

## RELATED FOUNDATIONS:

- Student Engagement

## RESOURCES:

- MYTH or FACT resources

## Substance Use MYTH or FACT

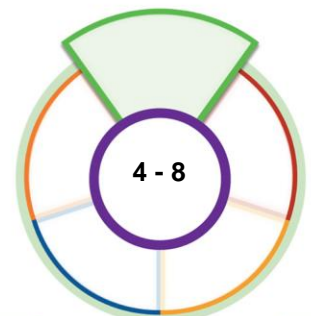
**ACTIVITY GOAL:** To increase awareness and knowledge of substances: alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, and vaping.

### ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Print and cut out the [Myth or Fact statements](#)
2. Cut the “MYTH” and “FACT” [title cards](#) and place each title in two different areas of the room, so that they are on a wall or board for all to see
3. Distribute Myth or Fact statements amongst students. Have students work together to determine what statements should go under the MYTH title card and what statements should go under the FACT title card. Ask students to place their sentence under MYTH or FACT heading.
4. All the Myth or Fact statements can be used as a class or in groups to complete the activity
5. Have students discuss the reasons for their answers
6. Take up the answers using the [Answer Key](#)

### Curriculum Connections

- Grade 4: D1.4 Tobacco and vaping, D2.3 Decisions about smoking and vaping
- Grade 5: D1.2 Short-and long-term effects of alcohol use
- Grade 6: D1.2 Effects of cannabis, drugs
- Grade 7: D3.2 Implications of substance use, addictions, and related behaviours
- Grade 8: D1.3 Warning signs, consequences



## Alcohol, Cannabis, Vaping, and Other Drugs: Myth or Fact?

Instructions:

- Print and cut out the Myth or Fact sentences.
- Cut the "Myth" and "Fact" titles and place each title in two different areas of the room, so that they are on a wall or board for all to see.
- Distribute Myth or Fact sentences amongst students. Have students work together to determine what sentences should go under the Myth title card and what sentences should go under the Fact title card. Ask students to place their sentence under Myth or Fact heading.
- All the Myth or Fact sentences can be used together for one large class of students or you can split the sentences into two groups and have two teams work at the questions at the same time.
- Take up the answers using the Answer Key.
- Encourage students to discuss the reasons for their answers.

**Myth and Fact sentences.** Each myth/fact can be cut and placed in a pile together.

**1. Myth or Fact?**

Alcohol circulates through every organ, tissue, and gland in the body.

**2. Myth or Fact?**

It is illegal to buy alcohol when you are underage, but it is not actually illegal to drink it when underage.

**3. Myth or Fact?**

Alcohol will help my mental health.

**4. Myth or Fact?**

Alcohol is a drug.

**5. Myth or Fact?**

Pregnant women should not drink any alcohol.

**6. Myth or Fact?**

Drinking alcohol as a kid will not have any long-lasting effects on me.

**7. Myth or Fact?**

Alcohol is safe for anyone, no matter what age.

**8. Myth or Fact?**

It is safe to drive after using Cannabis.

**9. Myth or Fact?**

Cannabis is not addictive.

**10. Myth or Fact?**

Cannabis helps youth focus.

**11. Myth or Fact?**

Most young people use cannabis.

**12. Myth or Fact?**

Cannabis is natural. If it comes from a plant, it must be safe.

**13. Myth or Fact?**

Smoking cigarettes can lead to serious health problems, but smoking cannabis is safe.

**14. Myth or Fact?**

Cannabis is now legal so anyone can use it.

**15. Myth or Fact?**

Prescription drugs like OxyContin and Percocet are always safe because they are prescribed by a doctor.

**16. Myth or Fact?**

The vapour inhaled and exhaled from an e-cigarette (vaping) device is just harmless water.

**17. Myth or Fact?**

E-juice/E-liquid does not contain nicotine.

**18. Myth or Fact?**

Vaping can lead to smoking cigarettes.

**MYTH**

-----Cut-----

**FACT**

## ANSWER KEY (keep with teacher/nurse):

### Alcohol and Other Drugs Myth or Fact?

#### 1. Myth or Fact?

Alcohol circulates through every organ, tissue, and gland in the body.

**FACT** – Alcohol enters the bloodstream and is carried to the entire body which means that every area of the body is affected by alcohol. (Healthy Families BC, 2019 - [How the Human Body Processes Alcohol](#))

#### 2. Myth or Fact?

It is illegal to buy alcohol when you are underage, but it is not actually illegal to drink it when underage.

**MYTH** – It is illegal to have, consume, attempt to purchase, or otherwise obtain alcohol when under 19 years of age. There is a fine for underage drinking in Ontario (Government of Ontario, 2019 - [Liquor License Act](#))

#### 3. Myth of Fact?

Alcohol will help my mental health.

**MYTH** - Youth who use alcohol to deal with their mental health are at an increased risk for symptoms of depression and anxiety. (Drinkaware, 2018 - [Alcohol and Mental Health](#) and Drug Free Kids Canada, 2019 - [Youth and Alcohol](#)).

#### 4. Myth of Fact?

Alcohol is a drug.

**FACT.** Alcohol is a drug which means it changes how your brain works. It has both immediate and long-term risks. This can include changes to the way you think, feel and act. Alcohol leads to significant preventable deaths and hospital visits. (Drug Free Kids Canada, 2019 - [Youth and Alcohol](#))

#### 5. Myth of Fact?

Pregnant women should not drink any alcohol.

**FACT.** There is no safe time, type or amount of alcohol that is safe during pregnancy. Alcohol can cause a malformation of the fetus and can lead to learning, health and social effects with lifelong impacts on the fetus as well as brain injury, birth defects, behavioural problems, learning disabilities and other health problems typically referred to as fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD). No alcohol during pregnancy is

best. (Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, 2023 - [Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health: Final Report](#) and MLHU, 2019 - [Alcohol and Pregnancy](#))

#### 6. Myth or Fact?

Drinking alcohol as a kid will not have any long-lasting effects on me.

