Raising Healthy Teens

Special Edition
Mental Health & Medication Safety

Promoting the Health & Safety of Kent & South County Teens

Fall 2020

New TikTok 'Benadryl Challenge' a Serious Threat to Teens

TikTok challenges — and before the app, challenges done by teenagers in general — aren't anything new. Since the pandemic started, they've largely focused on learning dance moves or doing push-ups — but a new, more dangerous TikTok challenge has recently emerged: teenagers taking large amounts of Benadryl to "trip," also known as a "Benadryl challenge."

Recently, the disturbing trend allegedly caused the death of a 15-year-old teenager from Oklahoma. The girl's death follows a report of three Texas teens who were hospitalized in May after overdosing on the allergy medicine. All three teens told medical staff they got the idea after watching videos on TikTok saying they could get high and hallucinate if they took a dozen or more Benadryl tablets. Scott Schaeffer, director of the Oklahoma Center for Poison and Drug Information, said the dose of diphenhydramine (Benadryl) that kids are taking "is very close to the dose that can cause something potentially life-threatening."

While Benadryl seems like an innocent-enough drug, it can cause health issues if it's abused, Gina Posner, MD, a board-certified pediatrician at MemorialCare Orange Coast Medical Center in Fountain Valley, California, told *Health* magazine. "It's fine in small doses but taking large doses is a bad idea," she says.

What Does Benadryl Do, Exactly?

Benadryl is a brand-name, over-the-counter version of diphenhydramine. It's a type of sedating antihistamine, which blocks histamines — chemicals in some of your body's cells that are released as part of your body's response to an allergy, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) says. Benadryl is also an anticholinergic drug which "blocks the cholinergic nervous system, responsible for saliva and tear production, and facilitates bodily functions such as urination, heart rate, body temperature, brain and eye functioning," says Robert Weber, PharmD, administrator for pharmacy services at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. "As a result, taking Benadryl can lead to side effects like a faster-than-normal heartbeat, dry mouth, and dry eyes."

Essentially, Benadryl can impact your whole body. "Just as an allergic reaction can affect multiple organ systems of the body, Benadryl can affect multiple organ systems," Ashanti Woods, MD, a pediatrician at Baltimore's Mercy Medical Center, recently told *Health* magazine.

"Large amounts cause exaggerated effects," Dr. Weber says, adding that serious issues with high blood pressure, hallucinations, seizures, brain damage and heart attack can arise after taking too much, not to mention lesser side effects such as high temperature, confusion, unsteadiness, blurred vision, and nausea or vomiting.

Johnson & Johnson, Benadryl's parent company, issued a statement denouncing the TikTok Benadryl challenge, saying the trend is "extremely concerning, dangerous and should be stopped immediately." The drugmaker warned that abuse or misuse of Benadryl, as with any drug, "can lead to serious side effects with

(continued on back cover)

Rhode Island Reports Increase in Deaths from Drug Overdose

Rhode Island experienced a significant increase in accidental drug overdose deaths in the first quarter of 2020 compared with the same period in years past, according to early data from the State Department of Health.

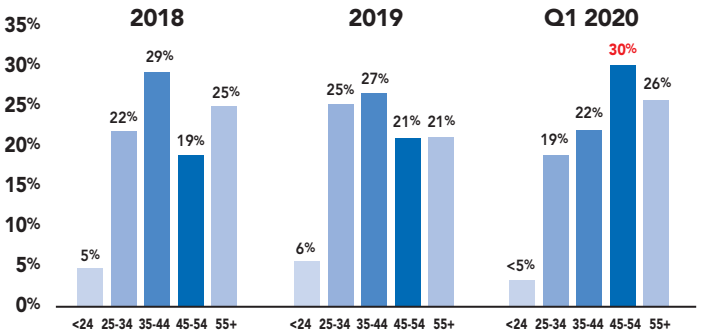
In a recent news release, the department said it anticipates that between 93 and 95 people will have died of accidental drug overdoses during this period, representing roughly a 22% increase compared to the same time period in 2019.

One suspected factor, according to the department, is the presence of extremely lethal synthetic opioids, such as carfentanil, a synthetic opioid far deadlier than highly lethal fentanyl. Another suspected factor is the stress of living during a pandemic.

