

Grade 4 Drug Education

Lesson 3: What Influences Drug Use?

This lesson, which is aligned with NL Health curriculum outcomes, contains necessary background information, substance snapshots, learning activities, scenarios, and discussion guides to support delivery of material.

Health Curriculum Outcomes Consumer Health

1. Recognize the pressures applied through advertising for brand-name health and health-related products.
2. Analyze advertisements promoting the use of tobacco products.
3. Identify various sources of health-related information.


Drug Education

1. Recognize that nicotine and caffeine are drugs.

English Language Arts Outcomes

1. Analyze the intended messages in a variety of text types and forms.

[Link](#) to Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) Curriculum Outcomes



Lesson 1: Safe Use of Medications
Lesson 2: Non-Medical Drug Use
Lesson 3: What Influences Drug Use?

Lesson Snapshot:



Ground Rules

- Learning Activity 1: Where do we get our information about drugs?

Background Information

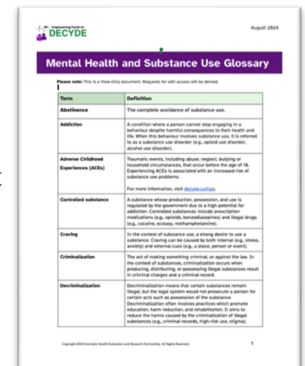
Definition of Drugs

Drugs are substances or chemicals that affect the way our bodies and minds work. Some drugs are medications that help people feel better. They can be used to prevent, cure or alleviate symptoms. Drugs can also be used in unsafe ways. They can affect how the brain works and can have negative effects on the way our body develops and functions. Drugs used unsafely can change the way people feel, think, or behave.

Examples of drugs include:

- Alcohol (e.g., beer, coolers, vodka, whisky, wine)
- Caffeine (e.g., energy drinks, coffee, tea, soft drinks)
- Cannabis or Marijuana
- Hallucinogens (e.g., LSD, Mushrooms)
- Medications (e.g., puffers, epi-pens, fever medications, anti-nausea medications, anti-anxiety medications)
- Nicotine (e.g., tobacco, cigarettes, nicotine vapes)
- Opioids (e.g., codeine, morphine, fentanyl, heroin)
- Over-the-counter medications (e.g., cough syrup, pain medications)
- Stimulants (e.g., nicotine, amphetamines [e.g., Adderall, crystal meth], methylphenidate [e.g., Ritalin], cocaine)
- Vaccinations (e.g., flu, COVID-19, tetanus)

The [DECYDE Mental Health and Substance Use Glossary](#) provides a comprehensive collection of key terms and concepts related to substance use. Designed to support educators and mentors, this glossary provides definitions to enhance understanding and communication around substance use topics that are relevant for DECYDE.



[Substance Snapshots](#) aim to provide educators with information about the various drugs that are incorporated throughout the learning activities. Each snapshot summarizes how the drug is used, its effects, when to seek emergency help, and how to stay safe. The Substance Snapshots are intended to support educators in the delivery of drug education and are not for direct student use unless deemed appropriate.

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Key Considerations

An understanding of the following resources will assist educators as they implement the learning activities.



Use a Skills-Based Health Education (SBHE) Approach

SBHE is a learning approach that uses interactive learning methods. This approach is used throughout the learning activities so students can learn skills that will promote and protect their health and well-being. Refer to the [SBHE infographic](#) for more information on SBHE and examples of interactive teaching methods and evaluation.



Incorporate the FACE Decision-Making Model

Throughout all lessons the FACE decision-making model is used to guide discussions and activities. The questions associated with each step of the FACE decision-making model are intended for educator use to probe students during scenario-based learning activities. Refer to the [FACE infographics](#) for more information.



Consider Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and implement Trauma-Informed Practices (TIPs) that support harm reduction principles

ACEs are traumatic events that occur before the child reaches the age of 18. Students who experience ACEs have an increased susceptibility to try drugs. This may impact their ability to engage in learning about substances. The [ACEs infographic](#) highlights the types of ACEs that may impact youth and offers strategies for educators. Incorporating early drug education and [harm reduction](#) principles may encourage youth to make safe and informed choices and reduce potential negative consequences. Understanding the impact of trauma resulting from ACEs will better equip educators to support student learning. The [Trauma-Informed Practices \(TIPs\) infographic](#) provides information on this strengths-based approach for educators.



