

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



Sometimes You Need A Dose of Vitamin Sea

HoCo Student Focus Group on Smoking & Vaping

In our recent Life Skills class, HC DrugFree's team had the opportunity to go straight to the source and ask Howard County middle and high school students what they think about smoking & vaping. During one discussion, it became apparent that some kids didn't consider vaping to be "smoking", so we did a poll. Here are the results:

When you hear the term "smoking" what initially comes to your mind



In the image above, you can see that the students we polled primarily considered the term "smoking" to be referencing smoking cigarettes only. Approximately half as many felt smoking referred to both smoking cigarettes and vaping. Why does this matter?

During the last several years, we have heard from Howard County youth who believe that vaping doesn't count as smoking, even believing that vaping devices don't contain nicotine! We feel it is urgent for young people to understand that vaping is just another form a smoking. Despite being considered more socially acceptable today than traditional cigarettes, there are risks involved and questions that won't be answered until we're able to evaluate the long-term consequences of vaping. [Learn more](#)

Patrick Kennedy: Brain Health and Unlocking the Mysteries of the Mind

This month, Prevention Action Alliance interviewed former Congressman Patrick J. Kennedy. Kennedy is an long-time advocate of many health-related topics including the need for more research on the brain to unlock the mysteries of the mind. Brain health encompasses the well-being and optimal functioning of the brain and is a critical aspect of overall well-being and quality of life. Kennedy has been very open about his own struggles with addiction and mental health challenges. [Read more](#)

In The KNOW...

In the *KNOW*...

OPIOIDS

What to ask your doctor before taking opioids:

- Why do I need this medication?
- How long should I take this medication?
- Are there non-opioid alternatives?
- How can I reduce the risk of potential side effects?
- What if I have a history of addiction?
- What if there is a history of addiction in my family?
- Could this treatment interact with my other medication?
- How should I store my opioid medication?
- What should I do with unused opioid medicine?
- Should I carry Naloxone?

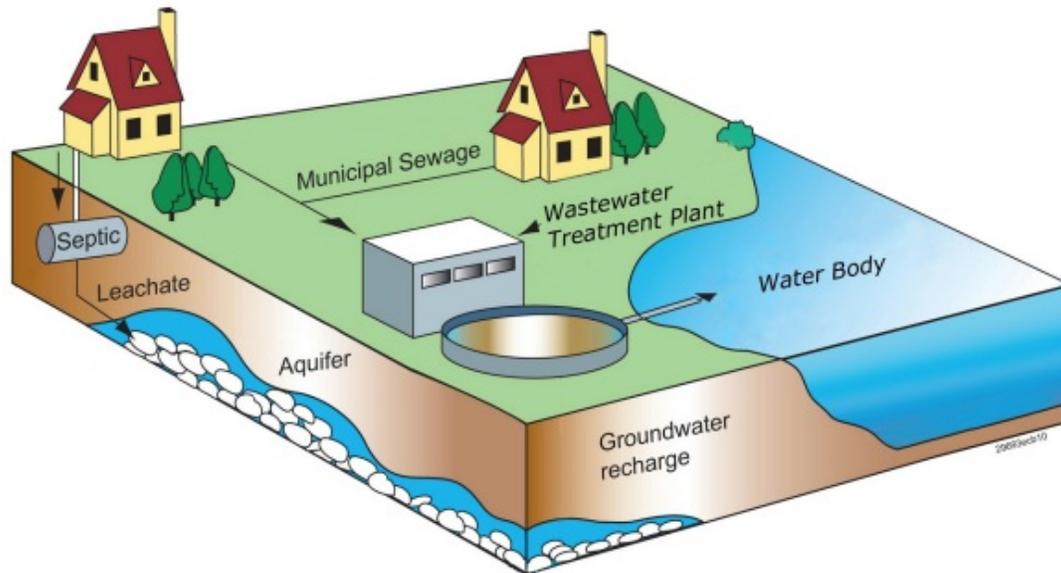


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Studies show that three out of four people using heroin began with the use of prescription medication. Taken as prescribed, opioids may help manage pain when taken for a short amount of time. However, prolonged use often leads to physical dependence and the risk of addiction occurs. [Learn more](#)

Medication Storage/Disposal

How Improper Disposal of Medicines May End Up in Our Drinking Water Sources



In homes that use septic tanks, prescription and over-the-counter drugs flushed down the toilet can leach into the ground and seep into ground water. In cities and towns where residences are connected to wastewater treatment plants, prescription and over-the-counter drugs poured down the sink or flushed down the toilet can pass through the treatment system and enter rivers and lakes. They may flow downstream to serve as sources for community drinking water supplies. Water treatment plants are generally not equipped to routinely remove medicines.

Safely dispose of your medication, sharps and more at HC DrugFree's Medication & Sharps drive-thru disposal event tentatively scheduled for Saturday, October 28, 2023 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. [Learn more](#)

You Make a Difference in Howard County

Together, we can educate youth and families in Howard County and make a difference in young lives. Donations of any size will help us to continue providing free services and resources for another year.

[Donate](#)



Resources

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

Help for Depression, Suicidal Thoughts or Other Mental Health Issues: Call or text 988.

Substance Use Disorder Regional Residential Treatment Guide: [Click here](#) to download the guide.

Additional Resources: [HC DrugFree Hotlines & Resources Page](#)

For more information, contact

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