Department Director Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott said "illicit drugs have always been dangerous, but right now they are more deadly than ever. Make sure friends and family have naloxone available — it can save a life and give someone an opportunity to take the first step on their personal journey of recovery. There is hope for everyone because recovery is absolutely possible."

Kathryn Power, head of the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals, said, "COVID-19 has made it more challenging for people with substance use disorder to stay connected to life-saving resources and support. Polysubstance use, including the use of stimulants like methamphetamine, cocaine, and crack-cocaine, are also on the rise."

Proportion of Fatal Overdose Deaths by Age Group 2018 – Q1 2020



Source: Office of the State Medical Examiners (OSME), Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH). Data updated as of July, 7 2020. Note: Data reflect accidental drug overdose deaths and do not include suicides, homicides, or undetermined deaths.

Anyone experiencing opioid withdrawal can connect with a health-care provider by calling Rhode Island's Buprenorphine Hotline, 401-606-5456. Fire stations in Providence, Newport, and Woonsocket are "safe stations," open daily to help people in crisis connect to a peer-recovery support specialist and treatment and recovery support services.

Deaths from Drug Overdose *(continued)*

Learn more about drug overdose prevention at preventoverdoseri.org — including information about naloxone, brand name Narcan, which can reverse an opioid overdose. "In Rhode Island, you can get naloxone at your local pharmacy without a prescription from a doctor," according to the news release. "When you buy naloxone at a pharmacy, the pharmacist can show you how to use it."

How You Can Help Combat the Opioid Crisis in Rhode Island

Do you live in a rural Rhode Island community?
Do you want to help combat the opioid crisis?

Now more than ever, with so many people at home, cut-off from the support they typically receive, it's crucial we have people who understand how to recognize and respond to an opioid overdose. Seconds make a difference between life and death.

The Community First Responder Program from the University of Rhode Island was developed to address this issue head-on. The program offers two ways to become a certified Community First Responder and receive free harm reduction supplies including naloxone (Narcan) and fentanyl test strips by mail. You can request a live WebEx seminar for your group or organization by emailing us at uriCFRP@etal.uri.edu or take an interactive online Community First Responder module on our website at https://web.uri.edu/cfrp/.

Online Learning Modules

Community members are invited to browse through our six interactive, educational learning modules with in-depth information about the opioid epidemic, including how to recognize and respond to an overdose. Each module takes about 10 minutes to complete and provides valuable resources to help you or a loved one connect with prevention, treatment and recovery options.

CFRP is also collaborating with CVS to provide information and distribute naloxone (Narcan) and fentanyl test strips in parking lots at CVS locations around Rhode Island. This program has been very successful in reaching "higher risk" populations.

For full CVS location list, Click Here!

Experts Searching for Reasons Why Youth Suicide on the Rise

The suicide rate among 10 to 24 year-olds increased nearly 60% between 2007 and 2018, according to a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The rise occurred in most states, with 42 experiencing significant increases.

"It's a real trend that has been demanding, for a while, a serious public health and research effort to understand what's happening and why," said Anna Mueller, associate professor of sociology at Indiana University Bloomington studying adolescent suicides.

Possible Factors Driving the Rise in Youth Suicide

A CDC survey in August on how COVID-19 is affecting Americans' mental health found 75% of respondents aged 18 to 24, reported at least one adverse mental or behavioral health symptom with 25% in that age group seriously considering suicide in the 30 days before completing the survey.

Experts say stressors such as climate change, which has been found to have roughly the same effect on suicides as an economic recession, has become an increasing concern for young people. Fear of school shootings and the prohibitive cost of college may also be factors. Many children, experts say, are struggling to imagine their futures. Spotty mental health screening, poor access to mental health services and stigma may also be obstacles to getting help to those considering suicide.

Suicidal Thoughts in Children are Not Uncommon

Adolescence is a vulnerable time when children are developing their sense of self — who they are and who they can be. When kids hit adolescence, they experience so many changes at once, including puberty. Their environments often change as they enter high school, which is typically larger and less personal. These changes can weaken safety nets.

