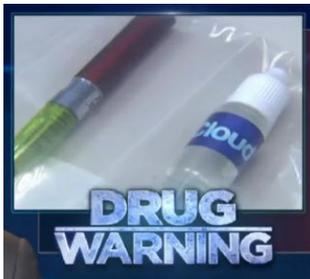


Cloud 9 – Not So Heavenly

A new synthetic drug, Cloud 9, is becoming the latest trend among teens and its method of ingestion – electronic cigarettes – is causing great concern.

Cloud 9 is a chemically made synthetic drug sold as “bath salts”. Also referred to as “E-Juice” or “Hookah Relax”, it is made to mimic the effects of meth and cocaine and comes in clear liquid form.

Users unscrew the top on the e-cigarette, put in a couple of drops, screw the top back on, and when they push the button it turns the liquid into a vapor, which they then inhale. There is no aroma other than a faint fruity smell and users say, used in an e-cigarette, there is no smell at all.



It can be easily obtained at convenience stores, smoke shops, or “head” shops, costing only \$20 for the small vial.

Its effects can be EXTREMELY dangerous. These include increased pulse, high blood pressure, paranoia, hallucinations, agitation, severe vomiting, suicidal thinking/behavior, seizures, strokes, and chest pain; several teens have described it as having the symptoms of a heart attack.

A recent rash of teen overdoses and hospitalizations in Michigan has officials there worried. Police there say there are a lot of kids that are getting really sick and having near-death experiences because of it. One mother described her son as going from “I love you mom, you are the greatest, and then switching to this other side”. Her son reported that it is being used in the schools, in the bathroom stalls, and also on the buses.

Teens have also been sprinkling Cloud 9 in marijuana and smoking it, and are now adding it to energy drinks.

Cloud 9, like other synthetic drugs, cannot be detected by standard drug tests, making it even more appealing to kids.

(Sources: www.nbcnews.com; www.myfoxdetroit.com September 2014)



The Personal and Legal Dangers of Sexting

In an age where it seems that every teen, pre-teen and now even elementary student, has a phone or tablet glued to their hands the majority of their waking hours, it is important that adults know what may be happening on those devices.

- 11% of teens admit they've sent pictures to strangers (Cox Communications)
- Nearly one out of six teens who own cell phones have sent or received nude or nearly nude pictures via text message from someone they know. (The Pew Report)
- 80% of teens who have sexted are under the age of 18 (Cox Communications)
- Over half (57%) of teens from a 2012 survey reported that they had been asked to send a sext (JAMA)
- 40% of teen girls say they have sexted as a joke
- 12% of teen girls feel pressured to sext (The National Campaign)
- 20% of teen boys say they "expect" to hook up with a girl if she sexts him
- 38% of teen girls and 39% of teen boys say they have had sexually suggestive text messages or emails – originally meant for someone else – shared with them (The National Campaign)

"Sexting" is defined as sending sexually explicit photographs to someone else electronically, often from one cell phone to another. It's basically a text message that includes a nude or semi-nude photograph. There are a variety of reasons that teenagers engage in sexting. Some may feel pressured into doing so and are subsequently giving in to that pressure. Others are simply interested in sex and use sexting as an outlet to learn more about sexual activities. Regardless, it is a risky behavior that could land any vulnerable teenager in trouble.

It's estimated that 20% of teenagers have participated in sexting at some point. In many instances, the pictures are seen by more than just the recipient – they are passed along to friends and classmates. Not surprisingly, sexting has drawn a lot of attention, as well as concern, from parents, schools and law enforcement.

Sexting is illegal and many don't think about or understand the consequences of their actions. What is difficult is to construct laws in a way that protect our children from true child predators, yet shield them from the mistakes youth tend to make. It is not specifically mentioned in any law, but it does fall under "Child Pornography". Under the current child pornography law, sexting can be a felony. Nebraska state statutes (NEB.REV.STAT. 28-813 et seq) makes images sent a class IV felony for minors and a Class IIIA felony for those 19 & over. Both of these felony charges, whether a minor or an adult, are punishable by up to 5 years in prison and/or a \$10,000 fine and requirement to register with the sex offender registry.

