Stay Smart, Don't Start

The Truth About Drugs and Alcohol

PhRMA CADCA CHPA

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Introduction

If you are a student, you already know that drug and alcohol abuse is dangerous. If you're a parent or teacher, you never want to see any child make bad decisions that at best lead to unhappiness and at worst to addiction, depression, and even death. In this supplement, we spell out the down-and-dirty facts about all the risks that even casual drug and alcohol use cause to your brain, impacting both your mind and your body. Students, parents, and teachers will all learn things they most likely didn't know before.

Recent substance abuse statistics among teens point to a shift away from the abuse of illicit street drugs toward the abuse of prescription and over-the-counter medicines. When used as directed, these medicines can help treat illness, make people feel better, and prevent illness. But, because too many teens do not understand the risks involved when abusing these medicines, we've included a special section on the dangers of their misuse.

This report also takes a closer look at the negative impact of drug and alcohol addiction, how to spot signs of a problem, and how to find help for you or a friend or child. We've included information on how young people can positively motivate friends who are abusing drugs or alcohol to stop. You'll read about how individuals and community coalitions are successfully fighting substance abuse. Finally, armed with knowledge, tools, and resources, you'll learn what you can do on your own or with a group to prevent drug and alcohol abuse from destroying the lives of those you care about in your family, your peer group, and your community.

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About CADCA

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) works on behalf of over 5,000 community coalitions across the country to realize its mission of building and maintaining safe, healthy, drug-free communities. The organization has evolved to become the principal national substance abuse prevention organization working with community-based coalitions and representing their interests at the national level. Community coalitions can connect multiple sectors of the community, including businesses, parents, media, law enforcement, schools, faith organizations, health providers, social service agencies, and government. By acting in concert through the coalition, all of the partners gain a more complete understanding of the community's problems. Together, the partners organize and develop plans and programs to coordinate their anti-drug efforts. The result is a comprehensive, community-wide approach to substance abuse and its related problems. Learn more at: **www.cadca.org.**

About PhRMA

The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) represents the country's leading pharmaceutical research and biotechnology companies, which are devoted to inventing medicines that allow patients to live longer, healthier, and more productive lives. PhRMA companies are leading the way in the search for new cures. PhRMA members alone invested an estimated $44.5 billion in 2007 in discovering and developing new medicines. Industry-wide research and investment reached a record $58.8 billion in 2007. Learn more at: **www.phrma.org.**

About CHPA

The Consumer Healthcare Products Association (CHPA), founded in 1881, represents the leading manufacturers and distributors of nonprescription, over-the-counter (OTC) medicines and nutritional supplements. CHPA member products provide millions of Americans with safe, effective, and convenient therapies for the treatment and prevention of many common ailments and diseases. Currently CHPA is spearheading several major campaigns to raise awareness about cough medicine abuse through programming efforts with the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, the Partnership for a Drug-Free America and D.A.R.E America in these efforts. Learn more at: **www.chpa-info.org.**

I: The 411 On Drugs and Alcohol

What Do Drugs And Alcohol Really Do to Your Brain and Body?

As you read this article, you are using your brain to process information. Even though it weighs only about three pounds, your brain is "operation central" for your body. It's a vital nerve center with different parts that direct all kinds of processes in your body. Lots of them go on without you even being aware of it, like breathing, seeing, hearing, digestion and sleeping. Your brain is also responsible for helping you learn new skills—like how to sink a three-pointer or play an instrument. Drugs and alcohol can confuse your brain to the point where it has trouble making your body work the way it is supposed to. That's why people who drink too much alcohol have trouble walking and talking. But there are much worse things happening inside the bodies of people who habitually abuse drugs and alcohol. Much of the damage can't be seen until it's too late.

Look at "Drugs and the Body—It Isn't Pretty" on pages 8 and 9. Look at how many parts of your body can be affected by just one class of drugs: *inhalants.* That three-pointer your loyal brain taught you how to sink could become just a distant memory if you use inhalants, because they can damage the marrow inside your bones. They slow down communication between your brain and body and can actually shrink the part of your brain that tells your body how to move. Inhalants have even caused heart attacks in perfectly healthy young people because they make your heartbeat go crazy! If your heart holds out, your lungs very well may not because inhalants replace the oxygen that your lungs are intended to hold—and you cannot live without oxygen.

