

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

## Happy Flag Day



[Click here](#) to read the 2022 Proclamation on Flag Day.

**"You will never do anything in this world without courage"**

Aristotle

## Parents Can Crack the Code



This morning, on [NBC's Today Show](#), reporter Kate Snow once again focused on how common it's become for social media drug ads to target our kids online.

It's no longer necessary to buy drugs on street corners.

Instead, drugs including fentanyl can be delivered to your door 24/7 with just a few clicks in social media apps like Instagram and Snapchat.

Dealers are using emojis online to keep under the radar of filters being used by social media apps. Parents need to know what these emojis mean, because teens and young adults certainly do. For example, an electrical plug is used to indicate a "hookup" or "connection" to drugs, and while social media filters will catch the word "plug", they don't catch the emoji.

Parents also need to be aware that drug ads are being mixed into social media along with many legitimate ads, which makes seeing ads for drugs as normal for kids as ads for movies and exercise equipment.

Beyond being aware of the issue, parents need to know how to help their children not fall victim to drug ads. In this [video](#), several older teens talk about how parents should talk with their teens about social media and encourage conversation about the availability of drugs on social media.

To see more commonly used drug-related emojis download the [DEA's Emoji Drug Code Decoded](#).

## Summer Life Skills Classes: *Register Now!*

Your kids will keep learning this summer, so why not have them learn positive things from teens and college students, like that most kids aren't using drugs, how to say no to risky behaviors while keeping their friends, and how to better protect themselves from a variety of dangers.



HC DrugFree is providing another series of *FUN* and interactive skills-based classes designed to promote positive health and personal development for students entering **grades 6 to 9**. We encourage siblings and friends to take these classes together, so if you have slightly younger or older students, please let us know and we will consider them as well. Classes will be held July 18 to 21 & 25 to 28 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. via Zoom. If you would like to register your child, please complete [this form](#).

For more information, visit our [website](#). Funding provided by the Howard County Health Department, MD Department of Health, and SAMHSA.

## NCAA Student-Athlete Well-Being Survey Results

Results from the NCAA Student-Athlete Well-Being Survey were released in May, and reported rates of mental exhaustion, depression, and anxiety are still much higher than before the pandemic. While over 60% of student-athletes reported knowing where to go on campus to get mental health support, less than half reported that they would feel comfortable accessing those services. [Read the report](#).

Don't Get Benched For Life - if you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255 or text "HOME" to 741-741.

# DON'T GET BENCHED FOR LIFE.



Visit [HCDrugFree.org](https://www.HCDrugFree.org) for more information.

**HCDrugFree**  
Empowering the Community



Nicotine Loophole Closed for Vapes

To avoid oversight from the FDA, vaping companies have been using synthetic "non-tobacco nicotine" so that the products would not be classified as "tobacco" products. A new law clarifies that the FDA can regulate any products containing nicotine, regardless of the source of the nicotine. This means that no nicotine product cannot be sold to anyone under 21 or given away as free samples, and marketing claims regarding products will require approval by the FDA. [Read more.](#)

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## Reminder: Safely Store and Dispose of Medication

Following surgery or other medical procedures, doctors may prescribe opioid medication for pain management. Once your pain no longer requires the medication, what do you do with the leftover pills? You may be tempted to hold onto to them "just in case," but this can have a ripple effect you may not expect if those medications end up being used by the wrong people and/or in the wrong way. Not sure what to do? Check out these [tips](#) and keep watching for the date of HC DrugFree's next drive-thru collection.

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## Keeping All Teens Safe

When we talk about preventing substance use in teens, we need to be talking about all teens. There's no one "type" of teen that needs to be protected, it's all of them. Support from family and friends is a strong protective factor in prevention, whereas teens who lack that support are at much higher risk of drug and alcohol use. LGBTQI+ teens are more likely to resort to drugs and alcohol to cope with life stressors due to lack of support, as well as other contributing factors. To learn more about how to prevent substance misuse in all teens, including additional strategies for LGBTQI+ teens, read this [Youth Substance Abuse issue brief](#).