But Mueller cautioned not to lose sight of the fact that suicidal thoughts are not uncommon, especially among young people. "It is fairly normal for kids to have thoughts of suicide at times during adolescence and early adulthood," she said. "We need to be prepared to talk about it openly and honestly."

Is Your Home Suicide Proof?

Every year, millions of kids and teenagers seriously think about attempting suicide. You might think your child or teenager is not at risk for suicide, but why take a chance? These simple things can help you suicide proof your home and might save someone's life.

Remove Firearms for Now

Firearms are used in almost half of teen suicides.

- Remove all guns from your home and store securely where a child or teenager can't get them. Ask your police department or shooting range if they can temporarily store your gun.
- If you must keep guns in your home, keep them in a locked box or gun cabinet. Keep bullets in a different locked box or gun cabinet and make sure children and teenagers can't get keys.

Store Medications Safely & Securely

Pills are the most common way for teens to attempt suicide.

- If someone in your house has a prescription for opioids or other controlled substances, store them in a locked box.
- *Get your FREE medication lock bag.* ***Click Here!***
- Before you take a dose of the medicine, count the number of pills that are in the bottle to make sure none are missing.
- Throw away any unused or expired medications. Find a medication drop box near you. ***Locations on back page.***

Talk, Listen & Give Support

- Pay attention to your teen's moods and behaviors. Warning signs of suicide are not always obvious.
- If you notice significant changes, talk to your teen or help them find someone to talk to.

RI RESOURCES

BH Link Hotline — 401-414-LINK (414-5465)
24/7, 365 days/yr

Kids' Link RI — (855) 543-5465
www.lifespan.org/centers-services/kids-link-ri

National Suicide Hotline — 1-800-273-TALK (273-8255)
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/

Change Direction *(Mental/Emotional Health)*
www.changedirection.org/

Massachusetts and Rhode Island Poison Control
http://www.maripoisoncenter.com

Parents Support Network of RI
(401) 467-6855 or (800) 483-8844 www.psnri.org

www.Preventoverdoseri.org **www.riprevention.org**
www.riprc.org **www.samaritansri.org**

TikTok 'Benadryl Challenge' *(continued from front cover)*

potentially long-lasting consequences," and added that all products in the Benadryl line "should only be used as directed by the label." The drugmaker also noted that it is "working with TikTok and our partners to do what we can to stop this dangerous trend, including the removal of content across social platforms that showcase this behavior."

If you or someone you know take too much Benadryl (or combine it with other medications that make it more potent), it's essential to seek medical care right away by calling 911 or a local poison control center that can connect you with emergency care.

Adapted from article by Korin Miller for Health Magazine

Rx Meds & OTC Drop Locations

Block Island Police Department
10 Beach Avenue, New Shoreham 401.466.3220

Charlestown Police Department
4901 Old Post Road, Charlestown 401.364.1212

East Greenwich Police Department
176 1st Avenue, East Greenwich

Hopkinton Police Department
406 Woodville Road, Hopkinton 401.377.7750

Narragansett Police Department
40 Caswell Street, Narragansett 401.789.1091

Narragansett Indian Tribal Police
4375-B South County Trail, Charlestown 401.364.1100

North Kingstown Police Department
8166 Post Road, North Kingstown 401.294.3316

Rhode Island State Police (two locations)
54 Nooseneck Road, Richmond 401.444.1068
7875 Post Road, North Kingstown 401.444.1064

Richmond Police Department
1168 Main Street, Richmond 401.539.8289

South Kingstown Police Department
1790 Kingstown Road, Wakefield 401.783 3321

Warwick Police Department
99 Veterans Memorial Drive, Warwick

West Warwick Police Department
1162 Main Street, West Warwick

Westerly Police Department
60 Airport Road, Westerly 401.596.2022

CVS Pharmacies — available at 24-hour locations

Coping Skills vs. Self-Medication

Self-medication is one of the ways people, young and old, turn to when looking to relieve stress, anxiety, unresolved trauma, depression, and other struggles of everyday life and try to treat their troubling ailment without speaking to a doctor.