Ecstasy has been shown to cause damage to the brain and body that can last for years, even after a few uses. "X" causes such extreme dehydration that it can lead to kidney failure. Confusion, depression, sleep problems, anxiety, memory impairment and paranoia don't happen to just *some* ecstasy users. They happen to *everyone* who tries this drug. And they last much longer than the high.

Lots of people say that marijuana is harmless. The real truth is that it causes problems with learning and memory and can lead to depression and lack of motivation. Like all the other drugs mentioned here and on pages 8-9, marijuana is illegal and it drastically impairs your coordination, concentration, and judgment.

So how about alcohol? It's legal—at least for adults. But there are reasons for a legal drinking age. Research shows that the younger you begin using alcohol, the more likely you are to become an alcoholic. If that isn't scary enough, think about this: Alcohol is involved in nearly *half* of all violent deaths involving teens. Suicide attempts are higher among teens that drink than among those who don't. Drinking alcohol can even be fatal if too much is consumed in too short a time.

Like many people, you might be thinking, "I can try it once. I won't get addicted." But guess what? You're not in control. Your brain is. When you use drugs or alcohol—just once—your brain's pleasure center is alerted. That can set up a craving for more that can send you into a downward spiral that could alter your life in very negative ways.

The truth about drugs and alcohol is simple: stay smart, stay safe—don't start.

TARGET: TRUTH

Which one is false?

Your brain

- tells your body how you feel
- helps you process information
- can take all kinds of abuse
- can "learn" to become addicted

A Closer Look

Study the "Drugs and the Body—It Isn't Pretty" chart on pages 8-9. Which part of the chart surprised you? Which picture do you think is the "yuckiest"? What do you think is the correct answer to "Target: Truth"?

Use the PDF of pages 8-9 available at **www.drugabuse.gov/scholastic.html** to project the chart onto a large screen for discussion.

Rx and OTC's: "It's medicine, so how can it be bad for me?"

For the first time ever, research has shown that fewer of today's teenagers are using illicit street drugs. That's great news! Unfortunately, the studies also shown that today's teens *are* abusing prescription drugs and over-the-counter (OTC) medicines at an alarming rate. Taking prescription medication not prescribed for you, or allowing someone else to take your prescription medicine, is not only against the law—it is dangerous.

Prescription and over-the-counter medicines are legal medicines that provide real benefits when taken as directed. But, when abused, these medicines can have devastating consequences. You may wonder how a medicine that makes a parent or friend feel *better* could possibly be harmful. For one thing, medicines have warnings and directions and should not be used beyond the recommended dose, or in the case of prescription medicines, without seeing a healthcare provider. When taken as directed and in the correct dosage by people who need them for a particular condition, medication can be extremely effective and there may be few, if any, side effects. But teens who abuse prescription and over-the-counter medications to get high often take far more of the medicines than people who take them as directed. That means the intended effects of the medicines are greatly exaggerated, as well as the potential side effects. To make matters worse, adolescents take several medications at the same time and often combine them with alcohol for a "heightened" effect. In fact, the "candy dish" at a party or "pharming parties," as they are called, usually means people bring a variety of prescription and OTC medications, randomly place them in a bowl and mix them up, and take turns taking a medication—often mixing it with alcohol—to determine what side effects they may have. For the most part, no one has any idea what the pills are or what effects taking a handful will have. As you probably know from chemistry class, mixing certain chemicals can have surprising results. The same is true when you mix drugs and alcohol. Your body is no place for a chemistry experiment, and the "surprise" result is just not worth the risk it poses to your health and your life.

Prescription Drug Abuse

The most-abused prescription drug class is painkillers (also called *opiates* or *opioids*). Opiates like morphine and codeine are prescribed when people are in a great deal of pain. They are meant to be used only for a short time. Other painkillers are prescribed by a doctor for people with long-term conditions like arthritis or back pain. They make the person feel better; the pain goes away and they may feel drowsy. *Use of painkillers for non-medical reasons is drug abuse.* Since opiates affect the brain and spinal cord, continued use can make your brain dependent on them. Once someone is hooked on prescription painkillers, stopping them means going through a very unpleasant process called *withdrawal.* Withdrawal can cause shaking and chills, aching and fever. It feels like the worst case of flu you've ever had!

