

Name: _____

Helpful and Harmful Substances

A “substance” is the material from which something is made. Water is a substance, sand is a substance, and alcohol, tobacco, vitamins, drugs, and medicines are also substances. Some of these substances are helpful to us and others are harmful to us. And some can be both!

Medicines, for example, are substances that we take when a doctor tells us to and they are given to us to help our bodies get better, stronger, and healthier. But some medicines can be dangerous to us if they are taken differently than how a doctor tells us to. For example, taking more medication than you are supposed to at once can really hurt you, but taking the right amount when you are told to is good for you. Also, medicine a family member was told to take for something making them sick might be very harmful for you to take, even if you think you might be sick the same way. It’s very important for medicines to only be used as the doctor tells you to.

Also, certain substances (like vitamins for growth and development, medicines to treat sickness of the body and mind, tobacco, sweetgrass, sage, or cedar for ceremonial purposes such as smudging or pipe ceremonies) are used to help people feel better and get healthier overall in their mind, body, spirit, and emotions.



DIRECTIONS: Read the information above, and underline all of the examples of substances mentioned (HINT: there are only 10 because some are mentioned more than once!). Then, sort those words into the chart below:

Helpful Substances for our Health	Harmful Substances for our Health