

is my child at risk?

a guidebook
for parents
and caregivers
to prevent teen substance abuse



An Open Letter from Pastor Bill Heintz

Director, THE FOUNDRY RESCUE MISSION AND RECOVERY CENTER

Dear Friend,

As parents, we know the struggles kids endure growing up. From peer pressure to curiosity, children do not always make the right decisions. Statistics show that the majority of teens will at least experiment with alcohol or drugs at some point in their lives.

At The Foundry Rescue Mission and Recovery Center, hundreds of men and women struggling with devastating addictions enter our doors each year. The great majority of them have one thing in common ... They were first introduced to alcohol or drugs at a young age—some, in fact, well before their tenth birthday.

The road from experimentation to full-blown addiction varies. Sometimes it takes years. In other cases, addiction can take root immediately. The goal of *Is My Child At Risk?* is to give you, as a parent, the tools to identify signs of substance use and abuse and to prevent your child from becoming a statistic. On the pages that follow, you will find methods of communication, prevention techniques, statistical data, drug definitions, and potential legal consequences along with internet and local resources to assist you further.

I hope you find this guide both informative and helpful. It is the ultimate goal of The Foundry to become obsolete ... through awareness and prevention to eliminate the need for recovery centers. That goal can only be reached one child, one soul at a time ... and it starts with you.

I thank you for your interest and know that together, we can make a difference!

With HOPE,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Heintz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pastor Bill Heintz

Executive Director

**The Foundry Rescue Mission
and Recovery Center**

An Open Letter from the Executive Director of First Priority

Dear Friend,

I am excited that you are holding “Is My Child At Risk?” in your hands. As you will read in the first pages of this booklet, the statistics of drugs and alcohol use among teens are alarming. As someone interested in seeing every student on every campus in every community live out God’s best for them, I am concerned when I see substance abuse rob our kids of this opportunity.

It has been said that opportunity knocks and temptation knocks the door down! More than likely your teen has already had their door of temptation knocked down. More than likely they have already been exposed to temptations more severe than you would like to admit. Now is the time for you to engage with your teen and help them overcome these unlawful and unwise temptations.

Over the past decade, I have seen First Priority conduct thousands of drug and alcohol assemblies to hundreds of thousands of students in public and private schools. I am convinced these programs alone will not work. Parents and community leaders must become personally involved with teens to help them heed and apply all of the warnings they hear in these presentations.

With the help of “Is My Child At Risk?” you will be encouraged, equipped, and empowered to help your teen decide what is wrong and what is right in culture and why. Believe me, you would rather see them make those decisions now, with your help, versus later without your help. Along with information in this book, look to your community for more support. Most schools and churches have organizations and resources to help you in this difficult job of parenting a teenager.

In order to avoid the pain that drugs and alcohol can cause a family, use every resource you can. Spend every dollar necessary. Use all the time it takes. Examine your own life and the example you are setting. Then, as a family, commit to living lives free of these harmful influences.

Till all hear,



Greg Davis
Executive Director
First Priority

is my child at risk?

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Teen Drug Use Statistics and Trends

Every two years, the federal government surveys eighth, tenth, and twelfth grade students to determine usage, abuse, and trends of illegal drug use. The most recent study indicated that 53% of high school seniors admitted to having used illicit drugs in their lifetimes, while over 25% (one in four) admitted to using in the 30 days prior to the survey.

The numbers don't get much better for the younger kids. Forty-five percent of 10th graders and 25% of 8th graders admitted to lifetime use, while 21% of 10th graders and 12% of 8th graders used in the last month.

Most kids who take drugs use marijuana and alcohol, but a wide variety of drugs are used and abused. Hallucinogens (LSD and similar drugs), cocaine, and heroin use have remained steady over the past few years. Crack cocaine and inhalant use has increased steadily.

Studies generally agree that socioeconomic factors do *not* determine whether a child is apt to use illegal drugs or alcohol. ALL kids are susceptible to becoming addicted.

Following are just a few facts about drug and alcohol use. For more information, visit the web sites listed in the Internet Resources section.