Another category of prescription drugs that is often abused is *stimulants.* People who say, "I can't get going until I have my morning coffee" are dependent on caffeine, a mild stimulant that is also found in chocolate and soft drinks. Prescription stimulants are used for ADHD and severe obesity. Stimulants increase brain activity, raise blood pressure, and increase heart rate and breathing rate. Stimulants generally work well for people for whom they are prescribed who take them in the right dosage. But when stimulants are abused, the side effects can be extremely unpleasant. People can become addicted to them, and they take higher and higher doses. They may feel very angry or suspicious of other people. There are also physical dangers. The stimulant abuser might experience a severely high body temperature, irregularities in heartbeat, and possibly a heart attack or seizure. Withdrawing from addiction to stimulants is like diving into a deep, black pool of depression.

Sedatives and tranquilizers are prescribed for people who are nervous, anxious or can't sleep. They work for people who need them because they slow down the brain's activity. People who abuse sedatives and tranquilizers become dependent on them, take higher and higher doses, and may experience poor memory and judgment, lack of coordination, and even ideas about suicide. Suddenly stopping these drugs is a shock to the brain that can cause seizures. Combining sedatives and tranquilizers with painkillers can cause your breathing and your heartbeat to slow down to a dangerously low point, and can even result in death.

TARGET: TRUTH

Can you find the false statement?

a. Medications are only for people who are sick or to keep people from getting sick.

b. Taking medication not prescribed for you can be as dangerous as using illegal drugs.

c. Drugs sold over-the-counter without a prescription are harmless.

d. Some prescription painkillers are called opiates.

OTC Cough Medicine Abuse

When you are at home sick with a cough, your parents may give you over-the-counter cough medicine to help you feel better. When used as directed, it makes sense to take cough medicine when you are sick, but if you take it intentionally in excessive quantities to get high, you're abusing it. Understanding the effects of dextromethorphan (also called "Dex," "DXM," "Robo," "Skittles," "Tussin" and "Triple Cs") should be enough to make you back off: confusion, dizziness, blurred vision, slurred speech, lack of coordination, stomach pain, nausea and vomiting, rapid heartbeat and not knowing

***RX/OTC**, continued on page 5*

What You MUST Know: Facts About Drugs and Alcohol

Here are some long-term effects of drugs you may not know about.

Alcohol causes skin problems, nervous system damage, memory loss, and liver damage.

Cocaine "highs" are followed by depression that is so extreme the addict will do almost anything to get more cocaine—including committing crimes to get the money needed.

Crack cocaine can give you the sensation that there are insects crawling all over your skin. Just one crack cocaine experience can be addictive or even kill you.

Cough medicine is abused by taking extremely large doses to get high. The "high" is caused by taking a large amount of dextromethorphan (DXM), the active ingredient found in many cough medications, and when abused with other medications, alcohol, and illegal drugs, can increase the dangerous side effects.

Ecstasy is illegally made in laboratories. The people making it can add anything they want to—even cocaine or meth.

Hallucinogens are drugs like LSD, angel dust, PCP, peyote and "magic mushrooms." Like the name suggests, they cause hallucinations—feeling as if you are in a dream that may very well turn out to be your worst nightmare. The scarier physical effects include coma and heart and lung failure.

Facts about Prescription and OTC Drug Abuse:

- An estimated 49.8 million people over the age of 12 have used prescription drugs for non-medical reasons during their lifetimes.
- Approximately 7 million Americans aged 12 or older report current use of psychotherapeutic drugs for non-medical purposes.
- Prescription drugs are the most commonly abused substances by the youngest teens and annual new users of prescription drugs now outnumber new users of marijuana.
- An estimated one in ten adolescents aged 12-17—or 2.4 million young people—report having intentionally abused cough medicine to get high.
- Only 45 percent of teens believe that abusing cough medicine to get high is risky, which means that over half believe it is not.

Inhalants used *even one time* can result in death from suffocation or heart failure. They also cause irreversible brain and nervous system damage.

Marijuana increases your risk of cancer, decreases male hormones in boys and increases them in girls. Marijuana is much more potent today than it was in the 1960s. Many different substances can be added to it, including synthetic THC and cocaine.

Methamphetamines ("speed," "meth," "crank," or "ice") raise your heart rate, make it hard to breathe, and can cause convulsions and heart problems that lead to death, especially when combined with other drugs or alcohol. Crystal meth can ruin—or end—your life in one weekend.

