



PRAIRIE RIDGE

PREVENTION SERVICES

"CLEAN MIND; CLEAN BODY; CLEAN SPIRIT; DRUG FREE"

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**Mental Health
Awareness Month
May 2007**

Congratulations

Graduates!!!

Have safe celebrations!



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Newsletter

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Start Prevention

By Rolena Hadwiger, MPH, Prevention Manager



The basic knowledge we learned in pre-school and kindergarten are the basis for the advanced and complex knowledge we are learning as adults. Similar to learning, prevention starts at the youngest age and builds up from there.

During preschool and kindergarten, children are eager to learn and memorize rules. Though they are not ready to take in complex facts about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, they are old enough to understand that drugs are bad for them. They look up to adults and want to know their opinions on what is "bad" and what is "good". This is a teachable moment to practice decision-making and even problem-solving skills. At this time, a parent might point out poisonous and harmful substances at home, such as kitchen cleaners, bleach, drain cleaner, and other

dangerous chemicals. If needed, read the products' warning labels out loud and explain that not all dangerous chemicals have warnings on them.

As children mature from kindergarten to elementary level, their interest expands outside the home and family. They will observe what other people do and this is a good time to begin explaining what are alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. Help children understand that some people use them even though they are harmful, and that there are consequences for using them. For example, explain why adults may drink but children may not. Explain how drugs interfere with children's body and brain development even in small amounts. Introduce and explain the idea of addiction—that it can be very hard to stop once a person has started using. It is very important that a child's anti-drug attitude is strong before entering middle school or junior high.

Parents and other adults should continue to take a strong stand against drugs as children progress to middle school and junior high. On-going discussion should occur about why some people are attracted to drugs and how traumatic events such as car accidents, pregnancy, violence, death, and other drug related events can be caused by drug use. This age group is fascinated by facts and this is an excellent time to explore information with children about effects of drugs and help them be aware of how drugs (alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs) are promoted in television, radio, song lyrics, and other advertising. They would probably welcome details as to how drugs affect a person's brain or body. Furthermore, this is the age where friends are very important to youth. Other children might expose them to drugs. Give youth permission to use you as an excuse: "My mom will kill me if I ever try that stuff!" It's important to praise your youth when they make good decisions and think for themselves. Make friends with other youth's parents so you can reinforce each others efforts. Remember, a child whose friends are all using drugs is very likely to be using them too.



Food for the Brain

By Rolena Hadwiger

- Addiction is similar to other _____, such as heart disease.
- Addiction has serious harmful consequences that are _____.
- Some consequences if left untreated can last a _____.
- The general equation for a lifestyle-health related problem is: _____ + Choices = Outcome
- _____ is a measure of how much impairment a person can experience at any alcohol or drug level.
- Drug abuse and _____ disorders often co-exist.

D	D	O	A	E	S	I	S	D	R	T
S	I	I	P	R	E	V	I	E	U	L
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E	Y	E	E	M	M	B	S	E	U	E
V	G	G	V	A	E	F	E	R	M	I
E	O	E	E	T	S	N	N	I	C	S
N	L	A	N	N	F	E	T	R	A	X
O	O	D	T	T	K	E	S	A	N	W
T	I	A	A	A	F	N	F	A	L	L
I	B	C	B	I	G	A	D	C	N	A
O	T	O	L	E	R	A	N	C	E	T
L	O	R	E	N	A	C	O	T	Q	Z

Answers: 1. diseases 2. preventable 3. lifetime 4. biology 5. tolerance 6. mental

How Well Do You Know Each Other?

Take one evening and try to see how well you know your youth and how well they know you. Here are samples of questions that you might ask and answer about each other.

For you to answer on your own:

- What is my son/daughter's favorite food?
- What is my son/daughter's favorite activity?
- Who is my son/daughter's favorite teacher?
- What does my son/daughter want to be when they finish school?
- What skills is my son/daughter most proud of?



For your youth to answer on his/her own:

- What is my mom/dad's favorite food?
- What is one chore at home that my mom/dad dislikes the most?
- What is my mom/dad's favorite activity?
- When my mom/dad was my age, what she/he wanted to be when she/he grows up?
- If mom/dad can do anything on the weekend, what would it be?

How many questions did you get right? Your youth? Talk to each other and find out. The most important part about this activity is that you talked to each other, and maybe started a memorable discussion and sharing about each other. Remember, start talking with your youth about little things and from there . . . they might just talk to you about serious issues such as drugs, sex, peer pressure, etc..

Questions & Answers:

Question: Does drug abuse cause mental disorders, or vice versa?

Answer: Drug abuse and mental disorders often co-exist. In some cases, mental diseases may precede addiction; in other cases, drug abuse may trigger or exacerbate mental disorders, particularly in individuals with specific vulnerabilities.

Question: Why do some people become addicted to drugs, while others do not?

Answer: As with any other disease, vulnerability to addiction differs from person to person. In general, the more risk factors an individual has, the greater the chance that taking drugs will lead to abuse and addiction. There are a lot of "protective" factors that reduce a person's risk of developing addiction. For example, family who spends time together, effective anti-drug use policy, friends who are against drug use, etc.

Question: Why is adolescence a critical time for preventing drug addiction?

Answer: Early use of drugs increases a person's chance of more serious drug abuse and addiction. Remember that drugs change brains—and this can lead to addiction and other serious problems. So preventing early use of drugs or alcohol may reduce the risk of progressing to later abuse and addiction.

Upcoming Events

May 19, 2007 Diversion Program at Prairie Ridge, Mason City. The program will be from 8:30-5:30 p.m. Saturday. For more information please contact the Prairie Ridge Mason City Office 1-866-429-2391.

June 11-12, 2007 Adolescent Prime for Life at Prairie Ridge, Mason City. The program will be from 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Monday through Tuesday. For more information please contact our office.

July 9-10, 2007 Adolescent Prime for Life at Prairie Ridge, Mason City. The program will be from 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Monday through Tuesday. For more information please contact our office.

For more information about any of the events, please contact us by phone or e-mail as shown below.



ask me.

40% of teens report getting alcohol from a friend's parent.

Keep track of your child's activities: ask who, what and where.