- Teens who smoke cigarettes are 14 times more likely to smoke marijuana.
- More than 120,000 Americans die each year from drug and alcohol related abuse.
- Teens 14 and under who use alcohol are twice as likely to have sex.
- Teens 14 and under who use drugs are four times more likely to have sex.
- 36% of teens say their parents have never had a serious discussion with them about the risks of using illegal drugs.
- 85% of violent teens report using marijuana.
- Over 90% of teen suicide victims have a mental disorder, such as depression, and/or a history of alcohol or drug abuse.
- Only 56% of 8th graders and 43% of seniors said they thought that drinking heavily once or twice a weekend was a great risk.

- In the next 24 hours, 15,006 American teens will try drugs for the first time, 2,795 teenage girls will become pregnant, and 1,439 teenagers will attempt suicide.
- Since 1992, drug use among 12–17 year olds has doubled.
- More than 50% of teens from 15–17 years old have been to a party in the last six months where marijuana was available.
- Underage drinking costs the U.S. \$58 billion a year, enough to buy every public school student a state-of-the-art computer.
- Alcohol kills 6.5 times more teens than all other illicit drugs combined.
- Every dollar spent on treatment leads to a \$7.46 reduction in crime related expenses and lost productivity. When health care savings are added in, every dollar invested in treatment for addiction yields a total return of \$12.00 saved.

How Well Do You Really Know Your Child?

1. What is your child's favorite color?

2. Who is your child's best friend?

3. Who is your child's favorite teacher? Why?

4. Who serves as a role model for your child? Who does he/she want to grow up and be like? Why?

5. If given one wish, what would your child wish for?

6. What is your child's favorite food?

7. What is your child's favorite movie? TV show?

8. What three words would your child use to describe himself?

9. What three words would your child use to describe you?

10. What are your child's hobbies? Favorite activities?

11. What are your child's future goals?

Parent: Check with your child to see how well you did on this quiz!

How To Detect Your Child Is Using Drugs

Since so many drugs are out there, it would take an entire book to list all the signs of drug use. However, there are eight common physical and emotional characteristics you might look for in your child.

- **Inflammation of the eyelids and nose is common.** The pupils of the eyes are either very wide or very small, depending on the kind of drug internalized.
- **Extremes of energy may be evident.** Either the individual is sluggish, gloomy, and withdrawn, or he may be loud, hysterical, and jumpy.
- **The appetite is extreme ... either very great or very poor.** Weight loss may occur.
- **The personality suddenly changes.** The individual may become irritable, inattentive and confused, or aggressive, suspicious, and explosive.
- **Body and breath odor are often bad.** Cleanliness is generally ignored.
- **The digestive system may be upset ...** diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting may occur. Headaches and double vision are also common. Other signs of physical deterioration may include changes in skin tone and body stance.
- **Needle marks on the body,** usually appearing on the arms, are an important symptom. These punctures sometimes get infected and appear as sores and boils.
- **Moral values often crumble** and are replaced by new, avant-garde ideas and values.
- **Be aware that some kids are able to hide drug use better than others...**

Adapted from a James Dobson article from July 2003

Note: Please refer to the Internet section for more in-depth signs of particular drugs.

What Can Parents Do ?

Talk With Your Child

It is important to establish and maintain good communication with your child. Get into the habit of talking with your child every day. Building a close relationship with your child when he/she is young will make it easier for him/her to come up to you when he/she has a problem arise ... and you will become more sensitive to his/her mood changes. With a closer relationship to you, your child will be less likely to develop mental health problems and to experiment with alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs.

Get Involved

It really can make a difference when you get involved in your child's life. Your children are much less likely to have mental health and substance abuse problems when they have positive activities to do and when caring adults are involved in their lives. Your involvement and encouragement tell your child that he/she and his/her activities are worthwhile and will help him/her identify and pursue positive goals as he/she gets older.

Set Rules

Make clear, sensible rules for your child and enforce them with consistency and appropriate consequences. When you do this, you help your child develop self-discipline. Following these rules can help protect your child's physical safety and mental well-being, which can lower his/her risk for substance abuse problems. Some rules, such as "Respect Your Elders," apply to all ages, but many will vary depending on your child's age and level of development.

Be A Role Model

Set a good example for your child. Think about what you say and how you act around him/her. Your child learns social skills and how to deal with stress by listening and watching you. Do not take part in illegal, unhealthy, or dangerous practices related to alcohol or illegal drugs or he/she may believe that, no matter what you say, these practices are okay. Be care-

ful what you say about mental illness and people with mental illness. Careless speech can lead to stigma, discrimination, and a lack of tolerance.

