

# Get the Facts

## Teacher's guide



Government  
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## Objective

The goal of this presentation is to provide teachers with resources to help their grade 4 to 6 students understand the risks of substance use.

### **The program includes:**

- Basic information about alcohol, cannabis, tobacco and vaping products;
- their short- and long-term effects;
- information about addiction, stigma, and peer pressure; and
- ways to protect mental and physical health.

It also includes some interactive activities to keep students engaged. This page aims to provide you with tips and tools to host your own Get the Facts lesson.

## Engaging youth

This program provides everything needed to build your own Get the Facts lesson, including a slideshow, speaking notes, and additional resources. The materials deliver fact-based information, thought-provoking activities, and tools to help your students make healthy choices.

## Engaging youth

**Here are some tips to help you engage with your students in a way that promotes open and positive communication:**

- **Active listening:** Ask open-ended questions, encourage discussion and let them know you hear them.
- **Get in the right frame of mind:** Understand their perspective.
- **Respond clearly:** Answer their questions.
- **Be straightforward:** Let them know your intent.
- **Be calm:** Offer a relaxed, judgement-free zone.

To learn about more strategies for talking to youth about substances, see [Talking with teenagers about drugs and alcohol](#) and [Talking with your kids about cannabis](#).

## Planning a Get the Facts lesson

**Estimated duration: Approximately 60 – 90 minutes**

- Introduction (2 – 5 mins)
- Types of Substances (15 – 20 mins)
- Healthy Heroes (5 – 10 mins)
- Effects of Substances (10 – 15 mins)
- Addiction (5 – 10 mins)
- Mental Health (5 – 10 mins)
- Peer Pressure (5 – 10 mins)
- Additional Resources and Q&A (5 – 10 mins)

## Planning a Get the Facts lesson

### Things to consider:

- **Location:** This program can easily be done from your regular classroom. For home learning, students should find an area in their home where they are comfortable.
- **Technical requirements:** You will need internet access and a projector or large monitor to share the module content for the class.
- Students with access to individual computer, tablet or mobile devices will be able to engage with the interactive content on their own screens.

## Additional resources

Do your students still have questions about alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, or vaping products? Continue the conversation with these resources, available for teachers, guardians and students:

- [Get the Facts Summary](#)
- [General information on substances](#)
- [Toolkit for talking with teenagers about drugs and alcohol](#)
- [Kids Help Phone](#)
- [Cannabis and mental health - Canada.ca](#)

## Get the Facts lesson guide

### Before getting started, please ensure you have the following:

- The Get the Facts slides are set up and visible to the students.
- Students have access to a computer or tablet (if available) so they can engage in the interactive activities such as trivia and two learning games.

### Learning Games: Choose between printing and following along in class or having students participate on devices.

### There are two learning games that can be played following the presentation:

- **Healthy Heroes:** Follow the Healthy Heroes as they encounter these substances while trying to save the city from the evil Dr. Disarray. Students will learn about the effects of cannabis, alcohol, tobacco, and vaping on the brain and the body.
  - ◇ [Interactive comic book](#)
  - ◇ [Printable worksheet](#)
- **Pressure Points:** The Pressure Points activity provides students with strategies for handling peer pressure scenarios.
  - ◇ [Interactive online game](#)
  - ◇ [Printable worksheets](#)

### Teacher's notes legend:

Directions are **outlined in white**



## Post-module survey

Thank you for participating in Health Canada's Get the Facts teacher-led module. We hope you found the content and its delivery informative for your students.

We would love your feedback on the module! Please take a few minutes to fill out the [Teacher Feedback Survey](#) if you haven't already and let us know how we did.

**Health Canada also offers other programs on substance use, including:**

- [Know More Opioids](#)
- [Harms of Substance Use Stigma](#)
- [Consider the Consequences of Vaping](#)

Find out more at [HealthCanadaExperiences.ca](https://www.healthcanada.ca/HealthCanadaExperiences.ca).