Motion sickness pills taken in large amounts, can cause hallucinations

Opiods/ rx pain relievers have hooked more people than cocaine, hallucinogens, inhalants and heroin combined.

Prescription stimulant abuse can seriously damage the brain and heart.

Sleep aids can cause a range of symptoms, such as extreme drowsiness. Abuse of sleep aids can cause increased heart rate, inability to walk, dehydration and feelings of disorientation. Abuse of sleep aids can even lead to stroke or seizure.

Tranquilizers can help lessen anxiety and create feelings of sleepiness when used as directed. When abused, they can cause a very slow heart rate and breathing rate, confusion, difficulty concentrating, disorientation, and possibly coma. When abused and combined with alcohol, tranquilizers can be fatal.

Addiction: Not a Risk Worth Taking

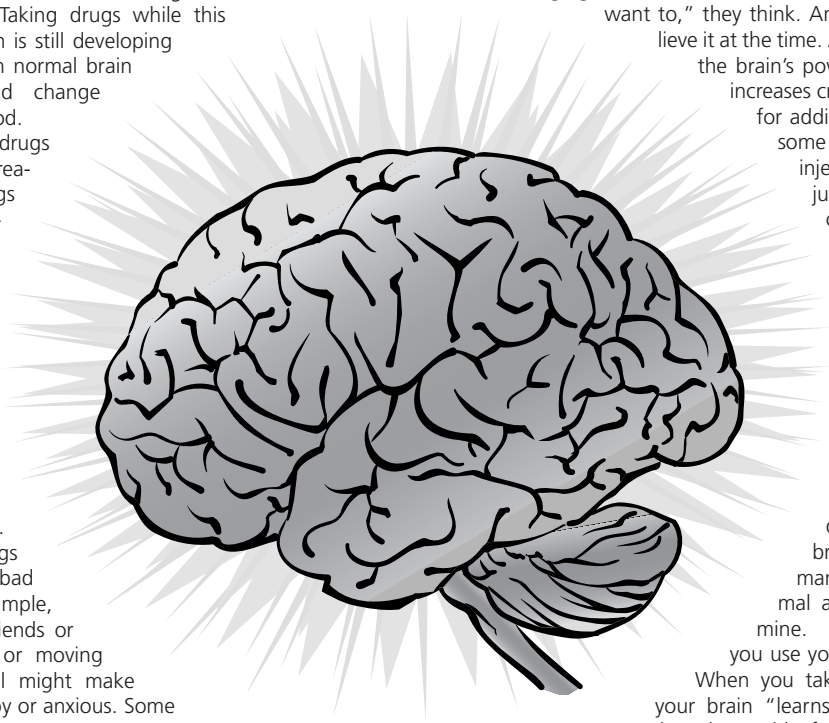
Addiction is defined as a brain disease that is distinguished by the addict's uncontrollable use of drugs, despite damaging and dangerous consequences. Scientists have learned that drugs actually change the brain structure of addicts. These changes cause them to act as they do because they can no longer make good decisions or exercise self-control. An addict cannot "just stop" using drugs or alcohol any more than you can stop breathing for more than a minute or so.

Scientists also discovered that an area of your brain called the *prefrontal cortex* continues to develop throughout your teen years. It's the part of your brain that helps you to take a realistic look at situations and make good decisions and judgments. Taking drugs while this part of your brain is still developing can interfere with normal brain development and change your brain for good.

People take drugs for different reasons. Most drugs produce feelings of euphoria (extreme happiness), relaxation, power, and satisfaction. Some simply transport the user into a world where they are unaware of who or where they are. People take drugs to get away from bad feelings. For example, problems with friends or family members or moving to a new school might make them feel unhappy or anxious. Some people believe that drugs will improve their athletic performance or help them achieve better mental clarity and better grades in school.

Probably the main reason people take drugs is because their friends are doing it. They want to fit in with the group, and they also may be curious about the experiences their friends describe. Teens are at high risk for drug and alcohol addiction because they are influenced more by what their friends say and do than they are by what their parents or teachers tell them. The problem is that friends who take drugs are either not informed about their bad effects, or they choose not to believe the facts.

At first, the decision to take drugs is voluntary. The person usually thinks, "I'll try this, just this one time. One time can't hurt." Then, because of the drug's pleasurable effects, they decide to try the drug again. "I can control this. I can quit any time I want to," they think. And they really believe it at the time. As the drug alters the brain's power to resist and increases cravings, the stage for addiction is set. With some drugs that are injected or smoked, just one use can cause addiction.