Teach Kids To Choose Friends Wisely

Support your child's social development. Teach your child how to develop positive relationships. Research shows that the pressure to use tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs comes most often from wanting to be accepted, wanting to belong, and wanting to be liked. Help your child learn what qualities to look for in a friend. Tell him/her what to do if offered harmful substances. Children who have difficulty making friends need support to avoid being isolated or bullied.

Monitor Your Child's Activities

Do you know what your child listens to and reads and how he spends time with friends? Talking with your child about his/her interests opens up an opportunity for you to share your values. And research says that monitoring your child's activities is an important factor in lowering his/her chances of getting involved in situations you don't approve of, especially those that can be harmful. Unsupervised children simply have more opportunities to experiment in risky behavior, including the use of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs, and they tend to begin substance abuse at earlier ages.

Legal Consequences of Drug Involvement

Beyond the physical and mental issues surrounding drug use, there are numerous legal consequences of illicit drug use. Most important for teenage kids, however, might be the consequences of having any type of criminal record, especially where eventual college applications and job searches are concerned. Possessing a controlled substance is a class C felony, and persons convicted face one to ten years in jail, along with up to a \$5000 fine.



What is an illegal drug?

The State Board of Health annually publishes a list of all known “controlled” substances. This list includes those you’ve probably heard about, such as marijuana, cocaine and crack, heroin, and crystal meth. However, equally important are various prescription drugs, which typically carry felony charges when obtained or possessed without a prescription.

What is drug paraphernalia?

Crack pipes, rolling papers, scales, syringes, roach clips, bongos, and other materials used to manufacture or prepare drugs for personal use or distribution are all items which can be considered drug paraphernalia. Possession of drug paraphernalia is a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by up to one year in jail and a \$2000 fine.

Does a person have to be caught using a controlled substance illegally in order to be arrested?

No. Controlled substance charges are not comparable to prosecutions for driving under the influence. In prosecutions involving a controlled substance, whether or not the person was actually using the drug is irrelevant.

What happens to people who are just “in the wrong place at the wrong time?”

Under a legal theory known as “constructive possession,” being in close proximity to drugs can be enough, under certain circumstances, to justify an arrest and result in a conviction for everyone who was close enough to the drugs for police and a jury to conclude that the drugs could have belonged to them.

Constructive possession cases often arise as a result of traffic stops, during which drugs are located in a center console or other central location that could conceivably be reached by more than one person in the car. Arrests are also made when drugs are found in a residence or in a room within a residence, and more than one person is present who could arguably be the owner of the drugs.

Practically speaking, it is imperative that your child should be aware of his/her surroundings and avoid situations where drugs may be present, even if he/she does not actually intend to use or handle the drugs himself. Assuming or trusting a friend or acquaintance will take responsibility for any drugs found has proven to be a critical mistake for many young people.

Drugs: Definitions and Effects

Following are basic descriptions of drugs most often abused by young people. Included are the most common mental and physical dangers of using each drug type. Following this section, we take a “closer look” at some of the more prevalent drugs abused by teens: Alcohol, Cocaine, Crack, Marijuana, Nicotine, and Inhalants.

Alcohol

Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant that can cause uninhibited behaviors and decreased motor coordination and control. This impairment can occur even at low levels of blood alcohol. When alcohol is abused, there is a significantly increased incidence of physical injury, motor vehicle accidents (nearly half of all fatal accidents) and injuries from assaults. Chronic heavy alcohol abuse is associated with increased risk of cancer of the esophagus, stomach, pancreas, liver, and heart and is the most common cause of liver failure.

Marijuana

Street Names: Pot, Weed, Blunts, Chronic, Grass, Reefer, Herb, Ganja

Users often have chronic bronchitis and run the added risk of lung cancer. Marijuana contains ten times the respiratory irritants and more carcinogens (cancer causing agents) than tobacco. Heavy users, especially among the young adult population, may show slow and confused thinking, decreased short-term memory and impaired performance of complex motor tasks, loss of energy, and apathy. Other side effects associated with chronic use of marijuana are rapid heart rate, panic, hallucinations, and paranoia.

Hallucinogens

Can be found in many forms ... some of them are PCP, Peyote, Ecstasy, Psilocybin, LSD, and Mescaline. They are usually taken orally or injected. Effects include illusions, hallucinations, and altered perceptions of time and distance. These drugs may cause psychosis or even death.

