

Drug Facts

This information is written so parents can discuss facts about alcohol and other drugs with children of elementary school age.

[TK]

Alcohol

Some Basic Facts:

- Alcohol is a drug.
- A can of beer, a glass of wine, and a shot of whiskey have about the same amount of alcohol.
- It is illegal for anyone under 21 to buy or use alcohol.

Effects on the Body:

- Alcohol is an addictive drug.
- Drinking alcohol can make a person get very sick and pass out.
- A person can die from drinking too much alcohol at one time.
- Heavy drinkers often ignore their health problems for many years.
- Alcohol can damage many parts of the body, including the brain, the stomach, and the liver.
- The liver cleans alcohol out of the bloodstream and can be severely damaged by heavy drinking.
- When a pregnant woman drinks, some of the alcohol is passed through her blood to the baby, and this can cause serious harm to the baby.

Effects on Behavior:

- Alcohol affects the brain almost immediately and can cause problems with memory, coordination, and judgment.
- Drinking doesn't make people's problems go away. It can cause new problems.

- Some people become addicted to alcohol and have serious problems with it all their lives. A person is more likely to have problems if he or she comes from a family with alcohol problems.
- Alcohol affects how people drive. Half of all car accidents are related to drinking alcohol. The leading cause of death among teenagers is car crashes in which a driver has been drinking.

Tobacco [Tk]

Some Basic Facts:

- Nicotine, the main drug in tobacco, is highly addictive.
- In most places, it is illegal for anyone under the age of 16 to buy cigarettes.
- Tobacco is smoked, chewed, and sniffed.

Effects on the Body:

- Smoking tobacco can cause heart disease and lung cancer.
- Tar and carbon monoxide from cigarette smoking are very damaging to the lungs and brain, causing smokers to receive less oxygen.
- Smoking deadens the taste buds on the tongue and the nerve endings in the nose that allow us to smell.
- Cigarette smoking causes stained teeth, yellow fingers, and bad breath. Other people notice these changes and find them offensive.
- Chewing tobacco can cause cancer of the mouth.
- Being near a smoker can make you sick. Secondhand smoke is dangerous to your health.
- A woman who smokes while she is pregnant risks harming her baby.

Effects on Behavior:

- Smoking tobacco can make you very nervous.
- Once a person starts smoking, it is extremely difficult to stop. This is called "addiction."
- More people today do not smoke, especially adults.

Marijuana/Cannabis

Some Basic Facts:

- The varieties of marijuana grown now are five to 20 times more powerful than those people smoked 20 years ago.

Effects on the Body:

- The effects of marijuana are subtle, long-lasting, and harmful.
- Marijuana use causes rapid heartbeat, bloodshot eyes, a dry mouth and throat, and increased appetite.
- Smoking marijuana has serious effects on the lungs.

Effects on Behavior:

- Marijuana slows down a person's reactions and makes driving dangerous.
- People who use marijuana often have a difficult time learning new information.
- Often people who use marijuana do not develop mentally as well as others who don't smoke it.

Cocaine and Crack [TK]

Some Basic Facts:

- Buying, selling, and possessing cocaine is illegal.
- Cocaine and crack are highly addictive. People want to continue to use them no matter how harmful they are.
- Cocaine is inhaled through the nose or injected. Crack is smoked in a pipe.

Effects on the Body and Behavior:

- Cocaine is a stimulant. It makes the heart beat faster and increases the rate of breathing.
- Cocaine and crack affect the heart and brain very quickly. They cause immediate changes in the body's systems.
- Just one experience with cocaine or crack can lead to serious consequences and addiction.

- Inhaled cocaine damages the inside of the nose.
- Cocaine and crack cause sudden mood swings and affect the user's ability to think clearly.

Inhalants/Sniffing

Some Basic Facts:

- Inhalants are products that can be sniffed, such as airplane glue, cooking spray, bug spray, hair spray, gasoline, nail polish remover, typing correction fluid, freon, etc.

Effects on the Body and Behavior:

- Breathing inhalants puts harmful poisons in the lungs.
- People who sniff inhalants look as if they are drunk or having a daydream. They are likely to be dizzy and confused.
- Users often get headaches, become sick, and throw up.
- Inhalants can cause immediate and irreparable damage to the brain, the lungs, the kidneys, and the liver.
- Sniffing inhalants can lead to death by shutting off the sniffer's oxygen or by causing the lungs to stop working.