All drugs interfere with the brain's communication system in one way or another. *Dopamine* is a brain chemical that makes you feel good. Some drugs cause your brain to produce many times the normal amount of dopamine. Remember that you use your brain to *learn*. When you take certain drugs, your brain "learns" that the drug caused a pleasurable feeling and makes you want to take the drug again and again. Eventually an addict reaches a point where the brain is so confused it can no longer produce dopamine normally. Life seems very dull and depressing without the drug, and the things that used to bring the addict pleasure no longer do. The addict's life begins to revolve around one thing: getting more drugs.

Although everyone who experiments with drugs does not become an addict, there is no way to know if you are one of those who will. Addiction is simply *not a risk worth taking.*

What would it be like to be addicted to drugs or alcohol? How would it change your life? To begin with, there would be physical changes that you would not be able to see or feel, like the changes in your brain that are described above. You would likely get behind in your schoolwork, and your grades would begin to slip. Even though you might not realize it, your personality could change. You could become moody, depressed, anxious or even violent. This could cause problems with your family and friends. Some friends would want to spend less and less time with you—although you might be lucky enough to have one who cared enough about you to try to get you the help you needed to stop taking the drugs and make a turnaround.

While it's always best to say no to drugs and alcohol in the first place, there is help for people who become addicted. In the next story read about Emmy Hall, a former drug addict who is now on the road back to good health and a happy life because she found help.

A Closer Look

Think of a food you enjoy almost every day, for example pizza or burgers. Imagine how it would feel to give that food up forever. Would you feel anxious? Imagine your anxiety multiplied by about ten times. If your favorite food was put in front of you, could you resist? That's how drug addicts feel every day.

Teacher Tip

For more about the science of addiction, including a PDF booklet with color pictures you can use for further discussion of this article, visit **www.nida.nih.gov.**

TARGET: TRUTH

Which statement is false?

1. Trying a drug just once can lead to addiction.
2. Addiction to drugs or alcohol is a disease.
3. Addicts can stop if they have enough willpower.

Emmy: Rebel With a Cause

Emmy Hall, an Oregon teen, was 12 when her parents divorced. She and her mom moved to a new neighborhood. Looking back now, Emmy realizes how hurt, lonely and depressed she felt about the situation. She still remembers clearly the day a new friend she had made asked her if she had ever tried drinking alcohol. "I said 'sure' because I wanted to seem cool. That was when I had my first drink. That was when it all started."

Even though she didn't enjoy drinking at first, she kept it up to be part of the crowd and because it seemed to make her feel a little better about her situation. "I never thought that I could become an addict. I was 12. I had no idea what I was doing."

Like most kids and adults who drink, Emmy made excuses that seemed to make it okay. Today, she's concerned that many parents let their children drink at home, with the idea that at least they know where their kids are. "What they don't realize," says Emmy emphatically, "is that kids who start drinking when they're underage like that are fifty percent more likely to become addicts. Their brains aren't finished developing. It just messes them all up."

In Emmy's case, drinking soon led to other things. "Every time I tried a new drug, it was because I was intoxicated," she says. When asked how many drugs she tried, she replied "It would be easier to name one I didn't." She started by experimenting with painkillers and "Skittles," and later on switched to drugs like heroin, cocaine and meth.

The effects of Emmy's abuse of drugs and alcohol soon showed up at school. She was kicked out of her public middle school several times and went to a private one for a while, but finally ended up in an alternative learning center for kids with problems. Before finishing 8th grade there, she hitchhiked to Portland, Oregon, with a friend. When the friend ditched her, she hitchhiked to Los Angeles by herself. She was officially a runaway—and a drug and alcohol addict.

"At one point, I weighed 86 pounds," she says incredulously. "One day when I had no place to stay, no money and no food, I sent up a little prayer for those three things. I'm not sure what made me do it, but I went and turned myself in to the Los Angeles police as a runaway. I got what I had asked for—an 8 by 8 cell for shelter, food, and transportation back home to a detention center in Oregon. I stayed there for two weeks, thinking I'd get out and go back to my old ways. That was when my probation officer told me I was going to rehab. The facility was way out in the middle of nowhere, and at first I just sulked. There was no escape, so I just told them what I knew they wanted to hear. I had a negative attitude, though. My heart wasn't in it, and the only thing I could find to abuse was a pen. I managed to mutilate my arm with it."

