

HC DrugFree

HC DrugFree: Keeping Howard County *in the KNOW!*
...knowledge is power, so just say KNOW

Happy Father's Day!!

...to the all the dads, father figures, and special men sharing their time, support and love to make a difference.

Dates to Remember in June

June 1-30: [National Safety Month](#)
June 1-30: [Men's Health Month](#)
June 1-30: [PTSD Awareness Month](#)
June 1-30: [LGBTQ+ Pride Month](#)
June 14: [World Blood Donor Day](#)
June 14: [NRPA Family Health and Fitness Day](#)
June 15: [Father's Day](#)
June 26: [International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking](#)

This Father's Day, Lead With Love & Gratitude

To fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and mentors:

Your everyday actions make a lasting impact. This Father's Day, take pride in the example you set, whether it's making healthy choices, having honest conversations, or simply being there when it counts. Your leadership helps our youth grow into strong, safe, and confident adults.

And to the teens and children: don't forget to show your appreciation. A thank-you, a conversation, a hug, or even just spending time together can go a long way.

Let's celebrate the role models who lead with strength and heart.

☐ Happy Father's Day from HC DrugFree.



Don't Be Afraid To Reach Out: Men's Health Month

Men's Health Month is a reminder that it's important to take a moment to take care of yourself. Remember, it's not weakness, it's strength. Whether you're a teen, dad, coach, or friend, now is the time to take charge of your physical and mental well-being.

Schedule that overdue check-up. Take a walk after dinner. Talk openly about stress. Avoid risky habits like vaping or misusing medications. Small actions today can prevent big problems tomorrow.

- ☐ Be the reason your loved ones stay motivated.
- ☐ Be the example of smart, healthy choices.

Start now by checking out these [tips](#) for better health.



In the *KNOW* about Cannabis



Though many people are aware of the dangers of smoking and alcohol, the **risks associated with cannabis and marijuana are often underestimated**, especially when it comes to teenagers'

perceptions. In a recent research report, experts advocated for increased policies and prevention against youth and adolescent cannabis. Recently, cannabis products have seen a rise in THC potency and have become more accessible and appealing to adolescents, despite **early cannabis use being linked to psychosis, substance use disorder and other physical and mental harms**.

According to experts, including psychiatrists, pediatricians, and addiction counselors prevention efforts in schools and media are lacking, resulting in continued early cannabis use and decreased understanding about its negative impacts. There is a large gap between the perceived and actual risk of cannabis use, and as one expert stated, **"People do not know that cannabis is dangerous. The signs on the stores have green crosses on them. There is an enormous educational gap here."**

A recent survey in Oregon presented shocking results demonstrating this gap: **32% of 8th grade students and 45% (nearly half!) of 11th grade students indicated that they don't see regular marijuana use as risky**. This belief, stemming from ineffective education and appealing marketing strategies, sets the stage for early use and its resulting mental health

problems.

Proposed efforts to increase prevention and decrease adolescent cannabis and marijuana use include...

- Standardizing and reviewing content of required evidence-based drug education programs at schools
- Parental and community educational resources
- Addressing marketing tactics and youth exposure to positive messaging and portrayals of cannabis
- Regulation of THC potency limits, proper labeling, age verification, and increased pricing for cannabis products

Read the full article [here!](#)

Cannabis Drinks vs. Alcohol: A New Social Sip?

As cannabis-infused beverages gain popularity, many are comparing them to traditional alcoholic drinks. A [Harvard Health article](#) highlights that while alcohol's effects are well-known, cannabis drinks can be unpredictable due to their variable THC levels and the unpredictability of individual biology. These beverages often have a delayed onset, leading some to consume more than intended, potentially resulting in anxiety or nausea and long-term cognitive damage.

Despite these concerns, cannabis drinks are becoming a popular alternative for those seeking relaxation without the hangover associated with alcohol. Their appeal lies in lower calorie content and the absence of next-day grogginess.

However, it's essential to approach them with caution, especially for older adults or those unfamiliar with THC's effects.

As the landscape of social beverages evolves, understanding the nuances between cannabis drinks and alcohol can help individuals make informed choices. Read our tips [here](#).