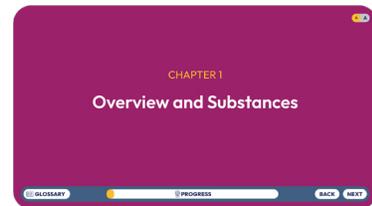
## Slide 1

Good [morning/afternoon], class. Today we are going to have a special presentation.



## Slide 2

**Chapter One:**  
Overview and Substances



## Slide 3

Get the Facts is a program developed by the Government of Canada.

Today, we're going to talk about alcohol, cannabis, tobacco and vaping products and how they can be bad for your health, especially for young people like you. If you don't know what these are, don't worry. We'll be talking about each one in a bit.

[More...](#)



### Slide 3 cont.

Raise your hand if you have a question along the way.

No question is silly and will help all of us learn together.



### Slide 4

Now, as we go through today's presentation, there is a challenge for you!

I want you to write down some of the facts that resonate with you, that will help you remember what you've learned today.

These are called Building Blocks.

There is no right or wrong way to do this. What you write down could be something that really stands out to you, something new you learned, a fact you want your friends to know – anything that will help you remember.

Get out a pen and paper so you can start your own Get the Facts Building Blocks as we go along.

When we get to the end, if anyone has a block that they want to share, I would love to hear them, but it's completely up to you!



## Slide 5

Today we'll talk about alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, and vaping products. These are called "substances."

We are going to talk about what these substances are, and how they can change the way your brain and body work. This includes how they can affect your mental health, like thoughts and feelings.

We're also going to do a fun activity and talk about peer pressure and how to deal with it.



## Glossary

We may be discussing some words today that are unfamiliar to you, so we'll take some time now to go over them.



## Slide 6

Why do people use alcohol, cannabis, tobacco and vaping products?

You may know adults in your life or have seen adults on television who use alcohol, cannabis, tobacco and vaping products with friends or for medical or religious reasons.



## Slide 7

For example, you may have seen an adult drinking a glass of wine, having a beer, vaping or smoking. But it doesn't mean these substances are safe, especially not for kids like you.

Now we're going to give you the basic facts about each substance. Then we'll get into some of the risks that you should know about.



## Slide 8

Some of you may know about alcohol already because a lot of people drink it. Alcohol is an ingredient that's in drinks like beer and wine.

[More...](#)



## Slide 8 cont.

Drinking alcohol can lead to intoxication, which is another way of saying “being drunk.” When people are drunk, they might not be able to move their body well. They can have trouble thinking clearly, remembering and focusing. Drinking alcohol can also affect your thoughts and feelings.

Alcohol can have long lasting effects on your body and can hurt your organs, like your brain, liver and heart.



## Slide 9

Next up is cannabis. Cannabis, has many different names like “pot,” “marijuana” or “weed.”

Cannabis is a plant that has chemicals in it. These chemicals can change the way a person thinks and feels. You may have heard an older sibling or adult talk about feeling ‘high’, which is one of the effects of using cannabis. It can affect your ability to think clearly and do certain activities.

[More...](#)



## Slide 9 cont.

Most people use cannabis by smoking or vaping it. Another common way is by eating it. You can tell if a product is legal because it comes in sealed packaging and has a yellow health warning.

Sometimes edible cannabis can look like candies or chocolate, and it can be hard to tell they have cannabis in them.



## Slide 10

There have been some cases of kids accidentally eating candy, cookies, or brownies that have cannabis in them, which caused 'cannabis poisoning' and the need for the kids to be rushed to the hospital. This is one of the reasons you need to be careful when taking food from people you don't know.

Sometimes edible cannabis can look like candies or chocolate, and it can be hard to tell they have cannabis in them.

If you see a cannabis leaf on any product, even one that looks like a treat you normally enjoy, don't eat it because it might contain cannabis.



## Slide 11

And the last substance we are going to cover today is tobacco.