Emmy says she was at the rehab center for three months before she really began to work on her problem. "One day somebody said something funny, and I smiled. They were like, 'What's with her? She's smiling.'" Her negative attitude had changed to a positive one. "After that, I began to join group activities and talk and work on my problem. Two months later, I graduated from the program and went to live with my dad. I stayed with him for a year and a half. Then I went to live with my mom."

Today, at 18, Emmy is on schedule to graduate from high school on time. She's been accepted at an art institute, but may go to community college for a year while she does a bit more thinking about which path to take in the future. She already works as a photographer and layout artist for a weekly newspaper section called *Under 21*, and also works with mentally disabled adults, a job that gives her a lot of satisfaction.

She feels badly about what she put her family through. "I totally took advantage of my mom," she says, "but she is amazing. That's all I can say. She knows how to make me see that I'm acting outrageous without making me feel bad about it. She's a genius." She worries about her little brother, now 13, and hopes he won't get into the same kind of trouble she did.

Does Emmy consider herself "cured"? "No! I'm scared!" she groans. "I have to be really careful to stay away from stuff. I am an addict. It's in my genes." She is involved in an aftercare program called On Track, and that helps.

It also helps that she has friends who would like to kick their bad habits, and that Emmy can be an inspiration to them to do it. She says most kids don't realize that after the high, they will get dropped into the lowest low they can imagine.

"Peer pressure works both ways," she says. "I work with a CADCA coalition, and we have a thing we call 'Take it Back.' It's like reverse peer pressure."

Emmy said part of what helped her recover from drug addiction was joining a CADCA community coalition and getting involved in CADCA's National Youth Leadership Initiative. Thanks to the program, she's now a role model for other kids and is learning how to prevent drug use in her community.

"You know, kids like to think that they're rebelling *against* society. But if they drink and drug, they're going along with the crowd. I say if you want to be a rebel, rebel against drugs and alcohol. I'm clean and sober, and I'm proud of it. And I am so happy now. That means so much. I can be happy without the drugs, without the alcohol. They didn't make me happy. They just made things worse.

RX/OTC, continued from page 3

who or where you are. Don't listen to anyone who says it's a great high. It isn't.

So why would anyone take the risk of experimenting with prescription and over-the-counter drugs? Lots of kids think that if their parents or friends take them, or if you can buy them at the drugstore, they must not be harmful. They might believe that the drugs will make their lives run more smoothly or that they will fit in better with their peers. If "everyone is doing it," it is often hard to see that *it's still wrong*.

Whether they're abusing prescription drugs or over-the-counter medications, drug abusers often have trouble at home and at school. Relationships with friends and family suffer. If a person is abusing drugs, there is a much greater likelihood that he or she will commit a crime or be a victim of one. Whether they come from the drugstore or your family medicine cabinet, using drugs for the wrong reasons poses serious risks to your health, your life and your future.

A Closer Look

Suppose you're reading an online post by someone who has abused prescription drugs or cough medicine and is telling people how to do it. What do you reply to the poster?

Teacher Tip

Discussion starter: What do you think are some reasons kids have switched to abusing prescription and OTC medications? For other tips on how teachers can get involved, visit **www.StopMedicineAbuse.org** and download the *Dose of Prevention Toolkit*.

A Drug is a DRUG

Street Names and Slang Terms For Common Drugs

- **Cough medicine:** Skittles, Syrup, Tussin, Triple-C
- **Crack cocaine**: base, devil drug, hard rock, kryptonite, rock, scrabble, snow coke, candy, grit, jelly beans, nuggets, rock star, Roxanne, topo
- **Cocaine:** Aunt Nora, C, Mojo, pony, toot, vall, blow, dust, nose candy, sneeze, Charlie, flake, paradise white, sniff, coke, ice cube, paste, snow
- **Crystal Methamphetamine:** speed, ice, quartz, crystalz, glass, crank, tweak, crystal tea, go-fast, Tina
- **Ecstasy:** Cadillac, E, love drug, pink pig, Adam, Ecsta, hug drug, XTC, X, elephants, beans, California sunrise, lollipop, mdma, clarity
- **Heroin:** horse, smack, junk, brown, H, skag
- **LSD:** acid, microdot, trips, cid, purple heart, blotter, tab, illusion, Daffy Duck
- **Marijuana:** pot, herb, dope, weed, grass, ganja, Texas tea, hemp, reefer, Mary Jane, dagga
- **Rx Painkillers:** hillbilly heroin, percs
- **Prescription stimulants:** kiddy cocaine, skittles, R-ball, smarties, vitamin R, rids

II. It's Your Life, Your Community, Your Responsibility

Why should I care?