Marijuana & Heart Disease

A new **study** published in JAMA Cardiology shows that both smoked and edible cannabis can significantly impair blood vessel function, increasing the

risk of heart disease. Vascular function dropped by 42% in marijuana smokers and 50% in edible THC users compared to non-users. The data also links cannabis use to **higher risk of stroke and heart failure**

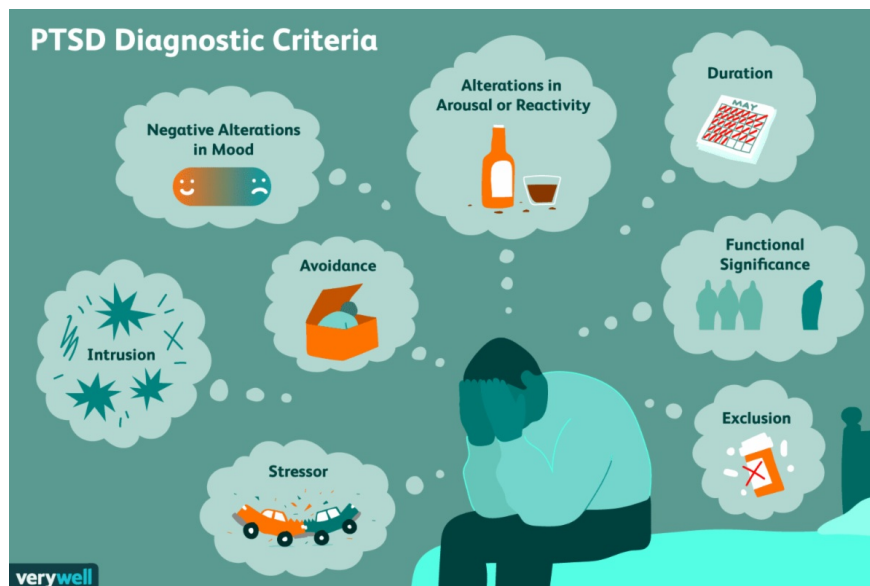
As cannabis use rises, especially in edible form, experts stress the need for greater awareness about its potential cardiovascular impact.



PTSD Awareness Month: Healing Begins With Understanding

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can affect anyone, including teens, who have experienced trauma such as abuse, violence, accidents, or loss. In fact, **12 million Americans currently experience it**. Left untreated, PTSD can lead to anxiety, depression, or substance misuse as a way to cope.

This month, we encourage families to learn the signs of PTSD and talk openly about mental health. Recovery is possible with support, and no one should feel alone in their struggle. Early conversations and professional help can make all the difference.



WFH With Teens? Your Summer Sanity Guide

(Anonymous Blog **submitted by a HoCo mom**) Working from home (WFH) and balancing work-from-home life and parenting teens during summer break

can be a challenge. Teens may not always recognize work boundaries, leading to distractions and stress.

We encourage parents to protect their own mental health by setting clear boundaries, creating a defined workspace, communicating work hours, assigning chores, and building flexible schedules. With planning, communication, and patience, families can thrive, even in the chaos of summer.

□ Read more tips [here](#).



Teen Talk: How To Start the Conversation About Drugs

(Anonymous Blog **submitted by a HoCo college student**) Talking to your parents about drugs can feel awkward or even scary. You may worry they'll overreact, lecture you, or not understand where you're coming from.

Whether you're curious, concerned about a friend, or just want to know where your family stands, it's okay to start the conversation. Try bringing it up casually, like during a car ride or while making dinner, and ask a simple question like, "What would you want me to do if I was offered something at a party?"

These honest talks build trust and help everyone stay informed. Need help getting started? Visit our [Teen/Youth Blog](#) for more resources.

NEW Registration Form! Teen Advisory Council 2025-26



HC DrugFree invites **all Howard County students in grades 8-12** to join our Teen Advisory Council (TAC) Meeting.

Students: If you have not submitted a new 2025-26 registration, please complete [this new form](#) to register for the coming school year. **Even if you have been a member for several years, we need a new registration each school year.**

Members of TAC attend our monthly meetings and serve as student ambassadors in their schools and in the community.