Support Students Emotional Wellbeing

Discussion about drug or substance use may provoke a range of feelings. Building a positive rapport is vital to effectively engage youth in learning conversations. Respect for students' comments, questions, and concerns surrounding drug use is important regardless of personal opinions. If needed, encourage students to speak with the school's guidance counsellor or another trusted adult. Additional supports are located on the [DECYDE website](#).



Use First-Person Language

Using first-person language that is non-stigmatizing can create an environment that encourages students to engage in conversations or seek help. For more information about stigma and tips for educators, refer to the [infographic on Stigma](#).

Lesson 3: What Influences Drug Use?



Learning Activities and Teacher Background Resources

Learning Activity 1: Where Do We Get Our Information About Drugs?

Teacher Resources:

Substance Snapshots: [Caffeine](#), [Nicotine](#), [Cannabis](#), [Alcohol](#)
[Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\)](#)
[Caregiver Substance Use Infographic](#)
[Trauma-Informed Practices \(TIPs\)](#)
[Stigma infographic](#)
[Substance Use Spectrum infographic](#)

Note to Teachers:

The [ACEs Infographic](#) highlights the types of ACEs that may impact youth and the [TIPs Infographic](#) offers strategies for educators. Schools are a protective factor for students, and teachers can play an important role in supporting students and their families. Children who have caregivers that engage in high-risk substance use may also require additional support. Refer to the [Caregiver Substance Use Infographic](#) for tips on how educators can help support children in the classroom.

Ground Rules



Begin the lesson by establishing a list of ground rules together as a class. Allow students to contribute their own ideas for ground rules, while also ensuring that the following key rules are acknowledged:

- Encourage questions and discussion
- Respect each other's opinions
- Listen when others are speaking
- Use respectful language
- Avoid using individual names when sharing the experiences of others, instead, use "Someone I know..."

Learning Activity 1: Where Do We Get Our Information About Drugs?



Learning Activity Objectives:

- Recognize the risks related to nicotine and caffeine
- Recognize that advertisements for vaping, cigarettes, smoking and energy drinks may target and influence youth
- Work collaboratively with peers

Materials

- Discussion prompts
- Exploration: Analyzing Types of Media
 - [Activity 1: Analyzing Video Media](#)
 - [Video \(YouTube\): It's a Breath of StressAir](#)
 - [Video \(YouTube\): Starbucks Energy Drink ad](#)
 - Student questions, Teacher Discussion Guide
 - [Activity 2: Analyzing Print Media](#) (Student version, teacher version)
 - [Activity 3: Exit Reflection Card: Create Your Own Ad](#)
- [Summary Quiz of Lessons 1-3](#)

Introduction

Use the discussion prompts below to engage students in a conversation about how media may influence drug use.



Discussion prompts:

- What are some examples of caffeine?
- What are some examples of nicotine?
- What is media?
- What are examples of media that you or your friends use?
- What is an advertisement?
- What forms of advertisements exist?
- Where do we get our information about drugs?
- How are drugs portrayed on television, in movies, or in video games?
- How are people who use drugs portrayed in television shows, movies, video games?
- What are some sources where you could find more accurate information about drugs?

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Possible discussion ideas:

- Where do we get information about drugs?
 - Television/movies
 - Social media (Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, etc.)
 - Websites
 - Friends
 - School (Health class, presentations from healthcare professionals)
 - Advertisements
- It is important to convey to students that not all descriptions of drug use are completely accurate.
- There are common **misrepresentations** of drug use that people often encounter. However, we should keep in mind that:
 - Drugs may affect people differently
 - Substance use disorder is a medical condition that can be treated
 - Substance use can be seen on a spectrum, ranging from infrequent, casual, problematic to substance use disorder.
- Ask students to reflect on how drugs or people who use drugs are viewed by society and/or portrayed by media:
 - Drug use is often glamorized in television shows, commercials, movies, social media, etc. The negative consequences of drug use are often downplayed in these media
 - People who use drugs are often portrayed as troublemakers, lazy, uneducated, etc.

Note to teachers:

Scare tactics have been a common tool used in drug prevention initiatives. However, fear-based messaging has **not** been successful in preventing nor reducing drug use. The reasons why people use drugs are complex and multi-faceted and trying to frighten people out of using drugs is not an effective strategy. Fear-based messaging can contribute to the stigma surrounding drug use, which may cause more harm (e.g., a person using drugs may be discouraged from seeking help).


