



Get answers. Get help. Get better.

TEEN BRAINOLOGY – November 2019 – The following is designed to be used for weekly emails or other communications to parents or on your school website.

For more information: <https://www.drugeducation.org/resources>

WEEK 1

SITUATION: Your child is charging her computer downstairs and you notice an odd-looking flash drive. You ask her about it and she says it is for a Juul, a very safe vaping device, explaining that a lot of people at school have them. Something is telling you this is not the whole story...and you are right!

SOLUTION: *Juul is a sleek, rectangular vaping device that delivers a concentrated form of nicotine. Not only are Juul vaporizers small enough to fit in the palm of your hand, they can be charged when plugged into a laptop's USB port, making it easy for students to pass them off as flash drives in class. One JUUL pod contains as much addictive nicotine as a pack of cigarettes. Nicotine exposure during adolescence can harm the brain. There are **NO** Juul pods that do not contain nicotine. It is illegal for anyone under the age of 19 to buy, sell, use or possess a vaping device.*

*There is an inherent danger in youth use of any type of vaping device. These negative risks range from introducing/encouraging the habit of smoking to putting something other than air in your lungs to even glamorizing the act of "smoking". All vape juices contain a significant amount of propylene glycol and vegetable glycerin, a compound used to lower the freezing point of water. Used to de-ice airplanes and airplane runways, in the production of plastics, polyurethane and in some antifreeze. **NOT JUST STEAM AND FLAVORING.** E-cigarettes contain nicotine and toxic chemicals, including acetaldehyde, acrolein and formaldehyde, that can cause lung and cardiovascular disease. Nationally, the CDC warns that there have been over 1,600 cases of vaping-related lung injury reported, with 34 deaths. Educate yourself, then talk to your teen about the risks of vaping and the importance of making healthy choices.*

WEEK 2

SITUATION: Your child tells you "Everyone is going to the party I am the only one not going. I'm never going to have any friends and it is all because of you."

SOLUTION: *It is not your responsibility to make your child's friends – but it is your job to help him/her grow up in a way that **THEY** can make good friends. The pressure to conform and be accepted will grow substantially during the teenage years and your child may feel compelled to make choices based on their need for acceptance. Your best defense against this social influence is instilling positive values at an early age, so your children will recognize bad influences and unhealthy values, and not feel the need to adopt values and act in certain ways just to be accepted. Talk...give them the tools they need and a strong base.*

WEEK 3

SITUATION: Your child has just turned 16 and wants to drive everywhere, which is a tremendous help for errands. But they get very upset when you ask where they have been all afternoon and who they are hanging out with, and you feel as if you have lost control over their choices. You start to wonder if you should just stop asking and trust them to make good choices.

SOLUTION: *Get your parent power back on! You do have control over them and should hold them accountable for where and with whom they are spending their time. Driving is a privilege not a right. Set clear rules and guidelines for use of the car and enforce them consistently. Remember that the part of their brain that controls decision-making and the ability to understand the consequences of their actions is not fully developed until around age 25, so it's important to reinforce your expectations for their behavior by following through with what you say you will do. That's how they learn to make better decisions.*

WEEK 4

SITUATION: Your child constantly assures you he will never really drink, especially if you just let him go to the party. He may have a sip just so no one will make fun of him and to fit in, but he will always be in complete control.

SOLUTION: *No! There is a direct correlation between the number of times you are asked to try alcohol or other drugs and when you first actually drink or use. One of the biggest risk factors for addiction is the age of first use. Teens who begin drinking at age 14 have a 47% chance of becoming addicted to alcohol. The good news is that the risk decreases with each year that you can **DELAY** that first use. Alcohol or other drug use can also interfere with the crucial processes taking place in their developing brains during the teen years, so our job as parents is to protect them from these risky choices as much as we possibly can!*