to develop a critical attitude towards cannabis use and smoking, and to moderate their alcohol consumption.

Try to limit consumption.

The earlier young people begin using addictive substances, the greater the danger of dependence. Therefore it is important to delay the onset. If young people already drink, smoke or use cannabis, you can try – for instance with the tips in this brochure – to limit their consumption. Individuals who can restrict their use still have their consumption under control to some extent.

Set binding limits.

At school, in training and in the family, teachers, trainers or parents must set young people clear limits on the consumption of addictive substances. It is important that you implement rules and react if they are not respected. Young people generally accept clear rules. However, they often rebel against an inconsistent attitude or unjust punishment.

Ensure that young people don't obtain addictive substances.

The sale or free distribution of tobacco and alcohol to under-16s is prohibited. React if you realise that the law is being violated: your attitude as a customer will have effect on the sales staff. If your child is sold alcohol or tobacco or given them free of charge, you should also consider reporting the offence. Talk with young people about why these legal regulations make sense.

Get support.

Sometimes as an adult one reaches one's limits. Do not hesitate to get advice from your circle of friends, from information centers for addiction prevention and youth education professionals, or from addiction counselling services. Often a conversation with the young person and an additional neutral person will help further. If you admit that you can no longer cope alone, and ask for help, that is an important and courageous step.

Alcohol: What you should know.



How often do young people drink alcohol?

Alcohol consumption among young people is relatively common. One study showed the following results for the 14 - to 15-year-old age group: Approximately 43% of boys and girls in the Canton of Zurich had drunk alcohol in the 30 days before the survey. 13% of boys and 15% of girls drank alcohol at least once a week. 17% of them had been really drunk at least twice in their life (HB-SC, 2007).

How does alcohol work?

Alcohol consumption can initially lead to positive feelings such as relaxation, pain relief, disinhibition or an elevated mood. However, these are followed, depending on the dose, by long-lasting, unpleasant side effects such as lassitude, restlessness, irritability, depression or a hangover. These side effects can be stopped by drinking alcohol again. This constitutes the addictive potential of alcohol, though personal predisposition also plays a role. Those

affected can, in the course of time, be trapped in a vicious circle and become alcohol dependent. The body becomes accustomed to alcohol, and tolerates still larger quantities of it. Because of this increased tolerance, more and more must be consumed to obtain the sought effects.

Why do young people consume alcohol?

Young people are generally more ready to take risks and are less experienced than adults. Pushing their limits is attractive to them and is seen as part of becoming an adult. Alcohol is readily available, and drinking alcohol is considered by many young people to be cool. They want to appear to be grown up, and think they do so with a beer or a drink. Peer pressure also plays a role: young people think that they are more acceptable to their peers if they drink together. Young people themselves report in surveys that they drink for pleasure and relaxation.

Is alcohol consumption problematic?

Young people mostly don't drink regularly, but nonetheless may drink large amounts of alcohol (ex. binge drinking at parties). This pattern of consumption is especially dangerous, because complete drunkenness is "intoxication" from the medical point of view, and can be fatal. Since they don't like beer or wine so much because of their bitter taste, young people often mix spirits with soft drinks. This increases the risk of intoxication because young people can't accurately estimate how strong their drink is. Young people react more strongly to alcohol than adults. Due to their often lower body weight, they feel the effects of even small quantities and become drunk more quickly. They often don't allow for the fact that it takes about an hour for them to feel the full effect. Other problematic consequences are increased aggressiveness, and hence an increased likelihood of violence, as well as increased risks of accidents: very often when young people are in-

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Involved in accidents, alcohol is involved. If young people's organs such as their brain or liver have not yet fully developed, alcohol may severely affect their overall development.

Alcohol dependence can develop much faster than in adults, i.e., within a few months. Problematic consumption in youth increases the risk of future alcohol dependence.