Tobacco is actually a leaf from a plant, but it contains a drug called nicotine, along with many other harmful chemicals.

Tobacco is often smoked, usually in a cigarette. Smoking cigarettes and exposure to cigarette smoke can harm many parts of your body, and it can be deadly over the long-term.

Tobacco has some cultural uses that are different than smoking a cigarette. To many First Nations and some Métis communities in Canada, tobacco is considered sacred. Sacred tobacco is harvested and used differently than what exists in products like cigarettes.

Nicotine is also found in vaping products. It can be very addictive and harmful to young, developing brains. We'll dive into this more a little later on.



## Slide 12

I want to take a moment to talk about vaping because you may have seen a friend or family member using a vaping product before. Both cannabis and nicotine can be vaped, each with their own risks.

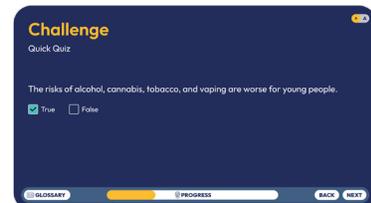
Vaping either substance exposes you to chemicals that can interfere with healthy brain development and can lead to addiction.

Some adults may vape nicotine to quit smoking, but nicotine poses a greater risk for youth.



## Slide 13a

We just chatted about the three different substances and their risks. Is it true or false that these substances are riskier and more harmful to youth?

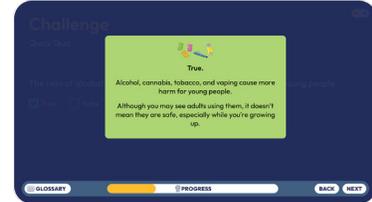


**Allow the class to complete activity together as a group with a show of hands or individually / in pairs on devices.**

## Slide 13b

**It is true**, the risks are greater for youth and can cause more harm. Although you may see adults using them, it doesn't mean they are safe, especially while you're growing up.

Now, let's do a fun activity that will bring some of these risks and effects to life!



## Slide 14



Choose between printing and following along in class or having students participate on devices:

- [Interactive comic book](#)
- [Printable worksheet](#)



Now we are going to work through an activity called Healthy Heroes.

Each of the heroes lose their abilities when they encounter a substance (smoke, smog, spray) that gives a reaction in their bodies that mimic vaping nicotine, consuming alcohol and consuming cannabis.

Your mission is to identify which substance causes each effect to help the heroes overcome or avoid them and save the city.

## Slide 15

Although these substances are all different, they have a few things in common.

- They can change how a person's body or brain works for a few hours after use.
- Using them comes with health risks, especially when you're a kid or teen, because your brain and body are still developing.
- They can be addictive and lead to other mental health problems over time.



## Slide 16

We just covered the facts and risks of alcohol, cannabis, tobacco and vaping.

Take this time to make a note in your Building Blocks. You can start it off with 'One thing that surprised me about these substances is...' I'll give you a minute...

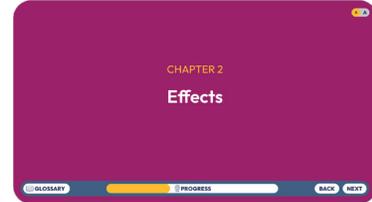


**Once the students have finished writing, you can move on to the next subject.**

Great, let's get into some of the short and long-term effects that you should know about.

## Slide 17

### Chapter Two: Effects



## Slide 18

There are both short-term and long-term effects of alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, and vaping products. To start, we are going to discuss the short-term effects.



## Slide 19

### Short-term effects of using substances can include:

- Affecting the way you think and feel, which can make you worried, nervous or sad.
- Making it harder to learn and remember things, which can reduce your ability to do well at school.
- Making it harder for you to pay attention and make decisions.

[More...](#)



## Slide 19 cont.

- Affecting your balance and being able to react quickly. This could make it hard to participate in the activities you love, like playing sports and musical instruments. When you're older, it could affect being able to drive.