For more information on the impact of stigma on substance use and how you can help reduce stigma in the classroom, refer to our [Stigma Infographic](#). More about the substance use spectrum can be found [here](#).

Exploration: Analyzing Types of Media

Activity 1: Analyzing Video Media

As a class, students will watch and discuss two videos from different sources. The purpose of this activity is for students to think critically about the media they consume and the messages they are receiving.

Provide examples of drug use in popular media. Discuss the following questions:



SUBSTANCE SNAPSHOT

Teachers may refer to [Inhaled Nicotine](#) and [Caffeine](#) to help inform the discussion.
Note: Not for direct student use unless deemed

<p>Video (Vaping - It's a Breath of StressAir) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rd_G-iJ4qaU</p>	<p>Video (Caffeine – Starbucks): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ih8ouRtoGZY</p>
<p><u>Discussion Questions with answers</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Who created this video? What is the message of this video? Why is this person trying to send me this message? <p>1. Who created this video?</p> <p>Answer: The video was created by people or organizations (“Truth”) who are concerned about public health and want to raise awareness about the dangers of vaping. Analyzing who made the video helps us understand their perspective and potential biases. For example, if it’s made by a health organization, they might be focused on educating people about health risks.</p> <p>2. What is the message of this video?</p> <p>Answer: The message of the video is that vaping, which might seem like a way to relieve stress, is actually harmful to health.</p> <p>3. Why is this person trying to send me this message?</p> <p>Answer: The creators are trying to send this message to inform and educate people about the risks of vaping and that some organizations may tell us they can help with stress so they can make more</p>	<p><u>Discussion Questions with answers</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How does this video get your attention? Who do you think is expected to view or listen to this video? Why created this video? Why? Do you think a company who sells energy drinks would use this video for promotion? Discuss. How did this video make you feel? What should we be aware of when drinking energy drinks? <p>1. How does this video get your attention?</p> <p>Answer: The video grabs attention with bright colors, upbeat music, and energetic activities like rollerblading. The use of quick cuts and fun visuals helps keep viewers interested and excited.</p> <p>2. Who do you think is expected to view or listen to this video?</p> <p>Answer: The video is likely aimed at younger people who enjoy being active and might be looking for a quick energy boost. It also targets people who care about wellness and positive experiences.</p> <p>3. Who created this video? Why?</p>

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money. Understanding why they are sharing this message helps us analyze their intent: they likely want to prevent health issues by encouraging viewers to make healthier choices. Analyzing the purpose behind the message helps us critically assess its impact and effectiveness.

The people who made this video want to teach us about the dangers of vaping. They say that some vape companies try to make more money by claiming that vaping helps with stress, even though it can be harmful. By understanding this, we can see that the video is trying to show us the real risks and help us make healthier choices. Analyzing who made the video and why they made it can help us understand how ads might use persuasive messages to influence us and why it's important to think critically about what we see.

Answer: The video was created by Starbucks to promote their new energy drink by associating it with "feel-good" energy and positive activities.

4. Do you think a company that sells energy drinks would use this video for promotion? Discuss.

Answer: Yes, because the video connects the energy drink with fun and positive energy. Companies use this kind of messaging to encourage people to buy their products by making them seem like they will improve your day or give you a healthy boost.

5. How did this video make you feel?

Answer: The video might make viewers feel excited, happy, or motivated to try new activities. It uses uplifting music and visuals to create a positive mood.

6. What should we be aware of when drinking energy drinks?

Answer: We should all be careful about how much caffeine and sugar are in energy drinks. Too much caffeine can make you feel jittery, and sugar can lead to a quick energy crash later. It's important to think critically about this advertisement and whether an energy drink is really a healthy choice.

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Activity 2: Analyzing Print Media

Provide students with the question sheet: [Where Do We Get Information About Drugs?](#)

The image provided is an advertisement created by Guru, a company that sells organic energy drinks in Canada. Energy drinks contain caffeine, a drug that is not recommended for children. Remind students that energy drinks are drinks such as “RedBull,” “Monster,” etc., and have a higher amount of caffeine than coffee.

Engage in a discussion with the students about this advertisement. You may decide to engage in a full class discussion, or split students into smaller groups to discuss. Students may write in the space provided, draw a picture, or discuss with their group.


This activity is available as a [PDF and Google Doc](#).