Legal regulations

Sale and free distribution

- The sale and free distribution to **under 18 year-olds** of the following drinks are prohibited:
 - a) Alcopops: spirit mixers (products that contain distilled spirits) and other alcoholic sweet drinks (designer drinks).
 - b) All distilled spirits (liquor, spirits) such as cherry brandy, vodka, aperitifs, rum, etc.
- The sale and free distribution to **under 16 year-olds** of the following is prohibited:

All alcoholic beverages, including wine, beer, cider, and other fermented beverages.
- The active party principle is applicable under criminal law. Whoever has sold alcohol, or distributed it free of charge to the child / the young people, is culpable.

Helpful websites

- www.suchtpraevention-zh.ch
- www.fachstelle-asn.ch
- www.zuefam.ch
- www.sucht-info.ch

As a parent

- Set an example of moderate and enjoyable consumption of alcohol.
- On special occasions, such as a family celebration, you can let your adolescent children carefully try alcohol in a controlled setting.
- Never give your son/daughter alcohol without supervision.
- Explain the risks of alcohol consumption to your son/daughter. Point out in particular the increased risk of accidents and the fact that under the influence of alcohol the risk of sexual transgressions and violence increases.
- Only lend your son/daughter your car with clear conditions: No alcohol / no drugs when driving.
- If stores or restaurants sell your son/daughter alcohol illegally, you should tell the sales personnel and, if it happens again, you should report it. This also applies if someone gives your child alcohol free of charge.

As a teacher or vocational trainer

- As a primary or secondary school teacher, apply bans consistently.
- Act according to the school's regulations concerning addictive substances or – if there are none – push hard to get them drawn up.
- Forbid any alcohol in the workplace also on the grounds of accident prevention.
- Take your function as a role model seriously.
- Incorporate the theme of alcohol consumption and its consequences in your teaching.
- Include parents in responsibility for alcohol-related issues.
- Consider reporting an offence if it turns out that someone sold alcohol illegally to students of your school.

Tobacco: What you should know.



SUCHT BEGINNT IM ALLTAG.
PRÄVENTION AUCH.

How many young people smoke?

In Switzerland, the number of smokers is steadily declining. Less than three out of ten people smoke; slightly more men than women smoke. Moreover, half the population of Zurich has never smoked at all.

Among young people smoking is not the norm either and has also declined slightly in recent years. Among 14- to 15-year-olds in the Canton of Zurich, four out of five boys do not smoke. More girls of the same age smoke, but at least three out of four do not smoke. About 45% of 14- to 15-year-olds who do smoke, however, are regular (daily) smokers (HBSC, 2007).

How does nicotine work?

Cigarettes are industrial products made from tobacco, and contain many additives. The nicotine in tobacco is a fast-acting neurotoxin. To have an effect, the body must first get used to nicotine. Smoking can be relaxing or stimulating. One becomes quickly physically dependent on nicotine. The earlier a person

starts smoking, the harder it becomes later to quit. Young people underestimate dependence and believe that quitting is easy. Girls, especially, often think that smoking can control their weight. This, however, is influenced primarily by diet and exercise. In any case, smoking is more harmful than being a little overweight.

Why do young people smoke?

By smoking, young people think they can look grown up. In an environment where smoking is disapproved of or prohibited, they can rebel with a cigarette. Many young people try cigarettes because their best friends do so too. Young people have the misconception that most people of the same age smoke. Smokers also have an ambivalent relationship to smoking. Half of all 15-year-old smokers admit that they would like to stop.

Is smoking problematic?

Each cigarette smoked does harm. Tar, carbon monoxide and many other toxic substances such as cadmium and arsenic are inhaled with every cigarette. One cigarette is enough to irritate the respiratory tract. Every cigarette reduces athletic ability, even among young people. Lung damage caused by smoking is usually incurable. Lung cancer is mostly due to smoking and is practically always fatal. One of every two persons who smoke one or two packs of cigarettes a day from the age of 15 onwards dies prematurely from the consequences of smoking. In the short-term smoking also has consequences. In cases of asthma, attacks are triggered, and in cases of colds the recovery process is delayed. Not only bad breath and unhealthy skin, but also stinking hair and clothes are other negative effects of smoking. Smoking also harms

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the health of other people who are present (passive smoking). Water pipes and other forms of tobacco use are equally problematic.