Cocaine/Crack

Street Names for Cocaine: Coke, Snow, Blow, Nose Candy, White, Big C

Street Names for Crack Cocaine: Freebase, Rock

Cocaine can cause agitation, confusion, hallucinations, convulsions, brain infarction (death of brain tissue), arrhythmias (heart rhythm irregularities), myocardial infarction, pneumonia, hypertension (high blood pressure), hyperthermia (high body temperature), and death.

Amphetamines

Street Names: Speed, Uppers, Dexies, Bennies

These drugs can cause a very rapid or an irregular heartbeat, tremors, loss of coordination, collapse, and even death from heart failure or from burst blood vessels in the brain. Heavy users are prone to irrational acts.

Prescription Drugs

These drugs are not illicit if they are used in accordance with the prescription. However, sharing prescription medication with someone else is illegal and can be very harmful.



Ecstasy

Street Names: XTC, X, Adam, E, Roll

Ecstasy is a designer drug that is chemically manufactured in private labs. It is taken in pill form. It has properties of both amphetamine and hallucinogenic drugs. Some long-term risks include serious or fatal head injury, fluid and electrolyte depletion and damage to the central nervous system, heart, kidneys, liver muscles, and brain. It can impair both verbal and visual memory.

Anabolic Steroids

Some common names are testosterone, nandrolone, and oxymetholone. These are injected or taken orally. Side effects include virilization, acne, testicular atrophy, gynecomastia, aggressive behavior, and edema. One who takes this for a long time may slip into depression.

Rohypnol

Street Names: Roofies, Roach, Forget-me Pill, Date Rape Drug

This drug is generally found in the form of odorless, tasteless white tablets that are slipped into the drinks of those who are unaware. This drug may become a gateway to harder drugs if taken consistently. Immediate effects of Rohypnol include amnesia, sedation, muscle relaxation, disorientation, and blackouts.

Heroin

Street Names: Horse, Smack, Big H, Junk

This is an opiate drug that causes the body to have diminished pain reactions, drowsiness, diminished response to carbon dioxide and pneumonia. Some of the risks associated with the use of heroin include accidental overdose, coma, and death. There is also significantly increased incidence of serious infections of the blood, brain, and heart as well as end-stage liver disease.

GHB

Street Names: Liquid Ecstasy, G, Georgia Home Boy

GHB is often made in home basement labs, usually in the form of a liquid with no odor or color. It is a depressant drug that can

cause both euphoria and hallucinogenic effects. Side effects include severe nausea, breathing problems, decreased heart rate, and seizures. GHB, like Rohypnol, is commonly used as a date-rape drug. Overdosing on GHB requires emergency care immediately. Even at low doses, using it even once can kill you.

Methamphetamines

Street Names: Crystal Meth, Meth, Speed, Chalk, Ice, Glass

Methamphetamines are a stimulant drug very similar to amphetamines, but the central nervous system effects are much greater. It is taken orally, intravenously, or smoked. Side effects include increased heart rate and blood pressure, producing strokes. Other effects include irregular heartbeat, anorexia, and respiratory problems. Methamphetamines can result in cardiovascular collapse and death.

Dextromethorphan

Street Names: DMX, DM, Candy, Dex, Triple C, Drex, Robo, Skittles, Vitamin D

Over the years, teens have made the unsettling discovery that they can get high by taking mass quantities of any of the multitude of over-the-counter medicines that contain dextromethorphan. They are found in tablets, capsules, gel caps, lozenges, and syrups. These are usually labeled “cough suppressant” or something similar. This problem has increased to the point where several national drug store chains have begun to keep cough suppressant medicines behind the counter just to prevent shoplifting. Side effects include paranoia, vomiting, seizures, and even death.

Note: These are not the only drugs used and abused today ... they are only the most popular. Every year, new forms of mind-altering substances come to light. Refer to the Internet Resources section of this booklet to keep current.

Alcohol: A Closer Look

What is Alcohol?

Alcohol is a drug containing ethanol which depresses the body's central nervous system.

How does alcohol affect the body?

The moment alcohol enters the body, it is absorbed directly into the bloodstream through the walls of the stomach. The heart starts beating faster and skin becomes flushed. Coordination, depth perception, reflexes, vision, reason, and judgment are adversely affected. Alcohol attacks liver cells, destroys proteins, and disrupts the body's balance of sugar and water. High blood pressure, heart disease, cirrhosis of the liver, malnutrition and death can be caused by drinking alcohol. Pregnant women who drink alcohol risk having a baby born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). Babies with FAS can have a low birth weight, brain damage, heart defects and physical deformities.