Empowering Youth to
DECYDE

Grade 4 Lesson 3
Learning Activity 1

Where Do We Get Information About Drugs?
Analyzing Print Media



The image above is an advertisement created by Guru, a company that sells organic energy drinks in Canada. Energy drinks contain caffeine, a drug that is not recommended for kids.

a) What message is Guru trying to promote in this advertisement?

b) Who do you think the advertisement is targeted towards?

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SUBSTANCE SNAPSHOT

Teachers may refer to [Caffeine](#) to help inform the discussion.

Note: Not for direct student use unless deemed developmentally appropriate.

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Teacher Version:

- a) What message is Guru trying to promote in this advertisement?
- *Drinking their energy drink will give people the ability to dunk.*
 - *Their energy drink is a healthy choice because it is natural and comes from plants.*
- b) Who do you think the advertisement is targeted toward?
- *The advertisement is targeted toward people who play sports, specifically people who play basketball.*
- c) Energy drinks contain caffeine, a drug that is not recommended for kids. Why do you think people drink caffeine?
- Answers may vary. Possible answers include:*
- *To give them energy.*
 - *They like the foods and drinks that caffeine is found in (coffee, tea, energy drinks, chocolate, soft drinks, etc.)*
- d) What is the safest choice that a young person could make about energy drinks or other caffeinated drinks like coffee?
- *The safest choice is to not drink or consume caffeine. However, if you do choose to consume caffeine, it is a good idea to limit the amount you drink or eat.*
- e) Think about the journey to becoming a professional athlete, like Connor McDavid (hockey player), Alphonso Davies (soccer player), or Naomi Osaka (tennis player). What kind of lifestyle do you think they lead? (Think about their training habits, healthy eating, drinking water, sleeping habits, etc.)
- Responses may vary. Possible responses:*
- *These athletes spend a lot of time training and practicing their sport. They probably eat very healthily, drink water and get enough sleep. If athletes do consume caffeine or energy drinks, this is not the main cause of their success in their chosen sport(s).*
- f) What would you suggest to a friend or family member if they were looking to reduce the amount of caffeine they consumed daily?
- *Drink water and eat healthy foods like fruit or vegetables.*
 - *Limit their caffeinated drinks to one a day.*
 - *Sleep for 8-10 hours a night.*
 - *Exercise.*
 - *Spend time outdoors.*

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Activity 3: Exit Reflection Card

In this activity, students will get creative by designing their own advertisement about one of the following: caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, or cannabis. The advertisement should:

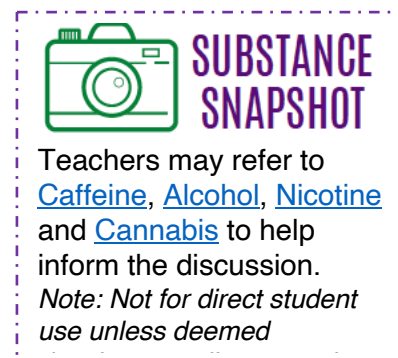
- 1) target youth
- 2) use accurate information
- 3) promote that youth should not use the substance.


This activity helps students reflect on what they've learned about how advertisements work and encourages them to think critically about the messages they see.

Provide students with the “**Create Your Own Ad**” Exit Reflection activity sheet.

Students can complete this activity by drawing or creating electronically.

This activity is available as a [PDF and Google Doc](#).




Name: _____
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Learning Activity 5

Create Your Own Ad
Exit Reflection Card

Create your own advertisement on either caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, or cannabis.

The advertisement should:

- 1) target youth
- 2) use accurate information
- 3) promote that youth should not use the substance.

