

Healthy Living Newsletter

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Take Control of Your Health

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Drug Abuse & Dependence

Drug abuse is an intense desire to obtain increasing amounts of a particular substance or substances to the exclusion of all other activities.

Drug dependence is the body's physical need or addiction to a specific agent. Over the long term, this dependence can result in physical harm, behavior problems, and other problems.

- Different people will be affected by drugs in different ways.

Source: emedicinehealth.com

Warning Signs of Substance Abuse

- Sudden changes in work attendance and quality of work
- Increased irritability and/or general attitude changes
- Loss of interest in past activities
- Withdrawal from responsibilities resulting in excuses
- Deterioration of physical appearance and grooming
- Wearing of sunglasses at inappropriate times
- Unusual borrowing of money from family, friends, and co-workers
- Isolation from family and friends

Source: UPSWELLNESSGUIDE

Did You Know?

- That according to a national survey, one in five eighth graders reports drinking alcohol within the past

Prescription Drug Abuse: Who Gets Addicted and Why?

One in five Americans report misusing a prescription drug at least once in their lifetime, but the overwhelming majority put the pills away with no lasting harm. So how does prescription painkiller abuse progress to full-blown opioid addiction?

For people with an inborn vulnerability to opioid addiction, taking pain pills can lead to an intoxicating rush that makes the brain want more. Repeating the high reinforces the cycle, and sets the stage for drug addiction.

Opioids stimulate the areas of the brain that perceive pleasure. This results in the initial euphoria or sense of well being that many opiates produce. Repeat abuse of opioid drugs floods the system with dopamine, which contributes to the euphoric rush of prescription drug abuse.

As an addiction-susceptible person uses opioids again and again, the brain's reward system begins to incorrectly associate these drugs as essential to survival as food or water. Experts believe that the nerve cells of the brain actually undergo a change. This explains the changes that go along with opioid addiction: neglecting responsibilities to family and friends, performing poorly at work, or losing the zest for life.
Source: www.webmed.com

Pain Medications

Pain medications are safe and effective when used as directed. However, misuse of these products can be extremely harmful and even deadly.

Consumers who take pain medications must follow their health care professional's instructions carefully. If a measuring tool is provided with your medication, use it as directed. Do not change the dose of your medication without talking to your doctor first.

Also, pain medications should never be shared with someone else. Only your health care professional can decide if a prescription pain medication is safe for someone.

Source: www.webmd.com

Illegal Drugs: Hallucinogens

- **LSD** – One of the most potent mood-changing chemicals. It was discovered in 1938 and is manufactured from lysergic acid, which is found in ergot, a fungus that grows on rye and other grains.
- **Peyote** – A small, spineless cactus in which the principal active ingredient is mescaline. The plant has been used by natives in northern Mexico and the southwestern United States as part of religious ceremonies. Mescaline can also be produced through chemical synthesis.
- **Psilocybin** – It is obtained from certain types of mushrooms that are indigenous to tropical and subtropical regions of South America, Mexico, and United States.
- **PCP** – Developed in the 1950s as an IV anesthetic, PCP was never approved for human use because of problems during clinical studies, including intensely negative psychological effects.
Source: www.nida.nih.gov

Laying Good Groundwork

No parent, child, or family is immune to the effects of drugs. Some of the best kids can end up in trouble, even when they made an effort to avoid it and even when they have

month?

- That 17 percent of eighth graders say that they have gotten drunk at least once in the past year?
- That 71 percent of young teens say that alcohol is easy to get?

Source: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

What is Binge Drinking?

Binge drinking is defined as a pattern of alcohol consumption that brings the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level to 0.08% or above. This pattern of drinking corresponds to five or more drinks on a single occasion for men or four or more drinks on a single occasion for women, generally within about two hours.

Source: www.cdc.gov/alcohol

Good Reasons for Teens Not to Drink

- You want your child to avoid alcohol
- You want your child to maintain self-respect
- You want them to know drinking is illegal
- Drinking at their age can be dangerous
- You may have a family history of alcoholism

Source: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Assistance

Alcoholics Anonymous
www.aa.org

Mothers Against Drunk Driving
www.madd.org

Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) www.sadd.org

National Drug and Treatment Referral Routing Service
1-800-662-HELP (4357)

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence
www.ncadd.org

been given the proper guidance from their parents.

However, certain groups of kids may be more likely to use drugs than others. Kids who have friends who use drugs are more likely to try drugs themselves. Those feeling socially isolated for whatever reason may also turn to drugs.

It is important to know your child's friends and their parents. Be involved in your children's lives. If your child's school runs an anti-drug program, get involved. You might learn something! Pay attention to how your kids are feeling and let them know that you are available and willing to listen in a nonjudgmental way. Recognize when your kids are going through difficult times so that you can provide the support they need or seek additional care if it is needed.

A warm, open family environment where kids are encouraged to talk about their feelings, where their achievements are praised, and where their self-esteem is bolstered encourages kids to come forward with their questions and concerns. When censored in their own homes, kids go elsewhere to find support and answers to their most important questions.

Source: kidshealth.org

Underage Drinking

Alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug among youth in the United States, more than tobacco and illicit drugs. Although drinking by persons under the age of 21 is illegal, people aged 12 to 20 years drink 11 percent of all alcohol consumed in the United States. More than 90 percent of this alcohol is consumed in the form of binge drinks. On average, underage drinkers consume more drinks per drinking occasion than adult drinkers.

Source: www.cdc.gov

Important Facts About Alcohol

- People tend to be very bad at judging how seriously alcohol has affected them. That means many individuals who drive after drinking *think* that they can control a car – but actually can not.
- Beer and wine are not “safer” than hard liquor. They all contain the same amount of alcohol and have the same effects on the body and mind.
- On average, it takes two to three hours for a single drink to leave the body's system. Nothing can speed up this process, including drinking coffee, taking a cold shower, or “walking it off.”
- Anyone can develop a serious alcohol problem, including a teenager.

Source: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

How to Say No To a Drink

At some point, your child will be offered alcohol. To resist such peer pressure, teens say they prefer quick “one-liners” that allow them to dodge a drink without making a big scene. It will probably work best for your teen to take the lead in thinking up comebacks to drink offers so that he or she will feel comfortable saying them. Here are some pressure busters to get the brainstorming started:

- No thanks.
- Forget it!
- I don't feel like it – do you have any soda?
- Alcohol is NOT my thing.
- Why do you KEEP pressuring me when I have said NO?

Source: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism