

**Upcoming Events:**

**February**

- Black History Month
- American Heart Month
- **2/11:** Make a Friend Day
- **2/12:** Abraham Lincoln's Birthday
- **2/17:** Random Acts of Kindness Day

**March**

- Irish American Month
- National Music in our Schools Month
- National Nutrition Month
- **4/20:** International Earth Day

**SAP Updates:**

## NEW CONCERNS

### Nicotine Salts

Nicotine Salts or "nic salts" are on the rise presenting new issues in the vaping world. The salt is created by combining nicotine with an organic acid, masking the naturally unpleasant taste of nicotine (Nedelman, 2019). Without the negative throat feeling from a hit, use of this form is further attractive and users may take deeper and more frequent puffs (Nedelman, 2019). This form also leads to higher nicotine blood content in a shorter amount of time, triggering neurochemical reactions faster (Matthews, 2018). Many experts worry that inhaling these and other added ingredients may cause other



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Retrieved from: <http://www.wfmz.com/health/why-vaping-is-so-dangerous-for-teens/979215986> & <https://vapingdaily.com/what-is-vaping/nicotine-salts/>

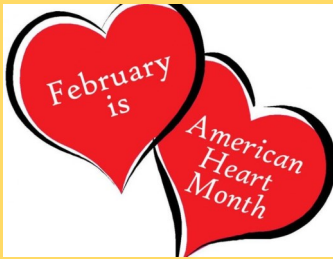
### Gabapentin

Gabapentin is a non-addictive, non-opioid treatment for chronic pain and is now classified in Kentucky as a controlled substance after finding the drug in a third of the states 2016 fatal overdoses. Used in conjunction with substances like alcohol, fentanyl or heroin, gabapentin make these even more dangerous by increasing their effects. Police in Ohio are reporting a rise in the abuse of gabapentin, also known by brand names like Neurontin, Gralise or Horizant. A college town in Athens, Ohio reports these



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Retrieved from: <https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/americas-heroin-epidemic/health-officials-are-sounding-alarm-drug-gabapentin-it-s-not-n861111>



- 1. Take a 10-minute walk.** If you don't exercise at all, a brief walk is a great way to start.
- 2. Give yourself a lift.** Lifting a hardcover book or a two-pound weight a few times a day can help tone your arm muscles.
- 3. Eat one extra fruit or vegetable a day.**
- 4. Make breakfast count.** Start the day with some fruit and a serving of whole grains.
- 5. Stop drinking your calories.** Cutting out just one sugar-sweetened soda or calorie-laden latte can easily save you 100 or more calories a day.
- 6. Have a handful of nuts.** Walnuts, almonds, peanuts, and other nuts are good for your heart.
- 7. Switch out red meats for seafood once a week**
- 8. Breathe deeply.** Try breathing slowly and deeply for a few minutes a day. It can help you relax.
- 9. Wash your hands often to stop the spread of germs**
- 10. Count your blessings.** Taking a moment each day to acknowledge the blessings in your life has been linked with better health, longer life, and greater well-being.



# Smoking & Mental

Research has found that anger levels experienced in adolescents in the sixth grade are a predictive of gateway drug use (smoking, alcohol use, and marijuana use). The biological factors involved in smoking relate to how the brain responds to nicotine. Regular doses of nicotine lead to changes in the brain, which leads to nicotine withdrawal symptoms when the supply of nicotine decreases.

Nicotine can create a false sense of relaxation so people who smoke believe that nicotine reduces stress and anxiety but this feeling is temporary and soon smokers experience withdrawal symptoms and increased craving. Smoking reduces nicotine withdrawal symptoms, which are similar to the symptoms of anxiety, but it does not reduce anxiety.

Nicotine stimulates the release of the chemical dopamine. Dopamine triggers positive feelings. Dopamine is found to be low in people who experience depression. Nicotine temporarily increases the dopamine supply, however, smoking encourages the brain to switch off its own mechanism for making dopamine, and this prompts people to smoke more.

A study supports that adolescent cigarette smoking is generally more common than alcohol and illicit drug use, and these results highlight its linkages with use of other substances and mental health symptoms. Early identification and intervention of adolescent cigarette smoking may help not only to prevent later daily smoking, but also may assist in identifying adolescents who are at increased risk for substance use and psychiatric problems.

Retrieved from:  
Smoking and mental health/Mental Health Foundation  
Anger and its Association with Substance Use Treatment Outcomes in Adolescents <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles>.  
Adolescent cigarette smoking and mental health symptoms. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles>.

## Tips to Help Stop Smoking

- ◇ Find other ways to cope with stress; regular exercise, breathing techniques, eating well, and counseling
- ◇ Get support from family and friends; be open about what is going on
- ◇ Avoid triggers linked to smoking and remove all products from the home
- ◇ Being educated on and prepared for withdrawal symptoms like headaches, nausea, irritability, anxiety

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