

TEEN BRAINOLOGY

MARCH 2019

WEEK 1

Situation: Your child is busy with school, sports, social life and family functions. And he/she doesn't want to miss anything. Sleep, one time a priority has moved to the bottom of the list. You find that more and more caffeine is being consumed, either in the form of coffee/espressos or energy drinks. Caffeine is legal, but how much is ok for the developing body and brain?

Fact : Caffeine is the most widely used drug in the world. It is a stimulant acting on the central nervous system and is addictive; associated with heart rate spikes, jittery, buzzed or hyper-alert feeling and can disrupt sleep. Energy drinks have an inherent danger because of the high caffeine content.

Solution: Alternatives to caffeine – Eat fruit (apple), go for a jog, eat breakfast every day and drink water. Staying hydrated will increase your energy level and help fight fatigue. Have a conversation with your child explaining the importance of relying on healthy sources for energy. Sleep is so important for our teenagers. Researchers hypothesize that sleep gives the brain an energy boost needed for normal functioning. It also improves energy, concentration and problem-solving.

WEEK 2

Situation: You are cleaning out the sock drawer in your child's room and find an Alabama Driver's License in the back corner. It is not your child's name, picture or birth date but you notice that the birth year is 1997. Your child has a fake ID!

Fact: Fake IDs are illegal. It is a felony to create, sell, or use a fake ID. In addition to other legal fees, your child may be subject to a fine up to \$15,000 and 1-10 years in jail. It is a misdemeanor for a minor to use a fake id to obtain alcohol. A misdemeanor carries a fine of up to \$500, jail up to 90 days, and driver's license revoked for up to 6 months.

Solution: It may seem obvious to an adult that the consequences for using a fake ID are steep, but not so obvious to a teen. Talk with your child about these serious consequences; explain to them that a felony charge will affect them now and very likely their future goals. If your child has a fake ID, destroy it together and explain what consequences they will have if you find them in possession of another.

WEEK 3

Situation: You are at a friend's house watching a movie. Your teenage child is at his/her friend's house watching a movie too – at least that is what you thought. You receive a text on your phone from your child and they have been at a field party where you hear there is underage drinking. Law enforcement is giving citations to all the young people. Your child has not been drinking but still gets a MIP

Fact: MIP – Minor in Possession citation can be given to minor for:

- A. Holding an open/unopened alcoholic beverage.
- B. Riding in a car with an open/unopened container and no one in the vehicle is 21 or over.

C. Consuming alcohol

D. Minor does not have to consume to receive citation.

Solution: It is much easier to discuss this situation before it happens. Share with your child that with electronic records today, even if records are sealed that does not guarantee they are not accessible. This record can negatively affect college acceptance, scholarships, and many other future plans. The ultimate rule – educate your child about the serious consequences for underage drinking before the situation occurs. This is a risk they do not want to take.

WEEK 4

Situation: Your child is charging his/her computer downstairs and you notice an odd-looking flashdrive. You ask your child about it and he/she says it is for their Juul, a very safe vaping device, explaining that a lot of people at school have them. Something is telling you this is not the whole story...and you are right!

Fact: Juul is a sleek, rectangular vaping device that delivers a concentrated form of nicotine. (google it) Not only are Juul vaporizers small enough to fit in the palm of your hand, they can be charged when plugged into a laptop's USB port, making it easy for students to pass them off as flash drives in class. One Juul pod contains the same amount of nicotine as a pack of cigarettes. There are NO Juul pods that do not contain nicotine. It is illegal for anyone under the age of 19 to buy, sell, use or possess a vaping device.

Solution; There is an inherent danger in youth use of any type of vaping device. These negative risks range from introducing/encouraging the habit of smoking to putting something other than air in your lungs to even glamorizing the act of "smoking". All vape juices contain a significant amount of propylene glycol and vegetable glycerin, a compound used to lower the freezing point of water. Used to deice airplanes and airplane runways, in the production of plastics, polyurethane and in some antifreeze . This is NOT WATER! Talk to your child with good information that will help them make good choices.