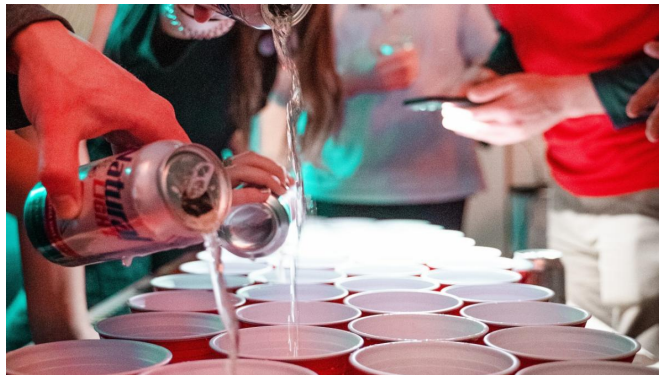
Why join TAC?

- Earn Community Service Hours
- Gain experience for job & college applications
- Volunteer opportunities year round
- Be a leader and role model in Howard County

[Learn more about TAC](#)

Freshmen & Binge Drinking

Freshman year of college is full of new possibilities and dreams about first time independence. Don't let your child's first step outside your home become a story of dependence. Know the facts about binge drinking on college campuses and harmful outcomes, including academic issues, drunk driving, sexual assault and even death. Click [here](#) to learn the facts.



June 14: World Blood Donor Day

Every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood, yet only about [3% of eligible donors actually give blood annually](#).

Donating blood is a simple way for teens and young adults to save lives and make a difference in their community.

If you're eligible (usually age 17+), consider donating or encouraging friends to join. One donation can save up to three lives! Plus, it helps build responsibility and a sense of community service.

Find a local blood drive [here](#).



Safe Storage of Meds



Safe medication storage isn't just about having a lock: it's about putting one more barrier between your loved ones and potential harm.

Try using a coded **lockbox**, a locking **tackle box**, or even a locked **toolbox**, all items you may already have at home!

When in doubt, dispose of unused medications properly. It's one of the simplest ways to protect children, teens, and even pets.

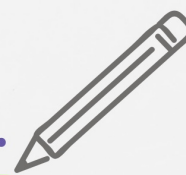
- ☐ Safe storage = prevention
- ☐ One small step can make a big difference
- ☐ Learn more about safe disposal [here](#).

Keep your loved ones safe!

Share Your Story

We invite you to share your story and help others in our community by raising awareness about youth substance use, behavioral health challenges, and the dangers of rising drug trends. All information shared will be anonymous. [Submit your story.](#)

Share your story.



By sharing your experiences, you can help break stigma, encourage prevention, and provide hope and guidance to other families in our community.

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HoCo Health Assessment Survey

The 2024 Howard County Health Assessment Survey of 2,266 adult Howard County residents, was conducted between July and October 2024 and provides a comprehensive picture of the health conditions and behaviors

across the County's population. This work has been produced through a collaboration of the Howard County Health Department, Johns Hopkins Howard County Medical Center, Horizon Foundation, and Columbia Association. This is the latest in a series of comparable studies conducted regularly in Howard County since 2012. [Read more](#).

Stay In the Loop: Follow Us Online!

Want real-time updates and powerful stories from our community?

Follow HC DrugFree on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn to stay informed about important events, helpful resources, and prevention news as it happens.

From last-minute event info to tips that keep your family safe, our social media is your fastest way to stay connected. Join the conversation: be informed, inspired, and part of the movement!

One-Click Links!

Facebook: [HC DrugFree](#)

Instagram: [@hc_drugfree](#)

LinkedIn: [HC DrugFree](#)

Twitter: [@HCdrugfree](#)



Donate



Your support allows us to provide our FREE resources and programs to the community. Please donate today by visiting hcdrugfree.org/donate or mailing

[Donate here!](#)

Resources

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:

Marylanders who are experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis should call or text 988. Learn more at 988.maryland.gov. Maryland veterans and their loved ones can call 988 and press 1 to transfer to the Veterans Crisis Line. Press 2 for Spanish. Press 3 for LGBTQIA+ support.



Free Narcan Training:

The Howard County Health Department offers a free training so you can be prepared in case of an opioid overdose. Sign up for your free training and Narcan kit today. [Learn more](#)



[Additional Resources](#)

For more information, contact

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