What's the truth about "sobering up"?

Drinking coffee, going for a brisk walk, or taking a cold shower are not good ways to sober up after drinking. The liver does most of the work to rid the body of alcohol, and nothing can be done to speed up the elimination process. Drinking milk or eating a meal before drinking alcohol will not prevent a person from getting drunk. While body weight and rate of alcohol consumption directly influence the amount of alcohol needed to make a person drunk, nothing will prevent alcohol from entering the bloodstream.



Why do teens start drinking?

Peer pressure is the main reason. Young people are very vulnerable to pressures from friends to try alcohol. Today's media depicts drinking alcohol as sexy, sophisticated, and mature. Teens should reject peer groups that condone drinking.

How do people become addicted to alcohol?

Alcoholism develops when alcohol reacts with a person's particular body chemistry. Depending on a person's physical make-up, it may take a lot of drinking to trigger alcoholism or it may take just a little. Studies have shown that heredity is a major influence in alcoholism. Each person is born with a certain level of risk for developing into an alcoholic. Teenagers can become addicted to alcohol because a young person's liver metabolizes alcohol more rapidly than an adult's. They may build up a tolerance to the drug, requiring more and more alcohol to achieve the same effect.

What are the warning signs of alcoholism?

- Needing a drink to start the day
- Chronic hangovers
- Making excuses for drinking
- Frequent absenteeism from work or school
- Sneaking extra drinks, gulping drinks

Some sobering statistics

- Alcohol is involved in 60% of all auto fatalities
- 83% of murders and 72% of sexual assaults are committed by individuals under the influence of alcohol
- 4.6 million teenagers are problem drinkers
- 10.6 million adults are alcoholics
- Alcohol costs the economy \$50 billion a year in lost productivity and health care costs
- Nearly 20% of youths report having used alcohol in the last 30 days

Marijuana: A Closer Look

Marijuana is the most widely used illicit drug in the United States and tends to be the first illegal drug that teens use. According to a recent survey of high school seniors, 22% had smoked marijuana within the past year. Marijuana is derived from the hemp plant and is also known as cannabis. The use of marijuana creates feelings of relaxation and euphoria. It causes a rapid increase in the pulse rate and is quickly absorbed into the blood stream, quickly entering the liver.

Use of marijuana impairs short-term memory and comprehension, alters sense of time, and reduces ability to perform tasks requiring concentration and coordination ... such as driving a car.

What are the short-term effects of using marijuana?

- Sleepiness and increased hunger
- Difficulty keeping track of time
- Impaired or reduced short-term memory
- Reduced ability to concentrate and loss of coordination
- Increased heart rate



- Potential cardiac dangers for those with pre-existing heart disease
- Bloodshot eyes
- Dry mouth and throat
- Decreased social inhibitions

What are the long-term effects of using marijuana?

- Enhanced cancer risk
- Decrease in testosterone levels for men
- Increase in testosterone levels for women
- Diminished or extinguished sexual pleasure
- Psychological dependence requiring more of the drug to get the same effect
- Increase in appetite, leading to weight gain
- Interference of development of social skills in youth
- Impairs verbal and mathematical skill development in youth

Cocaine: A Closer Look

Description

Cocaine is generally used in a white powdered form, although it is found in liquid form. It can be snorted through the nose, injected, or breathed as a distilled vapor (free base). Cocaine is highly addictive and widely abused.

Effects of use

Cocaine produces an immediate feeling of vibrancy and energy. Euphoria, false confidence, and a drug-induced feeling of personal direction and motivation are common reactions.

Symptoms of abuse

Cocaine use deteriorates the abuser's physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health. The drug reduces appetite and induces extreme, unhealthy weight loss. Deterioration of



membranes and linings in the nose, chest and intestine is common. An abnormally fast heartbeat and high blood pressure levels are also symptoms of cocaine abuse. Emotionally, cocaine creates irrational fears, feelings of dread, paranoia, and uncontrollable anxiety. Hallucinations, delusions, and the sense that insects are crawling over the skin are normal among abusers. In addiction stages, its use interrupts the addict's ability to experience personal growth or to function normally without cocaine.