From peer pressure and stress at school, to the struggles of growing up and just trying to "fit in," teens can be prone to try self-medicating. And today, it may be easier for teens since they can access drugs or alcohol through social media, peer groups or the family medicine cabinet.

The first part in understanding self-medication in your teen is to find the why. That way parents can better address the reason behind the behavior — whether it's alcohol, marijuana, other drugs, or using food as a source of comfort.

Understanding what may be driving their teen to self-medicate and looking at changes in their behavior, moods, patterns, and habits, parents can be more effective in helping them cope with problems and stressors in a healthy, productive way.

Offer Coping Skills to Avoid Teen Self-Medicating

Believe it or not, what seems to be simple suggestions by parents or caregivers to their teen on how to cope with a problem or stress, can actually be a very effective way to teach them a skill to utilize each time they feel overwhelmed, stressed or down and help them avoid the temptation for self-medication.

If you notice your teen struggling with schoolwork or a friendship drama or experiencing depression, don't hesitate to suggest an activity such as going for a walk alone or with a friend, make a music playlist, Facetime a friend or relative, or shop whether it's in-store (with mask and social distancing) or online. It may be just the thing they need to break the cycle of anxiety or stress.

More ideas for activities that teens can use as coping mechanisms can be found on the *YourLifeYourVoice.org* website at *https://www.yourlifeyourvoice.org/Pages/tip-why-care-about-coping-skills.aspx?Topic=Coping%20Skills*.

South County Prevention Coalition
Member of Rhode Island Regional Coalitions

Kent County Prevention Coalition
Member of Rhode Island Regional Coalitions

BHDDH

For more information contact South County Prevention Coalition Director Heidi Driscoll at hdriscoll@risas.org or Kent County Prevention Coalition Director Kathy Sullivan at ksullivan@risas.org and please visit us at **www.riprevention.org** *or on Facebook.*

Creative: COTDesign

CFRP

COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDER PROGRAM

Narcan Kit distribution sites:

09/19/2020 (Sat.)	CVS Store 1998 Mendon Rd. Cumberland	9:00am - 12:00pm
09/19/2020 (Sat.)	CVS Store 763 Tiogue Ave. Coventry	9:00am - 12:00pm
09/21/2020 (Mon.)	CVS Store 1400 Hartford Ave Johnston	10:00am - 2:00pm
09/25/2020 (Fri.)	CVS Store 1993 Plainfield Pike Johnston	10:00am - 2:00pm
09/26/2020 (Sat.)	CVS Store 1123 Boston Neck Road Narragansett	9:00am - 12:00pm
09/26/2020 (Sat.)	CVS Store 1998 Mendon Rd. Cumberland	9:00am - 12:00pm
09/28/2020 (Mon.)	CVS Store 11 Main Street Wakefield	10:00am - 2:00pm
10/02/2020 (Fri.)	CVS Store 180 County Road Barrington	10:00am - 2:00pm
10/03/2020 (Sat.)	CVS Store 3986 Old Post Road Charlestown	9:00am - 12:00pm
10/03/2020 (Sat.)	CVS Store 763 Tiogue Ave, Coventry 02816	9:00am - 12:00pm

Visit our website: https://web.uri.edu/cfrp/ or email: uriCFRP@etal.uri.edu

10/05/2020 (Mon.)	CVS Store 181 Bellevue Ave Newport	10:00am - 2:00pm
10/09/2020 (Fri.)	445 Putnam Pike Greenville	10:00am - 2:00pm
10/10/2020 (Sat.)	CVS Store 3986 Old Post Road Charlestown	9:00am - 12:00pm
10/12/2020 (Mon.)	CVS Store 173 State Street Bristol	10:00am - 2:00pm
10/16/2020 (Fri.)	CVS Store 1068 Putnam Pike Gloucester	10:00am - 2:00pm
10/17/2020 (Sat.)	CVS Store 99 East Main Road Middletown	9:00am - 12:00pm
10/24/2020 (Sat.)	CVS Store 1187 Main St. Wyoming	9:00am - 12:00pm
10/31/2020 (Sat.)	CVS Store 500 Main Road Tiverton	9:00am - 12:00pm

Visit our website: https://web.uri.edu/cfrp/ or email: uriCFRP@etal.uri.edu