**MYTH.** Research shows that people who start drinking before the age of 15 are five times more likely to develop an alcohol use disorder later in life. (National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2023 - [Underage Drinking](#))

#### 7. Myth or Fact?

Alcohol is safe for anyone, no matter what age.

**MYTH:** Youth are at the greatest risk of the negative health effects of alcohol because the brain continues to develop until age 25. Unfortunately, developing brains are more prone to damage. This means that experimentation with alcohol and drugs can have lasting, harmful effects on youth brains. (Partnership for Drug Free Kids, 2022 - [Brain Development, Teen Behaviour and Preventing Drug Use](#) and Drug Free Kids Canada, 2019 - [Youth and Alcohol](#).)

#### 8. Myth or Fact?

It is safe to drive after using Cannabis.

**MYTH -** Cannabis significantly impairs judgment, motor coordination, and reaction time. Studies have found a direct relationship between blood THC concentration and impaired driving ability. (Government of Canada, 2019 - [Drug Impaired Driving](#))

#### 9. Myth or Fact?

Cannabis is not addictive.

**MYTH -** 1 in 6 adolescents who use cannabis will develop a cannabis use disorder. You are at an even greater risk for addiction the earlier you begin using, the more frequently you use, and the more heavily used in adolescence. (Government of Canada, 2019 - [Addiction to Cannabis](#))

#### 10. Myth or Fact?

Cannabis helps youth focus.

**MYTH –** Regular cannabis use impairs thinking, attention, and memory. (Government of Canada, 2019 - [Cannabis and Your Health](#))

### 11. Myth or Fact?

Most young people use cannabis.

**MYTH** – 99% of grade 7 students and 95% of grade 8 students report NOT using cannabis in the past year (2019). Even in high school, most youth DON'T use cannabis. Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 2020 – [Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey](#)). \*2021 OSDUHS data not used as much of the data was suppressed due to unreliability.

### 12. Myth or Fact?

Cannabis is natural. If it comes from a plant, it must be safe.

**MYTH** - The chemicals found in cannabis impact brain development and mental health, regardless of how it is consumed (smoked, eaten, vaped, etc.). In addition, cannabis smoke has cancer-causing toxins that can cause damage to the lungs if smoked or vaped and can cause impairment that can lead to injury. (Government of Canada, 2019 - [Cannabis and Your Health](#))

### 13. Myth or Fact?

Smoking cigarettes can lead to serious health problems, but smoking cannabis is safe.

**MYTH** - Cannabis smoke contains hundreds of toxic substances and when people smoke it, they tend to hold the smoke in for a long time exposing them to these toxins. Cannabis has been linked to many health concerns including breathing, mental health, and addiction issues, as well as incidents of impaired driving. (Government of Canada, 2019 - [Cannabis and Your Health](#))

### 14. Myth or Fact?

Cannabis is now legal so anyone can use it.

**MYTH** – In Ontario, there are strict laws in place to keep cannabis out of the hands of children and youth. It is illegal to sell or distribute cannabis to anyone under 19 years of age. It is also illegal for someone under the age of 19 years to possess, consume, attempt to purchase, purchase, grow, or distribute cannabis. (Government of Ontario, 2019 - [Cannabis Control Act](#))

### 15. Myth or Fact?

Prescription drugs like OxyContin and Percocet are always safe because they are prescribed by a doctor.

**MYTH** – Prescription drugs can be safe BUT only for the person who was prescribed that medication.

The Healthcare provider:

- Prescribes the right dose of medicine for the person's medical condition.
- Tells them how to take the medicine correctly
- Explains side effects

When these drugs are used without a prescription or combined with other substances, they can be dangerous. In addition, prescription drugs bought from a dealer may be laced with another substance or a completely different drug. (Drug-Free Kids Canada, 2019. [Prescription Drugs](#))

#### 16. Myth or Fact?

The vapour inhaled and exhaled from an e-cigarette (vaping) device is just harmless water.

**MYTH** - Vaping products do not produce smoke or steam, but aerosol does consist of fine particles, containing varying amounts of propylene glycol, glycerin, flavourings, and other chemicals. Aerosol produced from an e-cigarette can contain toxic chemicals and heavy metals. Even without nicotine or cannabis it is not harmless water vapour. Some of the chemicals found in vapour products have been linked to cancer, lung, and heart disease. (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018 - [Public health consequences of e-cigarettes](#))

#### 17. Myth or Fact?

E-juice/E-liquid does not contain nicotine.

**MYTH** – Most vapour products and their e-liquid DO contain nicotine, and the nicotine content varies from device to device. People who use vapour products may be falsely reassured by "nicotine-free" labels on the liquids. At this time, manufacturing standards do not exist for how or where e-cigarettes (and the solutions) are made or labelled. This means that there may be no consistency in how the device is made, what chemicals are added, or what is included on the label. (Health Canada, 2023 – [About Vaping](#) and [Risks of Vaping](#))

#### 18. Myth or Fact?

Vaping can lead to smoking cigarettes.

**FACT** - Nicotine is a highly addictive substance. Youth are more vulnerable to addiction because their brains are still developing. There are concerns that young people who vape may begin smoking tobacco products, such as cigarettes. It was found that teens who vape are 4x more likely to start to smoke cigarettes compared to teens who never vaped. Another study showed that teens that vaped at the start of the study were significantly more likely to have started smoking at follow up 1 year later. (O'Brien et. al, 2021 - [Association between electronic cigarette use and tobacco cigarette smoking initiation in adolescents: a systematic review and meta-analysis](#))