

Addiction is a Developmental Disorder of Pediatric Onset

- Approximately [8.7%](#) of American adolescents had a substance use disorder (SUD) in 2022.
- Adolescents most commonly use [alcohol, cannabis, and tobacco/nicotine](#).
- Within 4 years of first use, more than [20%](#) of adolescents develop a cannabis use disorder.
- Mental health and substance use issues can often [co-occur](#) among adolescents.
- More than [90%](#) of all adults who have a SUD developed problems earlier than age 18.

Prevalence, Harms and Risk Factors

Substance use has decreased among youth in the past 20 years.

*Over [60%](#) of 12th graders in the United States have **not** used alcohol, cannabis, and tobacco/nicotine in the past month, while [over 70%](#) of 10th graders have never used drugs or alcohol.*

The opioid overdose crisis is reaching youth.

[Nearly four out of five](#) adolescent drug overdose deaths involved opioids in 2022, and the largest increases were seen among Hispanic and Black adolescents.

Risk factors for high-risk substance use are [numerous](#).

These include having a family history of SUD, mental health issues, childhood sexual abuse and exposure to peers who use substances.

Adolescent Substance Use “Best Practice” Considerations

1. Care should be implemented in [developmentally relevant ways](#) (e.g., taking age, maturation, cognitive processing, decision-making skills and special needs of the individual adolescents into consideration).
2. Providers should let parents know that a firm standard of “**Not in my house**” for substance use is an important boundary to keep, as delaying all substance use until after [age 18](#) can be useful in staving off eventual SUD.
3. Psychosocial treatments such as family-based therapy, motivational enhancement, cognitive behavioral therapy and multicomponent approaches remain the [most effective](#).
4. For adolescents who develop opioid use disorder, the best treatment includes medications, primarily buprenorphine or extended-release naltrexone.