Imagine your 15-year-old daughter, who has a momentary lapse of reason like most teenagers at some point, takes a semi-nude picture of herself and sends it to her boyfriend. That one act can lead to her being prosecuted for dissemination of child pornography – she is passing along nude or semi-nude photos of a minor, even if the minor is herself. The same is true if her boyfriend forwards the photo to one of his friends. And if his friend has the photo on his phone, he too may be violating child pornography laws. And to take it further, many people use photo backup and auto-sharing features on their phones, which means a copy of that picture might instantly appear on someone else's phone in the family unsuspectingly. If your teen is over 18, and they send something to someone under 18, they could be charged with distributing pornography to a minor.

Once a sext arrives on the other person's phone, you can't get it back. You also can't control how it's used. You can't guarantee that it won't wind up in the wrong hands. Some of these situations, unfortunately, have ended very tragically. The story of Jessica Logan, in Cincinnati, who completed suicide after photos that she had sent to her boyfriend ended up being forwarded to lots of people around the school, is just one example of the horror that can follow such an act. She was harassed for the pictures and couldn't handle the harassment that followed after her ex-boyfriend sent the pictures out.

So the question comes "what can we do to stop this?" Often, parents are unaware of the activity altogether so the first step is to know what is happening on your children's devices. It's your right and duty as a parent to know. The next step is open, clear communication and education on the risks of sexting. Communication and education can go a long way.

Ask your teen face-to-face if they have received or sent a sext message. If you learn that they have, it is imperative that you take action by explaining every way in which sexting can be harmful to them. Let your teenagers know that they pay for their sexting in emotional and legal ways. If sexual-based pictures are to land in the wrong hands, then what may have started as innocent fun has suddenly taken a bad turn. Ensure that you have passwords/codes to all electronic devices and social media sites. Let your child know that it is your right and duty as a parent to keep them safe and one way that you will be doing that is to monitor their activities from time to time. Make an electronic parking lot in your home where electronic devices go to be charged and during technology time-outs. Avoid charging electronics in the bedroom. Institute tech time outs where technology is not used e.g. mealtimes, homework time, and family time. Place computers in public areas of the home so that with a quick glance you can see what is on the screen. Lastly, institute the "Grandma Rule" – if you wouldn't show it to your grandma, don't photograph it; if you wouldn't write it to your grandma don't text it; if you wouldn't say it to your grandma don't post it or say it to others.



(Sources: <http://resources.uknowkids.com/blog/sexting-facts-and-statistics-why-parents-should-be-concerned>
<http://familyinternet.about.com/od/computingsafetyprivacy/a/Sexting-What-Parents-Need-To-Know.htm>
<http://www.parentfurther.com/teens-and-sexting>)



GOT SCIP?!?!

The School Community Intervention & Prevention (SCIP) program has teams of committed, passionate school personnel who want to see students succeed inside and outside of school.

As we know, between the ages of 6 and 18, kids spend much of their time inside the school building or at school activities, learning, socializing and building connections with peers, teachers and others. Besides parents and guardians, school personnel spend the most time with our children. The SCIP program utilizes those connections as a resource in developing and providing a front line, early identification and intervention process for students and their families struggling with mental/behavioral health and/or substance use/abuse issues.

When Should I Make a Referral to SCIP?!?!

You should make a referral to SCIP if you notice concerning behavior changes, have gut feelings that something is wrong, or you are made aware of the possible behavioral health concern of a student. These referrals are made out of the spirit of genuine concern for a student.

Some of the concerning behaviors, or possible issues, that may lead to a referral are:

- Truancy/Frequent Tardiness
- Failing Grades or Drop in School Performance
- Not Eating at School
- Signs of Sadness/Depression
- Concerns of Possible Substance Use
- Grief (death or loss of a significant relationship)
- Sleeping/Severe Fatigue in Class
- Emotional Outbursts (yelling, crying)
- Possible Self Injury
- Concerns of Suicide Ideation
- Concerns of Student Bullying or being Bullied
- Displays of Violence (witnessed or reported)

*Or any other behavior or possible issue that causes you concern for a student's physical and/or emotional well-being.

