



News Alert

Northeast Community Challenge Coalition

Smoking by Age 12 Related to Alcohol and Drug Abuse

According to the National Household Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), youth who begin smoking around age 12 or younger are more likely to meet the criteria for alcohol and drug abuse.

When smoking begins at an early age:

- Youth meet the criteria for alcohol and drug abuse
- Youth are more than **twice** as likely to meet the criteria for marijuana abuse, and **three times** as likely to meet the criteria for other illicit drug abuse.
- Youth report symptoms of mental illness; such as hopelessness and depression

“Nicotine is hazardous to the adolescent brain, affecting it differently than an adult brain and increasing a young person’s vulnerability to the effects of smoking. The relationship between early smoking and later use of other addictive substances or mental illness may be the result of critical changes in the brain that can be caused by exposure to nicotine.”

Source:

Center on Substance Abuse Research (CESAR) at the University of Maryland

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