

# BE OPIOID AWARE!

## Dear Families,

Opioid use and misuse are topics that teens and families need to understand. More than one hundred people die every day from opioid abuse.\* And opioids can be hard on the body in other ways. Connecting to your teens and providing them with a safe place to ask questions and get help is the best way to support them as they confront this public health crisis.

At school, your teen has been learning about opioid use with a program from the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) and the curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired. The program empowers teens to seek help for themselves and others with tips on where they can get help. Talk with your teen about what they have learned, and try some of these activities at home:

- Sometimes it can be hard for teens to talk to parents. Together, brainstorm other adults whom you don't mind your teen reaching out to if they need to talk but are nervous telling you. You might also visit these websites for tips on talking with your teen about drugs:
  - [teens.drugabuse.gov/parents](https://teens.drugabuse.gov/parents)
  - [samhsa.gov/talk-they-hear-you/parent-resources/keep-kids-safe-brochures](https://samhsa.gov/talk-they-hear-you/parent-resources/keep-kids-safe-brochures)
  - [getsmartaboutdrugs.gov](https://getsmartaboutdrugs.gov)
- Create a signal or code word that your teen can text or share with you if they need to be picked up from a party or situation, no questions asked.
- Drug abuse can lead to mental health problems, and mental health struggles can make pain-relieving drugs more attractive. Talk with your teen about other ways to get help with big feelings that are overwhelming. If you need ideas, talk to a school nurse or counselor. Confidential recovery programs are also available:
  - [nar-anon.org](https://nar-anon.org)
  - [al-anon.org](https://al-anon.org)
  - [al-anon.org/newcomers/teen-corner-alateen](https://al-anon.org/newcomers/teen-corner-alateen)
- Check in with your child a few times a week during mealtime or some other time when you have each other's full attention. The more relaxed time spent together, the easier it is for teens to open up.
- Plan family activities that encourage healthy stress relief. Go on outdoor walks, relax together with a favorite television show, cook a healthy meal together, or spend time with your teen in a hobby they enjoy.
- Support your teen in participating in positive social activities like clubs, sports, or community service.

## ABOUT THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL NURSES

The mission of the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) is to optimize student health and learning by advancing the practice of school nursing. School nurses are the leaders who bridge health care and education, provide care coordination, advocate for quality student-centered care, and collaborate to design policies and protocols that allow individuals and communities to develop their full potential. They are key stakeholders in children's health and well-being in the school community.



National  
Association of  
School Nurses

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\* [cdc.gov/opioids/basics/epidemic.html](https://cdc.gov/opioids/basics/epidemic.html)