Although these are short-term effects, some effects can last for hours or days after use.

There are also long-term effects that you should know about.



## Slide 20

You need to know that using alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, and vaping products is especially risky for kids and teens.

Why are you more at risk? Well, did you know that your brain is not done growing and developing until you're 25 years old?

So, if you use alcohol, cannabis, tobacco or vaping products before then, it can change or affect the way your brain grows and have long-term impacts.

[More...](#)



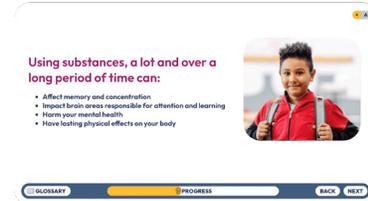
## Slide 20 cont.

These changes to healthy brain development can impact you in different ways. **This includes:**

- Affecting memory and your ability to focus
- Impacting the areas of your brain that control attention and learning
- Making you feel more nervous, worried, or sad in general

Using substances can also cause damage to other parts of your body, like to your lungs, heart and liver. It can also cause certain diseases like cancer.

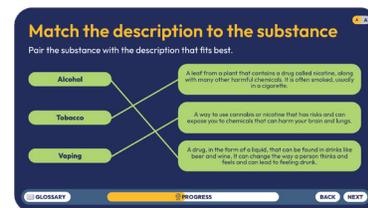
These substances can also be addictive, which is a word we will talk about in a bit.



## Slide 21

Pair the substance to the description that fits best.

More...



Allow the class to complete activity together as a group with a show of hands or individually / in pairs on devices.

## Slide 21 cont.

### Alcohol

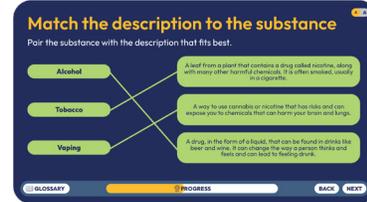
A drug, in the form of a liquid, that can be found in drinks like beer and wine. It can change the way a person thinks and feels and can lead to feeling drunk.

### Tobacco

A leaf from a plant that contains a drug called nicotine, along with many other harmful chemicals. It is often smoked, usually in a cigarette.

### Vaping

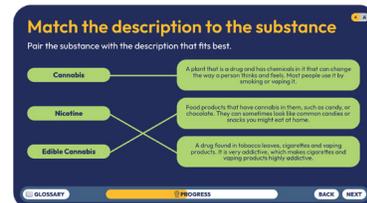
A way to use cannabis or nicotine that has risks and can expose you to chemicals that can harm your brain and lungs.



## Slide 22

Pair the substance to the description that fits best.

More...



Allow the class to complete activity together as a group with a show of hands or individually / in pairs on devices.

## Slide 22 cont.

### Cannabis

A plant that is a drug and has chemicals in it that can change the way a person thinks and feels. Most people use it by smoking or vaping it.

### Nicotine

A drug found in tobacco leaves, cigarettes and vaping products. It is very addictive, which makes cigarettes and vaping products highly addictive.

### Edible cannabis

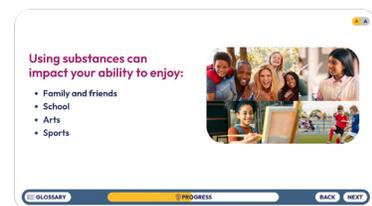
Food products that have cannabis in them, such as candy, or chocolate. They can sometimes look like common candies or snacks you might eat at home.



## Slide 23

As we talked about, the effects of using alcohol, cannabis, tobacco and vaping products can make certain parts of life harder, especially for kids and teens.

This can lead to challenges at school and in your relationships with family and friends.



## Slide 24-27

Can you match the substance to the correct effect?

When you drink **[alcohol]**, it can cause you to feel drunk.

**[Cannabis]** can cause you to feel 'high.'

**[Tobacco]** comes from a plant and contains many chemicals, including nicotine, which can cause a person to have an addiction.