Treatment needs

Conservatively, 1 million Americans are addicted to cocaine. Addicts require intensive, diverse treatment to begin recovery. Early in the treatment phase, therapy is activity-oriented and includes much physical activity because cocaine addicts generally have short attention spans due to the presence of the drug in their system. Later treatment needs may include individual counseling, group therapy, family counseling and recreational therapy. Treatment goals must be geared toward teaching the addict to live drug free.

Crack Cocaine: A Closer Look

Crack cocaine or just “crack” is a potent offspring of cocaine. It has produced a drug epidemic swamping already strained law enforcement agencies and drug rehabilitation centers. Crack is smokable cocaine prepackaged in small, ready-to-use amounts. It can be smoked in a “joint” of marijuana or a tobacco cigarette, in a special glass pipe, or in an empty soft drink or beer can. Known also as “rock” because of its pebble-like appearance, the drug is called “crack” because of the sound it makes when being smoked.

How does crack differ from regular cocaine?

The cocaine smuggled into the United States from South America and Mexico is distributed to drug dealers in white powdered crystals, known chemically as cocaine hydrochloride. The once favored method of administering the drug was “snorting” or inhaling the crystals into the nostrils. Now, crack is taken into the body by smoking or “free basing” to achieve a powerful high. Preparation of cocaine for “free basing” requires the use of a flammable solvent to free the pure cocaine base from its hydrochloride salt. Crack is preprocessed cocaine that allows the user to “free base” without having to prepare the cocaine.

How is crack made?

No sophisticated process is needed to process cocaine crystals into crack. Crack can be processed in a home kitchen using ordinary baking soda to convert the crystals into paste. After the paste hardens and dries, it is cut into white, beige, or gray chips or chunks, resembling soap or rough gravel. The crack rocks are sold by dealers for as little as five or ten dollars.

How does crack lead to crime?

Many people addicted to crack turn to crime to support their intense craving for the drug. Criminal acts also occur because of the particular vicious and aggressive behaviors that crack produces. Because it can be easily processed and purchased in small quantities at low cost, the crack trade is a thriving illegal industry. Drug lords recruit crack dealers from low-income groups, and dealers sell crack openly on street corners. Teenagers and children are enticed to sell the drug or act as guards to warn

dealers against narcotics officers. As a result of crack activity, violent crimes and murder rates have risen sharply.

Why is crack more dangerous than snorted cocaine?

Every form of cocaine is extremely dangerous, but snorting the drug in powder form can allow the occasional user to take it for several months or even years before becoming addicted. In contrast, smoking crack brings such an intense and instant high that a user can become addicted in two to three weeks. In some cases, the user becomes instantly addicted because smoking allows high doses of cocaine to reach the brain almost immediately.

Who uses crack?

The crack problem has no socioeconomic or age boundaries. Although cocaine was once the “glamour drug” of the wealthy and famous, crack has made cocaine affordable to virtually everyone. Because of the availability and low cost of crack, abuse by middle and high school students is becoming common. Children as young as twelve have called professional agencies in desperation over crack addiction. Infants are being born addicted to crack because their mothers used the drug while pregnant.

How does crack make a person feel?

Crack reaches the brain less than eight seconds after inhalation. A small piece produces a 20 minute high also called a rush. This period of intense euphoria is followed by a crushing depression. The cycle of ups and downs reinforces a craving for the drug so powerful that a chemical dependency can develop virtually immediately. As the drug wears off, crack users report intense anxiety about where they can get more of the drug for the next hit. Users also report that they experience feelings of invincibility, followed by intense feelings of self-hatred and depression.

What are the psychological effects of crack?

A crack user rapidly progresses through several psychological states: first euphoria with a feeling of stimulation and excitement, then, as the drug wears off, sadness and depression, followed by irritability, sleeplessness, and paranoia. Addicted users may experience a schizophrenic-like psychosis, with delusions

and hallucinations. Heavy crack users may have all these stages in one crack “binge.”

What are the physical effects of crack?

The early effects are chronic sore throat, hoarseness, and shortness of breath, leading to bronchitis and emphysema. The eyes become dilated, and the user may see lights around any object he attempts to focus upon. The heart rate increases by about 50% and the blood vessels constrict rapidly, raising blood pressure. Heart attacks, convulsions and stroke may result. Because of a loss of interest in eating and sleeping, severe weight loss and malnutrition are common.

How can I tell if someone is using crack?