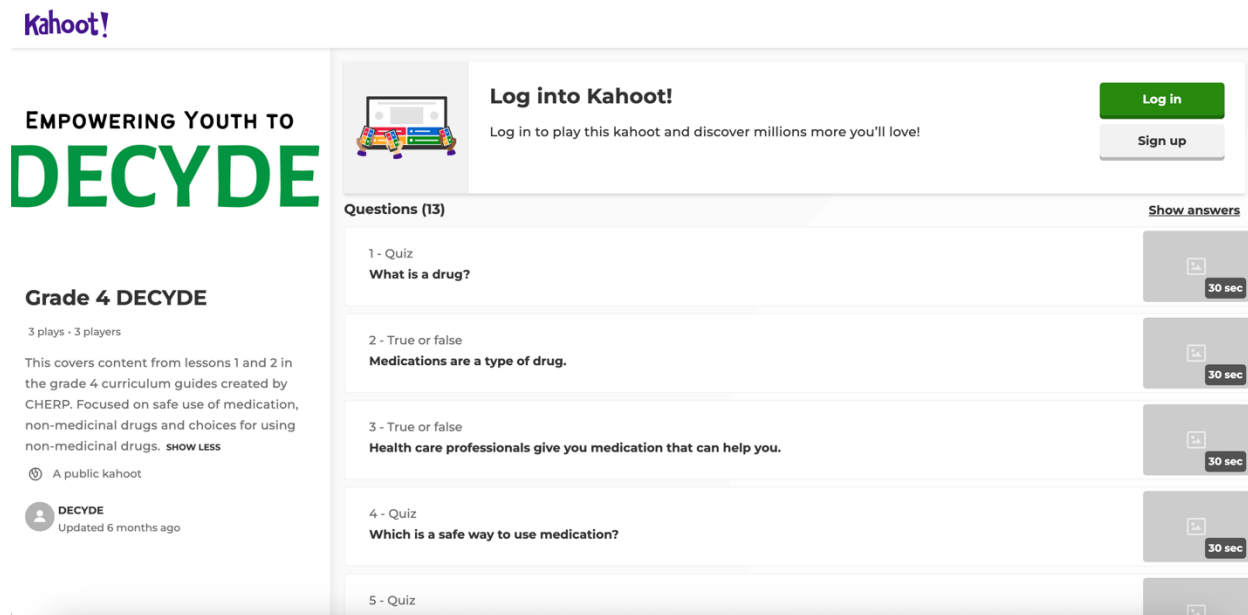
You can complete this activity by drawing or creating it electronically.

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Quiz Time! Summary Quiz – Lessons 1-3

This [Kahoot quiz](#) contains questions associated with the content of Grade 4 lessons 1-3. Teachers guide below provides the questions and answers.



The screenshot shows the Kahoot! interface for a quiz titled "EMPOWERING YOUTH TO DECIDE". The quiz is for Grade 4 and has 13 questions. The first five questions are visible:

- 1 - Quiz
What is a drug?
- 2 - True or false
Medications are a type of drug.
- 3 - True or false
Health care professionals give you medication that can help you.
- 4 - Quiz
Which is a safe way to use medication?
- 5 - Quiz
You have a headache at school. Your friend tells you to take some of their pills in their bag. What should you do?

Kahoot Quiz: Teacher Guide:

1. Question: What is a drug?

Answer: A drug can affect the way our bodies work.

2. Question: True or False – Medications are a type of drug.

Answer: True

3. Question: True or False – Health care professionals give you medications that can help you.

Answer: True

4. Question: Which is a safe way to use medication:

Answer: Taking medications with food like your doctor instructed.

5. You have a headache at school. Your friend tells you to take some of their pills in their bag. What should you do?

Answer: Thank your friend for trying to help but refuse the pills.

6. Drugs often look similar to other drugs or even can look like candy. Is this (picture) a medication or candy?

Answer: I'm not sure

7. Slide: It's an antacid to treat heartburn but they look like this candy!

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Answer: You should always speak with a trusted adult before taking medication.

8. Question: True or False: Charlie took 2 spoonful of cough syrup so they could go snowshoeing with their class. This is a safe use of medication.

Answer: False

9. Question: Some people take medications using a needle. What should you do if you see a needle in the grass by your playground?

Answer: Do not touch the needle and tell a trusted adult what you found.

10. Question: True or False – Caffeine is a drug.

Answer: True

11. Question: Cigarettes and vape juice contain an addictive drug called nicotine.

Answer: True

12. Question: Who can you talk to if you are curious about drugs?

Answer: All of the above (parent or guardian, teacher or guidance counsellor, an adult you trust).

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Content Created by the Cannabis Health Evaluation and Research Partnership (CHERP) Team at Memorial University

DECYDE stands for Drug Education Centred on Youth Decision Empowerment. Through this project, our Cannabis Health Evaluation and Research Partnership (CHERP) team of pharmacists, educators, researchers, and students at Memorial University who wish to support substance use education for youth. We further collaborate with a diverse panel of youth in Newfoundland and Labrador who collaborate with the team on creating the DECYDE content.

The key goals of our project are to:

- Provide substance use education that emphasizes harm reduction principles.
- Provide youth with information and support the development of decision-making skills about substance use.
- Provide youth with the knowledge and skills to make safe and informed decisions surrounding substance use.
- Provide educators with accessible and easy-to-follow lesson plans that contain valid and reliable information.

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