

EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT THE DANGERS OF DRUGS

An important part of staying drug-free is knowing the risks involved and being educated about just how harmful drugs are to the body. No drugs are exactly the same. One thing is true though, all illicit drugs are harmful to health and no drug is ever safe. When you learn just how bad drugs are for the body, it's easy to see why you should avoid them. The more you know the better. Below are some of the many problems all drugs cause.

SHORT-TERM RISKS

- Injury
- Violence
- Harmful side effects vary by drug
- Overdose

LONG-TERM RISKS

- Mental health decline
- Blood-borne disease
- Damage to vital organs
- Addiction
- Withdrawal
- Death

LEGAL PROBLEMS

- Probation
- Criminal conviction/record
- Jail time

FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

- Loss of employment
- Expense of drug purchases
- Large fines

FAMILY PROBLEMS

- Violence
- Abandonment
- Neglect

THE DANGERS BY THE NUMBERS

- About 20 million Americans battle with drug abuse
- Addiction and drug abuse cost America more than \$740 billion a year in lost productivity in the workplace, healthcare expenses, and crime-related costs
- Around 65,000 Americans die from drug overdose each year
- More than 90 percent of people who suffer from addiction drank alcohol or used drugs before the age of 18



There are many different varieties of drugs. It's important to know what they are, how they affect the body, and know to avoid them. It's time to get smart about drugs.

RESOURCES

Centers For Disease Control

www.cdc.gov/pwid/addiction.html

National Institute on Drug Abuse

www.drugabuse.gov/publications/principles-drug-addiction-treatment-research-based-guide-third-edition/resources

in the know

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WHAT IS YOUR DRUG I.Q.?

IT'S TIME TO GET SMART ABOUT DRUGS





DEPRESSANTS

Depressants slow down the brain and body. If a person takes too much, their vital organs will stop functioning. Dangers include vomiting and unconsciousness which can lead to death by choking. Depressants have high potential for addiction.

Drugs include:

- alcohol
- anti-anxiety tranquilizers (Valium, Xanax, and Prozac)
- anti-depressants
- barbiturates
- opioids



STIMULANTS

Stimulants speed up heart rate and raise blood pressure. They cause anxiety, paranoia, panic, seizures and can heavily damage the heart, leading to death. Stimulants are highly addictive.

Drugs include:

- MDMA (ecstasy)
- cocaine
- crack
- amphetamines
- methamphetamines



HALLUCINOGENS

Hallucinogens warp the user's perception of the world around them. They disrupt mood, senses, sleep, and appetite. Hallucinogens can permanently damage the mind, leading to long-term mental health issues, schizophrenia and suicide.

Drugs include:

- LSD (acid)
- Psilocybin (Magic Mushrooms)
- Peyote
- PCP and DMT



OPIOIDS

Opioids are strong and highly addictive pain relievers. Often these are legal prescription drugs, but they are widely abused. These drugs are highly addictive and slow down vital bodily functions, leading to overdose and death.

Drugs include:

- opium
- codeine
- heroin
- Demerol
- morphine
- methadone
- Vicodin
- Oxycontin
- fentanyl



INHALANTS

Inhalants are a wide variety of chemicals that are inhaled and produce mind-altering effects and cause extreme damage. Abusers risk, suffocation, seizures, coma and death from lack of oxygen to the brain.

Examples include:

- Toluene
- plastic cement
- paint and paint thinner
- hair sprays
- some anesthetic gases.



CANNABIS

Cannabis or Marijuana can be ingested in many ways. It can be smoked like a cigarette or in a bong, mixed in food, smoked via oils in the plant (dabbing), or vaporized and inhaled. Marijuana abuse leads to: mental health decline, memory problems, asthma, bronchitis, throat, mouth cancer.



SYNTHETIC DRUGS

Synthetic drugs, also known as "designer drugs," are a group of lab-made drugs created from chemicals and unnatural ingredients. They mimic the effects of authentic drugs and can contain any number of dangerous substances. Many of these drugs can be purchased online and in headshops. They are labeled as "herbal incense" and "bath salts" with "not for human consumption" warnings to avoid illegal classification. Synthetic drug abuse leads to paranoia, delusions, hallucinations, violent behavior, damage to vital organs and death.

HOW DO PEOPLE BECOME ADDICTED TO DRUGS?

As people use drugs they can develop a tolerance meaning they need more of the drug to get the same effect. This changes brain chemistry which leads to addiction. Without the drug, the user doesn't feel normal and will do almost anything to get more. Users lose control over their lives. They'll risk losing their job and ruining their future. They'll spend whatever money they have on drugs. Even those fighting hard against addiction can still suffer a relapse at any time — that's how powerful addiction can be.

WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS OF ADDICTION?

Drug abuse and addiction is a problem that disrupts every aspect of life. It leads to problems at school, work, home and in relationships. Addiction makes the user feel helpless, isolated and ashamed. Here are some signs of drug addiction:

- Neglect of school, work, or home responsibilities
- Bloodshot eyes, pupils larger or smaller than usual
- Changes in appetite, sleep patterns, or physical appearance
- Unusual smells on breath, body, or clothes
- Secretive and suspicious behavior
- Anxiety, paranoia

Recognizing addiction is the first step to help those suffering.

The best way to avoid addiction is to never start using drugs. If you or someone you know is suffering from addiction, seek professional help. Speak to a doctor, counselor, clergy member or trusted adult.

**STAY SAFE. STAY SMART.
STAY AWAY FROM DRUGS.**

