

# Red Flags & Resources - Addendum

**Introduction:** Two years have passed since the first edition of Red Flags and Resources was created for the northwestern region of Vermont in 2008. With the release of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2009, the guide has been updated to reflect the new data and changes to information, particularly under resources. The four pages of this addendum focus on topics that have been in the news recently and it can be used with previous editions of the guide. A PDF version of the **Red Flags and Resources Guide - Northwestern Vermont Second Edition** is available via the web and contains updated material from cover to cover. Listed under Prevention Resources on the back page of this addendum are websites where the PDF versions of the 2010 guide and the addendum can be found.

## AlcoPops and Energy Drinks

Young people are heavy consumers and drivers of the market for non-alcoholic energy drinks. Alcohol companies appear to be mimicking the marketing strategies for energy drinks, effectively capitalizing on the popularity of energy drinks among youth to sell their products. The premixed alcoholic energy drinks, also known as 'alcopops' are sold in cans that look virtually identical to their non-alcoholic cousins, confusing consumers, retailers, parents, law enforcement officers, and others who can't tell which drinks contain alcohol and which do not.



Although there is debate regarding the benefits of energy drink and caffeine consumption, there is consensus among health researchers that caffeine consumption can have adverse health consequences, particularly at high doses. Non-alcoholic energy drinks have 2-3 times the caffeine content of soda and have caused dangerous reactions, some requiring emergency room visits. Mixing alcohol with energy drinks presents several potential health and safety risks. While young people may think that caffeine, a stimulant, masks the intoxicating effects of alcohol, research shows this is not the case. As a result, people drinking these products may mistakenly believe they are less impaired than they are, and engage in dangerous activities such as driving under the influence. See page 6 of the guide for more information on alcohol.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Prevention Works!** At the VT policy level  
[www.preventionworks.org](http://www.preventionworks.org)

**Marin Institute** [www.marininstitute.org](http://www.marininstitute.org)

Prevention groups are working with lawmakers in Vermont to investigate whether alcoholic energy drinks are appropriately classified as malt beverages instead of distilled spirits under applicable state laws.

**Alcopops** are sweetened alcoholic beverages that are usually sold in single serving bottles or cans. These drinks resemble fruit juices, teas, and energy drinks that are already popular with youth.

The marketing of these products employs methods which reach and appeal to youth, while prices remain low due to tax classification as beer even though half the alcohol in alcopops is derived from distilled spirits.

Because they don't taste, smell, or look like alcohol, alcopops serve as a transition or bridge from soft drinks to alcohol and fuel underage drinking, particularly among girls.

# Methamphetamine (Meth)

Recent discoveries of methamphetamine labs in Franklin County in the spring of 2010 have raised the profile of meth in our region. While use is not widespread, methamphetamine is a toxic, highly addictive substance. Its manufacture and use can be very disruptive to communities even when produced or used by a small number of people. The by-product created during the manufacturing process is very volatile and extreme caution must be taken. See page 20 of the guide for more information on methamphetamine.

## RED FLAGS of a Methamphetamine Lab

- Unusual, strong odors
- Unusual number of chemical containers
- Lots of jars, bottles, jugs
- Windows that are covered or blacked out
- People smoking outside
- Paranoid or odd behavior
- Lots of traffic, especially at night
- Secretive and protective of area
- Exhaust fans

## Additional Responses

### For Teens and Adults

#### **Meth labs are toxic and could be explosive!**

If you suspect Methamphetamine related activity always put your own safety first. Leave the scene immediately and contact your local police or the Vermont State Police for assistance.

## Environmental Hazards

The mixing of the chemicals used in Methamphetamine production produce toxic and potentially explosive fumes.

Breathing these fumes may cause irreparable harm to nasal passages, lungs, and the brain.

Six pounds of toxic waste are produced for each pound of Methamphetamine manufactured.

Dumping of waste occurs wherever possible; contaminated garbage and toxic chemicals dumped indiscriminately can pollute water supplies, farm land, neighborhoods, etc.

There is a risk of fire and explosion from the byproducts of the manufacturing process.

Clandestine labs have many known & unknown liquids/substances in marked & unmarked containers deemed hazardous waste

## More RED FLAGS for Methamphetamine Use

- Not sleeping for extended periods of time combined with sleeping for extended periods of time
- Extreme weight loss
- Dramatic mood swings
- Increased heart rate, blood pressure, and respiration
- Auditory or visual hallucinations
- Paranoia or excessive panic
- Nervous activity
- Irritable, aggressive, even violent behavior
- Open sores caused by picking at the skin
- Unpleasant body odor that might smell like glue or mayonnaise

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### The Vermont Department of Health

Signs, symptoms, toxicity, and clean-up.  
[www.healthvermont.gov/adap/meth/meth.aspx](http://www.healthvermont.gov/adap/meth/meth.aspx)

# Prescription Drugs

“Opiate abuse and addiction is one of our most serious challenges in Vermont. It calls for an integrated approach encompassing public health, law enforcement and addiction treatment all working together.”

— Barbara Cimaglio  
Deputy Commissioner  
Alcohol & Drug  
Abuse Programs  
Vermont Department  
of Health



Image: Dynamite Imagery / FreeDigitalPhotos.net

Prescription drug misuse reported in the 2009 YRBS was 17.5% in Franklin and Grand Isle counties for having ever misused prescription pain relievers or stimulants. This is an increase from the 15% reported in the 2007 YRBS survey.

Misuse, the use of prescription medication in a manner that is not directed by a health care practitioner, is a growing problem not only in our region but across the country.

See page 12 of the guide for more information on prescription drugs.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Northern New England Poison Center

1 800 222 1222

[www.nnepc.org](http://www.nnepc.org)

### Chronic Pain/Narcotics Community Forum

The mission of the Chronic Pain/Narcotics Community Forum is to reduce access to, misuse of, and addiction to prescription medications while ensuring access to treatment of pain.

Meeting schedule: Friday, 7- 9 AM at Northwest Medical Center Conference Room 1.

For more information call Dr Ed Haak, DO  
Northwestern Medical Center  
802-524-5911, ext 4363

# Personal Safety

Data from the YRBS indicates that some simple safety measures are not commonly used among youth in our region. Fifty-nine percent of teens in Grand Isle County never wear a helmet while riding a bicycle. These numbers rise to 69% in Franklin County and some towns are as high as 81%. Head injury is the leading cause of death in bicycle crashes. Helmets have been proven 85-88% effective at reducing the impact of head and brain injury and saving lives. Teens also continue to be injured, some fatally, while riding ATV's without helmets. Another area of concern is the lack of seat belt use with only 53-56% of teens reporting they always wear their seat belt. Our region has a way to go to reach the Healthy Vermonters 2010 statewide goal of increasing consistent seat belt use to 92%.

**Communication:** A recent phenomenon with cell phone use among teens is known as “sexting”, the sending or forwarding of sexually explicit photos, videos, or messages from a mobile phone. In addition to risking one’s reputation and friendships, one could be breaking the law by creating, forwarding, or even saving this kind of message.

Teens should be aware that social networking sites are often used as a reference check by admissions offices of educational institutions and employers. Care should be taken when deciding what to post to FaceBook and other social networking pages. Once information is online it can’t be taken back even if posts have been deleted. There is no control over older versions that may exist and circulate on other computers. Also beware of online scam artists who send text, email or pop-up messages to ‘phish’ for personal information. See page 35 of the guide for more on personal safety.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition  
[www.vtbikeped.org](http://www.vtbikeped.org)

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Forward phishing emails to [spam@uce.gov](mailto:spam@uce.gov)  
[reportphishing@antiphishing.org](mailto:reportphishing@antiphishing.org)



Image: Ian Kahn / FreeDigitalPhotos.net

For updates, corrections and comments or to receive additional copies of **Red Flags & Resources; Northwestern Vermont Second Edition**, please contact:  
Franklin County Caring Communities at (802) 527-5049 or Grand Isle County Clean Team at (802) 309-2515

## Prevention Resources

### Franklin County Caring Communities

67 Fairfield Street  
St. Albans, VT 05478  
[www.fcccp.org](http://www.fcccp.org)  
phone: (802) 527-5049  
e-mail: [info@fcccp.org](mailto:info@fcccp.org)  
Executive Director: Beth Crane

### Grand Isle County Clean Team

PO Box 64, 3537 US Route 2  
North Hero, VT 05474  
[www.gicct.org](http://www.gicct.org)  
phone (802) 309-2515  
e-mail: [info@gicct.org](mailto:info@gicct.org)  
Executive Director: Mary Fletcher

### Rural Partnerships

2860 Route 105  
Berkshire, VT  
[www.ruralpartnershipsvt.org](http://www.ruralpartnershipsvt.org)  
phone: (802) 393-5383  
e-mail: [ruralpartnerships@gmail.com](mailto:ruralpartnerships@gmail.com)  
Director: Ethan Dezotelle

### Vermont Department of Health

Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs  
20 Houghton Street, Room 273  
St. Albans, Vermont 05478  
Phone: (802)524-7918  
e-mail: [mary.pickener@ahs.state.vt.us](mailto:mary.pickener@ahs.state.vt.us)

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