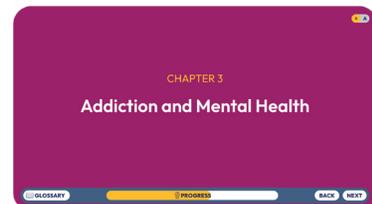
**[Vaping]** products can contain chemicals that can interfere with healthy brain development and can lead to addiction.



Allow the class to complete activity together as a group with a show of hands or individually / in pairs on devices.

## Slide 28

**Chapter Three:**  
Addiction & Mental Health



## Slide 29

Next, we are going to cover addiction.



## Slide 30a

Let's start with a quick quiz.

Which of these substances can be addictive? Select all that apply.



Allow the class to complete activity together as a group with a show of hands or individually / in pairs on devices.

## Slide 30b

**All of the substances** we have talked about can be addictive.



## Slide 31

Did you know that all of the substances we have talked about can be addictive?

Addiction is when someone has a strong desire to do something again and again in a way that is hard to control or stop. Addiction is actually considered a disease since it changes your brain, making you crave and keep taking the substance, even if you want to stop.

When talking about alcohol, cannabis, tobacco and vaping products, a person might continue to use these even though it might be causing problems for them or others, like their family or friends. Some people facing addiction can find it hard to take care of themselves or others, since their brain is so focused on the need to keep taking the substance.

Kids and teens may become addicted to these substances more easily and/or faster than adults because their brain and body are still developing and growing.

It's important to remember that people may choose to use a substance, but no one chooses to develop an addiction. However, people can get better with the right help.



## Slide 32

Using substances like alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, and vaping products can impact your mental health.

Some people may use these substances to help when they are worried, sad or generally struggling.

Though it may feel like it's helping in the moment, using substances can actually make things worse over time.

Let's talk about mental health and how to take care of it.



## Slide 33

Mental health is your feelings, thoughts, and emotions. It also helps you to deal with challenges and stress.

Your mental health can be impacted by many different things in your life, so no one person's experience is the same. It's normal to experience challenges from time to time.

[More...](#)



## Slide 33 cont.

Some people use substances to deal with their mental health challenges.

For example, if they are feeling nervous or worried, they may use a substance to try and take those feelings away.

While this might help for a little while, using substances to stop these feelings will actually make things worse over time.

However, as we have just seen, there are a lot of risks to using substances. So, let's chat about other ways you can build strong mental health.

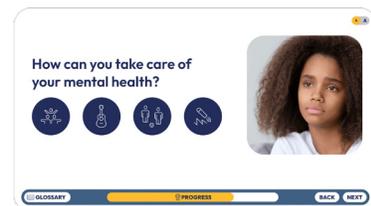


## Slide 34

It's always important to take care of your mental health – you don't need to wait until you're having a tough time.

It can be hard to deal with feeling sad, angry, anxious or nervous.

[More...](#)



## Slide 34 cont.

Going outside, spending time with friends and family who make you feel safe and happy or taking part in activities you enjoy, like music, sports or drawing, can help you feel better.

If you need help dealing with negative feelings, it's important to ask for help from your parents, teachers or other adults you trust.



## Slide 35

We just covered addiction and mental health.

Take this time to make a note on your Building Blocks page.

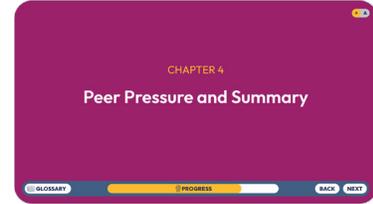
You can start it off with 'One thing I want to learn more about after this presentation is...'

I'll give you a minute...



## Slide 36

### Chapter Four: Peer Pressure & Summary



## Slide 37

Now we're going to talk about peer pressure.

Peer pressure is when someone tries to get you to do something you wouldn't normally do that may make you feel uncomfortable.