Legal regulations

Sale and free distribution

- In the Canton of Zurich, it is forbidden to sell cigarettes and tobacco products to young people under the age of 16.
- To hand over or to pass on cigarettes to young people under 16 is also forbidden.

Schools, public buildings, working places

- Smoking in public buildings (schools, cinemas, sports facilities, restaurants) is prohibited in the Canton of Zurich. Smoking is only allowed in enclosed, specially designated smoking areas.
- For primary and secondary school pupils, smoking anywhere on the school premises, on school trips and at school camps is totally prohibited.
- Under federal law, young people are also entitled to a smoke-free workplace.

Advertising prohibitions

- Throughout Switzerland, tobacco advertising in the vicinity of school buildings is forbidden.
- Cigarette advertising should not be aimed at young people.

Helpful websites

- www.zueri-rauchfrei.ch
- www.feelok.ch (for young persons)
- www.fittoquit.rauchfreieschule.ch
- www.sucht-info.ch

As parents

- Express a negative attitude to smoking.
- Inform yourself and talk to your son/daughter about the problems of smoking. Be persistent, but avoid preaching and making demands which are hard to fulfil.
- Set limits, come to agreements. Do not tolerate your children's smoking in your home, or in your presence, likewise smoking by any of your children's friends. Respond clearly and consistently to breaches of these rules.
- Support your son/daughter in not smoking or in quitting it – with incentives or rewards if necessary.
- Get outside professional help and support for problems in time.

As smoking parents

- Talk with your children also about the negative side of your own tobacco consumption.
- Don't smoke in the presence of your children.
- Don't smoke inside the house or in the car.
- Also ask your guests not to smoke.

As teachers or vocational trainers

- As a primary or secondary school teacher, implement the ban consistently.
- Demand - if they do not yet exist - common rules for a smoke-free school environment.
- Bring tobacco prevention into lessons with an interactive approach and specialised teaching aids.
- Strengthen the positive image of non-smoking, e.g. by participating in the «non-smoking experiment» class competition.
- Refer young people to aids that help to quit smoking.
- Involve parents in activities for tobacco prevention.
- Consider reporting an offence if it turns out that someone has sold tobacco to students under the age of 16.

Cannabis: What you should know.



How many young people smoke cannabis?

Many young people try cannabis. For most of them, it is just once or rarely. In the Canton of Zurich, 30% of 14- to 15-year-old boys and girls have tried cannabis at least once (HBSC, 2007). Slightly more than 9% of 15- to 24-year-olds in Switzerland smoked cannabis regularly, i.e. daily, in 2007 indicating a problematic use (ESPAD, 2007). The consumption of cannabis has tended to decrease in recent years.

What is cannabis?

Cannabis is the name for Indian hemp which contains the psychoactive substance tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Nowadays, because of enhanced indoor cultivation techniques, the THC content is often much higher than it was 20 years ago. Resin extracted from the flowers of hemp is called hashish. The flowering tops and leaves of the same plant are called marijuana. Marijuana is also known as "grass". Cannabis products have a sweetish odour. Most commonly cannabis is mixed with tobacco and smoked as a joint. Less commonly, it is processed into cookies or tea. Young

people obtain cannabis mostly through their friends. Quite a number of users grow their own hemp.

How does cannabis work?

If cannabis is smoked in a joint, the effect will come on within a short time. When mixed with food or drink, it takes longer until the onset. The effect depends on the quantity and nature of the cannabis ingested, on the individual's constitution, and on their current physical and mental condition. Cannabis intensifies or lightens existing moods and feelings. In addition, it alters and impairs perception, especially the abilities to respond and concentrate, as well as attention and short-term memory. Cannabis is not harmless, but if moderately consumed, it is hardly more harmful than alcohol. It does not make one physically dependent, but can lead to psychological dependence. Cannabis is not an entry drug to "hard" drugs.

Why do young people consume cannabis?

