

# Get the Facts

## Summary

Get the Facts is a virtual presentation that engages and educates students about alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, and vaping products and how they can change the way the brain and body work. This includes how they can affect mental health.

### WHAT ARE ALCOHOL, CANNABIS, TOBACCO, AND VAPING PRODUCTS?

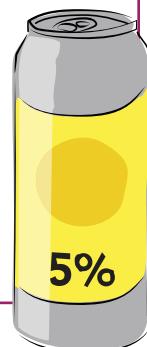
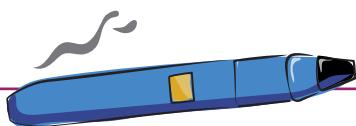
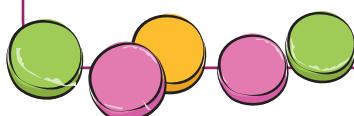
**Alcohol** is a drug that can change the way a person thinks and feels and can lead them to feel drunk. It's risky because it can harm your health, both physically and mentally.

**Cannabis** is a plant that can change the way a person thinks and feels and can lead them to feel high. It's risky because it interferes with the normal functions of your brain and body as you grow. Sometimes, it's really hard to know whether something has cannabis in it.

**Tobacco** is often smoked, usually in a cigarette. It's risky because it contains many chemicals that are very harmful to many parts of your body. It's also risky because nicotine can be addictive and can harm a young, developing brain.

**Vaping Products** are a way to use cannabis or nicotine that has risks and can expose you to chemicals that can harm your brain.

All these substances can change how a person's body or brain works. Using them comes with physical and mental health risks, especially for kids or teens.



## SHORT AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF SUBSTANCE USE

### Short-term Effects

- Affect the way you think and feel, which can make you worried, nervous or sad.
- Make it harder to learn and remember things, which can reduce the ability to do well at school.
- Make it harder for you to pay attention and make decisions.
- Affect balance and being able to react quickly. This could make it hard to participate in the activities you love, like sports or playing a musical instrument, and when you're older, being able to drive.

### Long-term Effects

- Affect memory and concentration.
- Impact brain areas responsible for attention and learning.
- Harm your mental health.
- Have lasting physical effects on your body.

## ADDICTION

During the presentation your students learnt that all of the substances covered can be addictive.

Addiction was defined as 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 and even though it may be causing problems for you or others, like family or friends. It was explained that although people may choose to use a substance, no one chooses to develop an addiction and that people can get better with the right help.

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

## SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH

Using substances can impact 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.

## HOW CAN YOU TAKE CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH?

You can encourage your students to take care of their mental health by:



Going outside.



Spending time with friends and family who make them feel safe and happy.



Taking part in activities they enjoy, like music, sports or drawing.



Speaking to a parent, teacher or other trusted adult if they need help dealing with negative feelings.