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## Inside the Mind of Teen Boys with ADHD

Adolescent boys with ADHD may be their own worst enemy when it comes to asking for help when they need it. So how can parents help while still encouraging and supporting independence? Playing up on their strengths and interests and being patient can help. [Read more tips.](#)

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## Babies Hospitalized After Eating THC-Laced Crackers

Three babies were taken to an emergency room in Stafford County, VA after their parents noticed the 1-year-olds were lethargic and uncoordinated, with glassy and bloodshot eyes. Medical staff determined all three had been exposed to tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the psychoactive compound found in cannabis, and notified police. An investigation of the day care where the three babies had been uncovered THC-laced goldfish crackers. [Read more.](#)

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## Stranger Danger or Tricky People?

Do you tell your kids not to talk to strangers and use the term Stranger Danger? Instead, maybe you can role play to teach them how to identify and handle Tricky People. Predators act fast and just need a few minutes to lure a child away. Kids can learn how to better identify dangerous strangers and how to stay safe while parents should be aware of signs that they should be concerned for their child.

Want to learn more? Here are some [Tips for Parents and Kids](#) (scroll to the right on that same page for the tips for kids) and one mother's story of ["How the 'tricky people' concept saved my boys."](#)

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## Don't Take Candy from Strangers...or Friends

Parents of middle school students in Georgia were reminded that they need to continue talking to their children about the dangers of taking candy from other students after a student brought what the administration told parents was a drug-laced candy to school. The candy and packaging resembled a popular name-brand candy except that the packaging contained the word "medicated" on it. With more and more reports of copycat packing for drug-laced edibles, parents need to teach children of the dangers those packages may hold. [Read more.](#)

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## Childhood Trauma and Rx Drug Misuse in College

The social and academic stress of college is often enough to lead students to misuse prescription drugs, but research shows that students with a history of [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\)](#) are at greater risk of prescription drug misuse. [Read more.](#)

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## Get Friends Connected to HC DrugFree

Friends keep friends informed! This newsletter and social media remain the best ways for us to share vital information with you! Please Like & Share our content on social media or forward this newsletter to a friend to help us with our mission of keeping Howard County safe and informed. Invite a friend to [subscribe to our newsletter](#). You can also view previous newsletters in the [Newsletter Archive](#) on our website.

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## Don't Get Benched for Life

Please share our [Don't Get Benched for Life...Not your meds? Don't take them!](#) campaign with others working with Howard County youth...sport teams, school groups, scouts, religious groups, friends, community groups, and more!

[Download and print any of the 8 campaign ads.](#)



This ad campaign features Howard County high school students.

## We Need Your Donations



Are you a **Friend of HC DrugFree?** Have you made a donation this year? We depend upon the generosity of individuals, organizations, and businesses to support our free services. Please make a gift of any size today.

Would you or your PTA/PTSA, religious group, civic group, company like to become a **Sponsor of HC DrugFree** by donating \$500 or more per year? Monthly payments are welcome. Thank you for your support.

[Donate](#)



## Additional Resources

**Think you see illegal drug activity in your neighborhood?**  
**Let us know.**  
**Report it anonymously:**  
HCPDcrimetips@howardcountymd.gov or  
**410-290-DRUG**

Calvin Ball  
County Executive

Howard County  
Police Department

**Mental Health Crisis? Thoughts of Suicide? Problems with Drugs or Alcohol?** Contact MD's HELPLINE. Call 211, then press 1. Text your zip code to TXT-211 (898-211). Visit [211md.org](http://211md.org) for additional resources for housing/shelter, utility assistance, food, domestic violence, legal services, and more.



**Reverse Opioid Overdose:** [Click here](#) to contact the Howard County Health Department to receive free training and Narcan kit.

**Free Behavioral Health Resources:** The Howard County Health Department will be at the Mall in Columbia with helpful behavioral health resources and services to promote mental health, resilience and wellbeing. This initiative takes place now through June 23, 2022 from 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. [Learn more](#) and share!

**Free Resources for Parents Following a Suicide Attempt:** What to expect during recovery, safety planning, warning signs and risk factors. [Click here](#) to download resources document.

**Free Bilingual Behavioral Health Resource Directory:** [Click here](#) to download the directory. Please verify that the provider accepts your insurance or provides sliding scale fees before scheduling.

**Gambling with Your Future:** Call, text or chat 1-800-GAMBLER for free confidential, compassionate help with gambling problems.

**Quit Smoking:** Call 1-800-QuitNow (1-800-784-8669) for 24/7 for free and confidential assistance or visit [www.smokingstopshere.com](http://www.smokingstopshere.com).

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