Although many symptoms are the same as emotional disturbances or a troubled adolescence, drug abuse should be suspected if these danger signals are severe:

- Definite changes in personality or behavior
- Animosity toward family members and friends
- Loss of concentration
- Altered sleep patterns
- Weight loss
- Loss of interest in appearance
- Association with people known to use drugs
- Loss of household valuables or unexplained vanishing cash
- Extreme paranoia (suspicious of everyone)

Nicotine: A Closer Look

Tobacco has been used as a medicine since the 1500's. It was used to treat a number of ailments ... most notably headaches, colds, allergies, and as an antihistamine. It was known as the Holy Plant. In 1828, a French chemist isolated its active ingredient, Nicotine. Although many people still believed in the cure-all effect of nicotine, by around 1890 a few medical professionals began to voice some opinion that tobacco might not be all good for people's health. We now know that smoking causes or contributes to cancer, high blood pressure, arteriosclerosis, heart disease, and strokes.

Although smoking among adults has declined sharply in the past few decades, smoking among teenagers has remained steady. This is due to perception of risk. Cigarette health problems are associated with old age ... not nicotine.



Why is nicotine addictive?

Reinforcement: Psychological reinforcer is something that motivates an individual to work towards getting more. This has been proven with rats ... they will press a bar to get more nicotine.

Tolerance: First we experience unpleasant effects including dizziness and nausea. These disappear after a few days of smoking.

Withdrawal: Within 24 to 48 hours of last dose of nicotine, most people say they want to hurt something. Depression, loss of energy, and chest pain are also common.

What are some of the dangerous effects of smoking/nicotine?

- Carbon monoxide and a reduction of oxygen exchange in the lungs produces low oxygen levels in the brain and heart.
- Nicotine causes a release of adrenalin which speeds up the heart and slows oxygen intake, which deprives the heart.
- The inner lining of blood vessels thickens and hardens.
- Nicotine is an irritant to the lungs ... the major cause of lung cancer.
- Nicotine paralyzes the cilia in the lungs, causing congestion and asthma.
- Tars in smoke coat the bronchial tubes, causing asthma and eventually emphysema.
- Layers of skin seem thinner in smokers ... causing appearance of wrinkles and premature aging.
- Odor permeates clothing and person, making one smell offensive.

Inhalants: A Closer Look

Inhalants are breathable chemicals that produce psychoactive (mind altering) vapors. They include solvents, aerosols, some anesthetics, and other chemicals. Examples are model airplane glue, nail polish remover, lighter fluid, cleaning fluids, and gaso-line. Aerosols that are used as inhalants include paints, cook-ware coating agents, hair sprays and other spray products.

Who abuses inhalants?

Young people, ages 7 to 17, are most likely to abuse inhalants. This is due to their availability and low cost. Sometimes children unintentionally misuse inhalant products that are found around the house.

How do inhalants work?

Nearly all of the abused inhalants produce effects similar to anesthetics, which slow down the body's functions. At low



doses, users may feel slightly stimulated. At higher amounts, they may feel inhibited ... less in control. At high doses, a user can lose consciousness.

What are the short-term dangers of inhalants?

- Lost touch with immediate surroundings
- Violent behavior
- Nausea and vomiting
- Highly concentrated amounts can cause suffocation
- Depression of the central nervous system to the point where breathing ceases

What are the long-term dangers of inhalants?

- Severe weight loss
- Salt imbalance and muscle fatigue
- Permanent damage to the nervous system
- Greatly reduced physical and mental capabilities
- Irreversible damage to the liver, kidneys, blood, and bone marrow
- Death

“A Closer Look” segments adapted from Commonly Abused Drugs, The Foundry Rescue Mission and Recovery Center, 2000

Drug Quiz For Parents

1. By graduation time, what percent of seniors will have experimented with illegal drugs?

- A. More than 25%
- B. More than 50%
- C. More than 75%
- D. Almost 100%

2. Cigarette smoking among teens has declined significantly over the past five years.

- A. True
- B. False

3. Illegal drug use among teens has declined significantly over the past five years.

- A. True
- B. False

4. The most important factor in whether kids decide to use drugs is...

- A. How easy drugs can be obtained
- B. Understanding the perceived risk of using drugs
- C. Whether drugs are deemed socially unacceptable
- D. Where the person lives

5. The most popular drug of choice among high school seniors is...

- A. Marijuana
- B. Alcohol
- C. Cigarettes
- D. Inhalants

6. Because sniffing powdered heroin doesn't require needles, it isn't very risky.

- A. True
- B. False

7. Most kids get their drugs from...

- A. A friend
- B. A family member
- C. A dealer
- D. A classmate

8. The leading source of drug prevention information for a teen comes from...

- A. Media
- B. School
- C. Internet
- D. Parents

Drug Quiz Answers and Explanations

1. By graduation time, what percent of seniors will have experimented with illegal drugs?

Correct Answer: B More than 50%. In 2002, 53% of high school seniors reported having tried an illegal drug.