Experimentation with addictive substances is a phenomenon that occurs frequently in adolescence. Young people often use cannabis with friends and enjoy the feeling of belonging to a group. Above all they are motivated by curiosity and the search for pleasure and relaxation.

Is cannabis use problematic?

Cannabis use is generally problematic for very young adolescents (under 15) and should be taken as a clear warning sign by those educationally responsible. Cannabis is often more harmful than tobacco to the respiratory organs and the cardiovascular system because the smoke is inhaled very deeply. The dosage, and hence the effect, is difficult to estimate since the THC levels can vary greatly. High doses can cause panic attacks and anxiety. Memory performance and reaction time are affected by canna-

What to do?

bis use. It is therefore dangerous to drive or operate machinery under the influence of cannabis. Cannabis is illegal in Switzerland and its use has consequences under criminal law (including fines) from which young people are not exempt. With regular use of cannabis, concentration, attention and learning ability decrease, and longer term and more intensive use may lead to psychological dependence. For people with psychological or neurological problems, cannabis use can trigger or reinforce depression or other serious mental illnesses.

What does problematic consumption look like?

Problematic cannabis use among young people doesn't just develop from one day to the next. Signs of problematic use could be:

- A sudden and marked decline of performance and frequent absences from school or work.
- Withdrawal and reticence, a sudden change of friends.
- Lack of enthusiasm and apathy and/or mood swings.
- Smoking cannabis becomes central in life: without cannabis, relaxation, falling asleep, or working are impossible.

Legal regulations

Cannabis is an illegal narcotic. Its cultivation, sale, possession and consumption are prohibited. On the road there is zero-tolerance: anyone who is caught driving a vehicle under the influence of cannabis must give up his or her driving license immediately for an indefinite period.

Helpful websites

- www.suchtprevention-zh.ch
- www.feelok.ch (for young persons)
- www.sucht-info.ch

As a parent

If you assume or know that your son/daughter uses cannabis:

- Speak to your child about it.
- Do not panic or over-react to known or suspected cannabis smoking, and don't overwhelm your son/daughter with reproaches.
- Point out the risks of cannabis use.
- Make your point of view known, and negotiate rules with your son/daughter.
- Seek support from a counselling centre if you realise that the situation is getting worse. Let your son/daughter know where counselling is available.

As a teacher or vocational trainer

- Enforce the prohibition of cannabis use anywhere on school premises, at school events and in camps.
- Do all you can to ensure a unified response in cases of legal violations in school or at work.
- Prohibit cannabis use during working hours also on the grounds of accident prevention.

Teachers or vocational trainers often notice problematic cannabis use in young people before their parents do because their performance in school or training drops. It is important that you respond to these, as well as to other, symptoms of crisis among young people

- Establish a dialogue with young people if you detect signs of problematic development, and inform their parents.
- Point out the availability of counselling centres to young people and their parents.
- Act as a teacher in accordance with your school's policy of early intervention, or do all you can do to develop such a policy.

Information centres for addiction prevention in the Canton of Zurich

There are eight regional information centres for addiction prevention in the Canton of Zurich which are responsible for basic preventive measures in the regions and are mainly financed by the municipalities. In addition, there are eight specialised information centres for addiction prevention operating across, and financed by, the Canton. All of these are at your disposal and welcome your inquiries.

Regional information centres for addiction prevention

Suchtpräventionsstelle der Bezirke Affoltern und Dietikon
Grabenstr. 9
8952 Schlieren
044 731 13 21
supad@sd-l.ch
www.supad.ch

Suchtpräventionsstelle des Bezirks Andelfingen
Landstr. 36
8450 Andelfingen
052 304 26 60
suchtpraevention@jsandelfingen.zh.ch
www.rsp-s-andelfingen.ch

Suchtpräventionsstelle für den Bezirk Horgen, Samowar
Bahnhofstr. 24
8800 Thalwil
044 723 18 17
info@samowar.ch
www.samowar.ch

Suchtpräventionsstelle des Bezirks Meilen, Samowar
Hüniweg 12
8706 Meilen
044 924 40 10
meilen@samowar.ch
www.samowar.ch

Suchtpräventionsstelle Winterthur
Technikumstr. 1, Postfach
8402 Winterthur
052 267 63 80
suchtpraevention@win.ch
www.suchtpraev.winterthur.ch

Suchtpräventionsstelle Zürcher Oberland
Gerichtsstr. 4, Postfach
8610 Uster
043 399 10 80
info@sucht-praevention.ch
www.sucht-praevention.ch

Suchtpräventionsstelle Zürcher Unterland
Erachfeldstr. 4
8180 Bülach
044 872 77 33
info@praevention-zu.ch
www.praevention-zu.ch

Suchtpräventionsstelle der Stadt Zürich
Röntgenstr. 44
8005 Zürich
044 444 50 44
suchtpraevention@zuerich.ch
www.stadt-zuerich.ch/suchtpraevention

Canton-wide specialised information centres for addiction prevention

Fachstelle ASN, Alkohol- und Drogenprävention im Strassenverkehr
Ottikerstr. 10
8006 Zürich
044 360 26 00
info@fachstelle-asn.ch
www.fachstelle-asn.ch

Fachstelle Suchtprävention Mittelschulen und Berufsbildung
Neumühlequai 10
8090 Zürich
043 259 22 76
infosuchtpraevention@mba.zh.ch
www.fs-suchtpraevention.zh.ch

FISP, Fachstelle für interkulturelle Suchtprävention und Gesundheitsförderung
Kehlhofstr. 12
8003 Zürich
043 960 01 60
fisp@bluewin.ch
www.fisp-zh.ch

Institut für Sozial- und Präventivmedizin der Universität Zürich, Abt. Prävention und Gesundheitsförderung Kanton Zürich
Hirschengraben 84
8001 Zürich
044 634 46 29
praev.gf@ifspm.uzh.ch
www.gesundheitsfoerderung-zh.ch

Pädagogische Hochschule Zürich
Fachstelle Suchtprävention Volksschule
Rämistr. 59
8090 Zurich
043 305 59 04
barbara.meister@phzh.ch
www.suchtpraevention.phzh.ch

infoDoc Suchtprävention Radix
Stampfenbachstr. 161
8006 Zürich
044 360 41 05
infodoc@radix.ch
www.infodoc-radix.ch

ZüFAM, Zürcher Fachstelle zur Prävention des Alkohol- und Medikamenten-Missbrauchs
Langstr. 229
8031 Zürich
044 271 87 23
info@zuefam.ch
www.zuefam.ch

Züri Rauchfrei
Fachstelle für Tabakprävention
Zähringerstr. 32
8001 Zürich
044 262 69 66
info@zurismokefree.ch
www.zueri-rauchfrei.ch

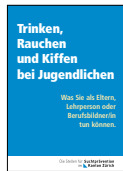
Further information
www.suchtpraevention-zh.ch

Translation:
Andrew Fellows

Ordering further information material

Limited quantities of information material may be ordered free within the Canton of Zurich only. Pricing information for purchases from outside the Canton or for larger quantities may be obtained from the Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine: 044 634 46 29, praev.gf @ ifspm.uzh.ch

For parents, teachers, vocational trainers



“Drinking, smoking, and cannabis use among young people. What you can do as a parent, teacher, or vocational trainer.”

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The pictures in this brochure, and others, can be ordered as posters or postcards from www.suchtpraevention-zh.ch



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Bezug via Internet:
<http://suchtpraevention.phzh.ch>

Für Eltern: Empfohlene Angebote von Sucht Info Schweiz



Sucht Info Schweiz bietet zu Alkohol, Rauchen und Cannabis je eine kostenlose A4-Broschüre mit Tipps zum Gespräch mit Jugendlichen an. Auch kann der regelmässig erscheinende Elternbrief mit Tipps zur Suchtprävention kostenlos bestellt werden (per E-Mail oder Post). Ansicht und Bestellung unter: www.sucht-info.ch, 021 321 29 11

Die Stellen für **Suchtprävention**
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