How Do I Make a Referral to SCIP in School?!?!

The SCIP teams use a referral process in identifying students who maybe struggling with an underlining behavioral health concern.

SCIP is a somewhat flexible program that allows schools to customize how it implements segments of the SCIP process, one being the making of a referral, which may vary from school to school. When making a referral, you should contact one of your school's SCIP team members to relay your concerns. This can be done via paper format, email, or face to face. If

you are unsure of how to make a referral to SCIP within your school, you should contact the SCIP Team Leader or an administrator.

It should be noted, many of the issues surrounding referrals are very sensitive and so confidentiality is of the utmost importance for maintaining the integrity of the program and the respect of the student.

Who Can Make a Referral to SCIP?!?!

While it's true that most referrals are made by concerned school personnel, a result of kids spending much of their day inside the school building, referrals may also come from other sources:

- Any school personnel (teachers, administrators, paras, nurses, custodial, etc.) may refer a student they have concerns about to SCIP.
- Parents generally can contact the SCIP team leader with concerns they may have about their child and request that their child be referred to SCIP.
- Students can also contact the SCIP team leader or another SCIP team member in their building about their concerns of another student. Some SCIP teams allow anonymous reporting by students.
- Students can refer themselves to SCIP if they are looking for help.
- Community members who have concerns about a student's behaviors may also refer a student to their school's SCIP team.

Remember SCIP is not a disciplinary program or action. SCIP is a valuable resource to assist schools, families and, most importantly, the youth who may need help in dealing with life's challenges in and outside of school.

The next segment will focus on what happens after a referral is made.



Lifestyle is the single most overlooked aspect of reaching an “elite level” in anything we attempt. Life of an Athlete’s primary focus is to provide education and awareness on the dangers of alcohol and other drugs. While targeted at athletes and the coaches, parents and teachers who surround them, this information is valuable to any parent or student who has the focus or determination to excel in any area of life. In addition to drugs and alcohol, Life of an Athlete addresses proper sleep and nutrition.

Life of an Athlete provides guidance concerning lifestyle choices to help students (athletes and non-athletes) achieve optimal performance. These lifestyle choices fall into three categories: nutrition, training and chemical health. Parent’s encouragement is essential to their sons/daughters. Parents need to live by example and need to offer healthy food choices within the household, support the athlete’s training schedule, and discourage drug use.

Nutrition

Athletes should refrain from binge eating habits. In order to perform at their best, athletes need to prime the body with the nutrients that it needs. Empty calories from junk food can easily take up most of the majority of a calorie budget without providing enough nutrition. Here are some strategies to help your son/daughter eat a nutritionally balanced diet.

- Carbo-load with caution. This technique benefits athletes who participate in endurance events that last 90 minutes or more.
- Pick appropriate proteins. Athletes should not guzzle protein shakes or consume massive amounts of protein powder in order to gain muscle. The average American diet includes sufficient protein.
- Get necessary fats. Bodies need a moderate amount of fat each day for long-lasting fuel and a fully functioning body.
- Load up on vitamins and minerals. Get enough iron to prevent fatigue and enough calcium to maintain strong bones and muscles.
- Stay hydrated.
- Avoid foods high in fat, protein or simple sugars right before a game. Digestion of these foods requires energy. Athletes should have a small meal two to four hours before their event.

Lifestyle & Chemical Health

Help your son/daughter commit to the following:

- Sleep 8 to 10 hours a day to improve performance in the game.
- Stay away from alcohol and illegal drugs. They have an adverse effect on training and performance. Let them know, one night of binge drinking equals two weeks of lost training. Student athletes who want optimum performance should not consume alcohol and illegal drugs.
- If your student athlete is at a party or gathering where alcohol or drugs are being illegally dispensed, they should leave. Let them know you will pick them up – no questions asked.
- Encourage your student athlete to cooperate with any investigation for Code of Conduct violations.

Visit <http://www.talkaboutalcohol.org/toolkit-resources/life-of-athlete> to learn more.

(Source: www.ioanh.org)