

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

Happy New Year from HC DrugFree!

“The New Year stands before us, like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written.”

Melody Beattie

Celebrate Safely This New Year's Eve

Ring in the New Year with a glass or two of champagne sounds harmless enough until it's time to drive home.

If you're planning on drinking this New Year's, make sure you have a plan to get home safely.

Even better, offer to be the designated driver for those in your party.

[Learn more here.](#)



10 Unexpected New Year's Resolutions to Make Your Life Better

2020 has been... a year, which makes getting a fresh start in 2021 feel super appealing. For some people, that might mean making a New Year's resolution that helps them get the year started on the right foot, but traditional New Year's resolutions usually fail. Turns out, our brains are just not into making swift, abrupt changes to our habits.

When creating resolutions, ask yourself questions like:

- How do you want to feel? Will this resolution get you closer to that?
- What energy do you want to create? Will this resolution give you that type of energy?
- Are you operating from a place of restriction or abundance? Does this resolution involve taking away things you like?
- Would you recommend this resolution to your younger sibling or best friend?

- How will this resolution impact you five, 10, or 15 years from now?

[Read the full article here.](#)

TED Talk: Everything You Think About Addiction is Wrong

What really causes addiction to everything from cocaine to smartphones? And how can we overcome it? Johann Hari has seen our current methods fail firsthand, as he has watched loved ones struggle to manage their addictions. He started to wonder why we treat addicts the way we do -- and if there might be a better way. As he shares in this deeply personal talk, his questions took him around the world, and unearthed some surprising and hopeful ways of thinking about an age-old problem. [Watch the Ted Talk here.](#)

Record 80k Overdose Deaths in a 12-month Span

The opioid epidemic has gotten worse during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to new data released by the Centers for Disease Control... [Read the full report here.](#)

Breast Cancer Patients at Higher Risk for Chronic Opioid Use

In study findings presented at the 2020 San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium, women who received a mastectomy and reconstructive surgery after a diagnosis of breast cancer were found to be at a greater risk of chronic controlled substance use, per media reports. [Read more.](#)

What is DXM?

Dextromethorphan (DXM) is a cough suppressor found in many over-the-counter medications, such as cough syrup, tablets, capsules, or powder. Misusing DXM can lead to sweating, hypertension, nausea, vomiting, and more. It can also be deadly when mixed with other substances. [Read more.](#)

Chronic Alcohol Use Reshapes the Brain's Immune Landscape, Driving Anxiety and Addiction

"We found that chronic alcohol exposure compromises brain immune cells, which are important for maintaining healthy neurons," says Reesha Patel, PhD, a postdoctoral fellow in Roberto's lab and first author of the study. "The resulting damage fuels anxiety and alcohol drinking that may lead to alcohol use disorder." [Read more.](#)

Are You a Friend of HC DrugFree?

As a nonprofit organization, HC DrugFree depends upon the generosity of individuals, organizations and businesses in the community to support the free education and prevention services that help keep our great community safe.

Please consider becoming a Friend of HC DrugFree by making a donation in any of the following amounts:

- \$10 student
- \$25 individual
- \$50 family
- \$50 nonprofit organizations
- \$100 business
- Sponsors starting as low as \$500.

[Please make your tax deductible gift to HC DrugFree today!](#)



Reader Poll

What topic(s) interest you?

Medication Safety, Storage, and Disposal

Select

Opioid News & Information

Select

Drug/Alcohol Misuse

Select

Mental Health

Select

Parenting Advice and Information

Select

Events

Teen Advisory Council Meeting

Our next TAC Meeting will be held on **Monday, January 11 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.** [Click here to register for Zoom meeting](#)

TAC is open to all Howard County High School Students. Public School, Private School, and Homeschool students are encouraged to join! To access the 2020-21 school year registration form please [click here](#). Email your

Parenting Corner

Family Checkup: Positive Parenting Prevents Drug Abuse

Learn the five parenting skills important in preventing the start and progression of drug use. [Read more here.](#)

MEDucation: Your Meds. Their Drugs.

An alarming trend is emerging. Every day, more than 1,700 children and young adults begin experimenting with prescription drugs. These drugs range from pain relievers and depressants to stimulants and over-the-counter (OTC) medicine.

Some disturbing facts:

- One in four teens abused prescription drugs.
- 3.1 million 12 to 25 year olds used OTC cough and cold medications at least once to get high.
- Prescription drugs are the #1 choice among 12-13 year olds.
- 13 is the mean age of the non-prescribed use of sedatives and stimulants.
- One in seven boys and one in five girls has shared or borrowed a prescription drug.
- Nearly one in ten high school seniors admit abusing pain relievers.
- Girls age 12-17 are more likely than boys to misuse OTC medications, but the trend reverses with 18- to 25-year-olds.

[Learn more about preventing prescription misuse here.](#)

Additional Resources

If You Need Help

If you need help with depression, suicidal thoughts, or other serious mental health issues, please contact:

Grassroots Crisis Intervention: 410-531-6677

The Maryland Crisis Hotline: Dial 211 and then choose option 1

The Crisis Text Line: Text 741741 and a trained counselor will respond

The National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

The Howard County Health Department: 410-313-6202

Gambling with Your Future

Call, text or chat 1-800-GAMBLER for free confidential, compassionate help with gambling problems.

Medication Disposal

To safely store and dispose of prescription and over-the-counter medication and sharps (needles, syringes and EpiPens), **please visit our website** for more information.

For more information, contact

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