2. Cigarette smoking among teens has declined significantly over the past five years.

Correct Answer: True. The percentage of teens who have had a cigarette in the past 30 days has declined from 41 to 28 percent in the last five years.

3. Illegal drug use among teens has declined significantly over the past five years.

Correct Answer: False. Although improving, 48% of teens had tried an illegal drug, compared to 53% five years ago.

4. The most important factor in whether kids decide to use or not use drugs is...

Correct Answer: B Understanding the perceived risk of using drugs. Research shows that perception of risk is the most important factor influencing drug use decisions.

5. The most popular drug of choice among high school seniors is...

Correct Answer: B Alcohol. 78% of seniors have used alcohol, 57% have used cigarettes, 48 % have used marijuana and 12% have used inhalants.

6. Because sniffing powdered heroin doesn't require needles, it isn't very risky.

Correct Answer: False. Heroin, in any form, can cause death.

7. Most kids get their drugs from...

Correct Answer: A. A friend. Of the half of all teens who have been offered drugs, 57% say that the offer came from a friend around their age.

8. The leading source of drug prevention information comes from...

Correct Answer: B School

Partnership for A Drug Free America 2003

Local Help

Help is a phone call away! If your child has a problem, contact someone immediately. His or her life may depend on it.

Al-A-Teen	(205) 322-1500
Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council	(205) 933-1213
Alcoholism Recovery Services	(205) 923-6552
The Bridge Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment	(256) 546-6324
Crisis Center Help Line For Youth and Parents	(205) 323-7777
Hillcrest Behavioral Health Services	(205) 833-9000
JCCEO Alcohol and Drug Outreach Program	(205) 787-3040
Jefferson County Sheriff's Department	
—Student STOP-Line	(205) 252-STOP
Montclair Adolescent Treatment Program	(205) 592-5051
START (Short Term Adolescent Residential Treatment)	(205) 924-4133
UAB Drug Treatment Center	(205) 934-7008
YMCA 24-Crisis Line	(205) 322-4878

Other resources are available. Contact your school's guidance counselor for additional help.

This is the BOTTOM LINE ...

Don't expect your teen to just "grow up and grow out" of their problems.

Give them the tools to lead a productive, happy, and fulfilling life without the need of mood-altering substances.

Give them the choice of LIFE!!

Internet Resources

Information about drug and alcohol abuse is available in many forms on the Internet. Following are a few legitimate sources of information along with a general description of the site. Please keep in mind when using these that some have a political agenda. These agendas can affect how an organization manipulates and presents facts. It is recommended that you use several different sources ... and not rely on any one in particular.

Parents The Anti-Drug (www.theantidrug.com)

This is a great site for parents of children reaching driving age. It is filled with advice for parents of teens and includes faith-based articles.

Office of National Drug Control Policy (www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov)

Although obviously politically driven, this site has tremendous facts, figures, and a host of additional links.

Narconon (www.stopdrugaddiction.com)

This site has excellent current articles. It also has good advice on addiction and recovery. It has an extensive section on signs of drug abuse.

National Institute On Drug Abuse (www.drugabuse.gov)

This is a site dedicated to scientific research. It is a technically superior site and has been a leader in research for over 30 years.

Drug Test Your Teen (www.drugtestyourteen.com)

This site gives you tools to test your teen on virtually every drug, and has good resources on detecting drug use. Also good links and testimonials.

U.S. Office of Applied Studies (www.drugabusestatistics.samhsa.gov)

This is a technically superior site, with reliable empirical data and a non-biased look at what the statistics mean. Worth a look.

Note: This is just some of the vast amount of information available on the web ... each site has a number of related links and if you have a specific interest, any reliable search engine (Yahoo, Google, etc.) will provide you with many options.