



# RED RIBBON WEEK

## DRUG FREE LOOKS LIKE ME



### WHAT IS RED RIBBON WEEK?

**Red Ribbon Week** is an ideal way for people and communities to unite and take a visible stand against drugs. The Red Ribbon Campaign® is the oldest and largest drug prevention program in the nation, reaching millions of young people during Red Ribbon Week®, October 23rd - October 31st each year. During the high school years it's essential to continue raising awareness about drug abuse and, more importantly, prevention. "[Red Ribbon](#) serves as a catalyst to mobilize communities to educate youth and encourage participation in drug prevention activities."

### WHY IS DRUG EDUCATION AND PREVENTION IMPORTANT?

#### **We need to be talking about drug education and drug prevention with our teens.**

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), most illicit drug use (11.2%) begins between ages 16-17. An additional, smaller percentage of individuals begin using illicit drugs even earlier: 8% when 14-15 years old and another 2.9% when just 12-13 years old<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, according to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), approximately one in six adolescents used illicit drugs within the United States in 2017<sup>2</sup>.

**Preventing early drug use is critical.** Early drug use negatively affects mental health, physiological health, and overall functioning<sup>3</sup>. It can negatively impact body and brain development<sup>4</sup> through lifelong, irrevocable changes within a teens' brain. Specifically, it can impair memory, judgment, brain functioning, and behavior control<sup>5</sup>. These negative consequences of early drug use emphasize the importance of teens participating in drug education and prevention work.

**Commit to a drug-free lifestyle!** Show your personal commitment to a drug-free lifestyle through the symbol of the Red Ribbon, this October 23 - 31st. [Learn more about Red Ribbon Week here](#)

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<sup>1</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). *Drugs, brain, and behavior: The science of addiction*. [Link](#).

<sup>2</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2019). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (HHS Publication No. PEP19-5068, NSDUH Series H-54). [Link](#).

<sup>3</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). *Drugs, brain, and behavior: The science of addiction*. [Link](#).

<sup>4</sup> Berger, K. S. (2016). *Invitation to the lifespan* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

<sup>5</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). *Drugs, brain, and behavior: The science of addiction*. [Link](#).

## HELPFUL RESOURCES:

### Online Articles & Videos:

- [Teen Health: Substance Use & Abuse](#) (video)
- [Start a Conversation: 10 Questions Teens Ask About Drugs and Health](#)
- [What are the Signs of Having a Problem with Drugs?](#)
- [Drug Facts](#): Get the facts on commonly used drugs & how they impact your brain

### Additional Resources:

- [NIDA National Drug & Alcohol IQ Challenge Kahoot](#)
- [The Safe Communities Coalition](#) offers resources to assist in making your home a safe, healthy, drug free environment.
- [Community In Crisis](#) is a local nonprofit with extensive resources and information for parents and teens about alcohol, drugs, and vaping.

**Caregivers:** Clean out your medicine cabinet and drop off old and unused prescription medications in [several permanent locations throughout the county](#).

## CHALLENGES & AWARDS

### The Enrique Camarena Red Ribbon Award

Know someone who is an outstanding leader in the field of drug prevention? Tell us about them. This annual award recognizes and honors individuals who personify Agent Camarena's belief that one person can make a difference. Visit [www.redribbon.org/downloads](http://www.redribbon.org/downloads). Nominations must be received by December 2, 2021.

### Take the #DrugFreeLooksLikeMe Social Media Challenge

Show us what Drug Free Looks like! Have someone take a picture of you holding up the [Red Ribbon Theme Sign](#) and post it to Social Media during Red Ribbon Week from October 23 through 31st. Add the hashtags #DrugFreeLooksLikeMe and #RedRibbonWeek. You could win an Amazon gift card!

### Family Table Time

Did you know that teens who eat dinner with their families are less likely to use drugs and alcohol? Family Table Time is an innovative, all-in-one, 52-week family activity kit that establishes lifelong healthy habits, rituals, and traditions. The materials will get you up to speed on having weekly family meetings including new character/value topics, creating memories from the week, and staying organized. It also includes a weekly fun activity - ideal for school-aged families - that promotes values, ethics and principles. Learn more by visiting their website: [www.FamilyTableTime.com](http://www.FamilyTableTime.com)



**WHRHS Student Assistance Counselors are here to help!**

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