

Nurses' Nook....from the heart

Just this past week I learned of another young adult that I knew who lost her life to an overdose. Addiction is a long term, chronic disease that is killing our young adults and teens at an alarming rate. The National Institute on Drug Abuse states that Massachusetts is among the top ten states with the highest rates of overdose deaths with a rate in 2016 of 29.7 overdose deaths per 100,000 people. During that same period of time the national rate was 13.3/100,000. (NIDA Feb, 2018). I'm not sure what is going wrong or how it can be fixed but these deaths are tragic.

Some of the best advice out there is for parents to keep a very close eye on their children; know who their friends are, where they are, and what they are doing. Talk to your children about drug use and abuse as well as other subjects. Keep an open mind about the possibility that your own child could be engaging in risky behavior. The data above show us that a fair amount of kids actually are partaking in substance abuse, so please be vigilant.

In addition, research shows us that the younger a person is when they start using drugs, alcohol, or nicotine the more likely they are to become addicted.

Here are some medication recommendations to be extra safe, should your child have an injury or need surgery (including wisdom tooth removal). These recommendations are from Daniel Muse, MD, an emergency physician at Brockton Hospital and a Fellow of the American Academy of Emergency Medicine who works with the drug task force in Brockton:

- Narcotic pain relievers should NOT be the primary source of pain relief
- Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), naproxen (Aleve), and acetaminophen (Tylenol) should be utilized first
- Immobilization, ice, elevation, and rest will help relieve pain
- IF your child is prescribed a narcotic pain reliever it should be for NO MORE than 3 days and NO MORE than 3 times per day
- In addition parents should receive education from the prescriber about narcotics:
 - Addiction potential
 - Risk of mixing
 - Warning about driving
 - How to store and dispose of narcotics

The National Institute on Drug Abuse has [a page about preventing drug use](#) that has a lot of interesting and helpful information. Please read it and keep yourself informed.

As always, feel free to contact the nurse at your child's school with any questions.

In addition ALL of our school nurses have FREE medication disposal packets that you can have to dispose of any unused prescription or over-the-counter medication you may have leftover in your home.