



**DALLAS COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
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**Don't Let Summer Vacation Be the Start of Drug Use in Teens**  
***DCHHS Provides Tips to Parents to Keep Kids Drug Free***

May 25, 2007 (Dallas) – Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) encourages parents to start to the summer right by talking to with their children about the dangers of recreational drugs, such as cheese heroin, and the devastating effects of drug addiction. According to the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, “significant parental involvement” is the most important factor in deterring young people from using drugs. Communication is the key to building a strong relationship with your child and keeping them drug-free.

“The National Household Survey on Drug Abuse is only one of many bodies of research that confirm parents are the most effective tools for preventing drug abuse,” said Zachary Thompson, DCHHS Director. “These same studies show that rates of substance use were lower for youths who talk with parents about drugs than for those who did not. “

“Having open lines of communication with your children about the prevalence of recreational drugs in their schools and neighborhoods is one of the best ways to prevent drug addition in young people.” Thompson continued. “The long-term impact of crack/cocaine and methamphetamine has increased numbers of people needing drug abuse treatment services as well as the new homeless people attributed to drug addictions. Now we can add the highly-addictive drug cheese heroin to the new wave of dangerous drugs that have caused recent deaths in Dallas County. Because cheese heroin is so cheap and readily available it makes is very attractive to younger children,” Thompson continued.

As the summer break begins, DCHHS urges parents to make sure their children are involved in constructive activities to prevent the use of addictive drugs like cheese heroin. The National Youth Anti-Drug Campaign calls summer the most risky time for teens, citing June, July, and August as being the greatest time for first-time drug use among children and teens. They offer the following ***S-U-M-M-E-R*** drug-free checklist for parents:

- **Set rules**  
Have you set clear rules and let your teen know that marijuana use is unacceptable? Two-thirds of kids say that upsetting their parents or losing the respect of family and friends is one of the main reasons they don't smoke marijuana or use other drugs. Set limits with clear consequences for breaking them; praise and reward good behavior.



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***DCHHS Tips for Keeping Kids Drug Free This Summer***

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- **Understand and communicate**  
Have you talked to your teen recently about the harmful physical, mental, and social effects of marijuana and other illicit drugs on young users? Young people who learn about the risks of drugs at home are up to 50 percent less likely to try drugs than their peers who learn nothing from their parents. Look for teachable moments in everyday life to keep the conversation ongoing.
- **Monitor your teen's activities and behaviors**  
Have you checked to see where your teen is, who he is with, and what he is doing? Teens who are not regularly monitored by their parents are four times more likely to use drugs. Check up on your teen to make sure they are where they say they are.
- **Make sure you stay involved in your teen's life**  
Have you talked to your teen's coach, employer, and friends lately? Stay in touch with the adult supervisors of your child (camp counselors, coaches, employers) and have them inform you of any changes in your teen.
- **Engage your teen in summer activities**  
Have you helped plan activities to keep your teen busy? Research shows that teens who are involved in constructive and adult-supervised activities are less likely to use drugs.
- **Reserve time for family**  
Have you planned a family activity with your teen in the coming weeks, such as going to the movies, taking a walk, or sharing a meal? Teens who spend time, talk and have a close relationship with their parents are much less likely to drink, take drugs or have sex.

Cheese Heroin, a cheap and highly addictive recreational drug, has had a devastating effect on young people across Dallas County. Made by combining heroin and crushed tablets of certain over-the-counter common cold medication, cheese heroin is considered a starter drug and is being used by children as young as 12 years of age. The epidemic of cheese heroin users among middle and high school age students has resulted in the deaths of 22 young people this year.

DCHHS urges parents of children addicted to the recreational drug cheese heroin should seek treatment at a rehabilitation facility so that the symptoms of withdrawal can be managed. As with any addiction, seeking rehabilitation during recovery provides optimal outcomes. DCHHS also recommends that parents caring for a child addicted to cheese heroin, which are unable to place the child in a rehabilitation program, consult their local healthcare provider for assistance in dealing with withdrawal symptoms. Symptoms of addiction in users of cheese heroin include sleepiness, difficulty waking up, disorientation, flu-like symptoms, nausea, vomiting, anxiety caused by withdrawal, personality changes, and aggressive behavior.

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