For a lot of teens, the first time they try alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, or vaping products is because a friend is encouraging them to do so.

It's normal to want to fit in, and there can be both positive and negative peer pressure.

An example of positive peer pressure would be if your friends want you to join a fun new club or sports team at school with them.



[More...](#)

## Slide 37 cont.

An example of negative peer pressure would be if your friends encouraged you to leave another friend out of your game at recess.

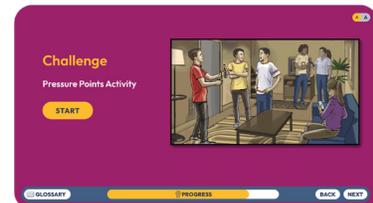
It's ok to like what your friends like, but it's important that your choices feel right for you, too.

When it comes to substances, you can say 'no', and your friends should respect your decision.



## Slide 38

When it comes to peer pressure, it's all about choices, Pressure Points is an activity we are going to complete to help you know some of the choices you can consider when it comes to peer pressure.



**Allow the class to complete activity together as a group or individually / in pairs on devices.**

## Slide 39

It's likely you will all face peer pressure at some point as you grow up, so how can you handle these situations?



## Slide 40

If you're ever feeling pressured, here are a few ideas you could try to remove yourself from the situation. You may even want to jot some of these ideas down if they speak to you.

- Be honest with your friends, let them know you're not ready or comfortable taking substances. If they're good friends, they will support you.
- Say 'no thanks' or 'I'm not interested'.
- Use a previous commitment, something like 'I'm late for practice' or 'I have to get home to do my chores'.
- Make it about your parents/guardians. You could say 'I'd be in so much trouble, it's not worth it,' 'I'm grounded and have to go home' or 'my parents/guardian will be able to tell, I don't want to risk it.'



[More...](#)

## Slide 40 cont.

You can always talk to an adult like me, or a parent about any questions or ideas you might have.

Hopefully, today's activity and information helped you find something that will work for you when you face peer pressure.



## Slide 41

We covered a lot of stuff today, so let's do a quick summary.

Although these substances are all different, they have a few things in common:

- They can change how a person's body or brain works for a few hours after use.
- Using substances comes with long and short-term health risks, especially when you're a kid or teen because your brain and body are still developing until around the age of 25.
- The effects of using alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, and vaping products can impact your ability to do the things you enjoy.

[More...](#)



## Slide 41 cont.

- Substances can be addictive and lead to other mental health problems over time.
- When it comes to substances, you can say 'no', and your friends should respect your decision.

After today's presentation I will share the links to the activities we enjoyed so if you didn't have time to finish or want to play again you will be able to access them.



## Slide 42

Does anyone want to share a Building Block with us?

Raise your hand, and I'll call on you.



## Slide 43

Thank you for your time and attention today. Does anyone have any questions?

If you're not comfortable asking in front of the class, you can come speak to me later as well.



## Slide 44

Talking about substances and mental health can bring up strong feelings.

If you or someone you know is struggling with, or has questions about, substance use and/or mental health and you aren't comfortable talking to the adults in your life about your feelings, Kids Help Phone is there.

Kids Help Phone offers confidential support in both English and French by phone and text, 24/7, as well as live, online chat in the evenings if you don't have a phone.



## Slide 45

Thank you for participating in Health Canada's Get the Facts teacher-led module.

This presentation and additional resources can be found at [HealthCanadaExperiences.ca](https://www.healthcanada.ca/healthcanadaexperiences)



## Slide 46

We would love your feedback on the module!



A short survey has been provided at the end of the presentation to gather student feedback. Please encourage your students to complete.

**Health Canada also offers other programs on substance use, including:**

- [Know More Opioids](#)
- [Harms of Substance Use Stigma](#)
- [Consider the Consequences of Vaping](#)

Find out more at [HealthCanadaExperiences.ca](https://www.healthcanada.ca/HealthCanadaExperiences.ca).