You've got all the facts about drug and alcohol abuse. You've already decided you're never going to abuse. No one in your family has a problem. You live in a nice neighborhood so you're sure nobody you know is using illegal drugs or abusing alcohol. So why should you worry about whether your community is drug-free? Isn't *someone* else taking care of the problem?

The truth is that almost nobody lives a life that is untouched by drugs or alcohol in some way. Drugs are present in every kind of neighborhood. The people who are using them are not going to call an anti-drug meeting at the high school gym. It's your community, and you, your friends, your parents, teachers, law enforcement officials, local medical professionals, and community leaders who have the most to gain by working together to make your neighborhood a better place to live.

(BTW: If you had trouble choosing an answer for **Target: Truth,** it's because *everyone* on the list should get involved in community anti-drug coalitions.)

Target: Truth

Choose the best answer. Who should join a community anti-drug coalition*?

- local law enforcement
- students
- teachers and school officials
- doctors and nurses
- community leaders
- parents

***coalition:** a group of people who join together to accomplish a common goal

Let's take a look at how drug and alcohol abuse affects a town or neighborhood:

1. Remember, drugs like marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine and heroin, are *illegal*. If people in your neighborhood are using them, they are dealing with criminals who sell the drugs. That means those criminals are walking the same streets and school corridors as you.
2. If there are criminal drug dealers in your community and/or school, there is a greater chance that someone you know will develop a problem. It *might* even be you, a friend, or a member of your family.
3. While prescription and over-the-counter medications are not illegal, people who abuse these types of drugs sometimes resort to robbing pharmacies and stealing from stores to get their drugs.
4. People who become addicted to drugs need money for them so badly that they may rob, injure, or even murder to get the money. Or they may turn to prostitution to fund their drug habit. This causes health problems as well as moral issues, and even lower self-esteem for the addict.
5. Alcohol-related motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death in teenagers. It is also extremely dangerous to drive after using drugs because they impair judgment and coordination.
6. Almost 50 million people in America do not have health insurance. Costs for hospitalization due to alcoholism or addiction are a drain on local budgets.
7. Businesses tend to leave areas that are known for heavy drug use. The owners are afraid of getting robbed. New businesses don't move in. The result is ugly boarded-up storefronts.

Okay, so you may be thinking, "It's up to the adults to straighten out these problems. Kids shouldn't have to worry about it." You might be surprised to find out how much your voice can mean in the fight against drug and alcohol abuse. If your parents, teachers, and community leaders knew that a group of students wanted to form an anti-drug coalition—well, let's put it this way: They couldn't very well say no.

So what can you do? Read the rest of this supplement to find out how other communities have dealt with their drug problems. Check out **www.cadca.org** and the other websites in the "Resources" section on page 15. In the meantime you can:

- start talking to your friends about forming a group at your school,
- ask your school resource officer, teachers, and school nurse for ideas and help,
- write an article for your school newspaper asking for student volunteers,
- find out the date of the next city council meeting and write a letter asking to be put on their agenda to present your ideas.

Once you get the ball rolling and get enough people motivated, you'll find there is lots of help available from organizations across the country. Apathy—lack of interest—never solved a problem.

The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking

The Surgeon General, the nation's top public health official, is a physician appointed by the President of the United States to provide Americans with information that will help them lead healthier and safer lives. The Surgeon General issues many different "Calls to Action" to motivate citizens to act more responsibly. In his March 2007, Call to Action on Underage Drinking, Surgeon General Kenneth P. Moritsugu stated:

"Alcohol remains the most heavily abused substance by America's youth. We can no longer ignore what alcohol is doing to our children. This Call to Action is exactly that—a call to every American to join with the Surgeon General in a national effort to address underage drinking early, continuously, and in context of human development. Underage drinking is everybody's problem - and its solution is everyone's responsibility."

—Acting Surgeon General Kenneth P. Moritsugu, M.D., M.P.H

Even though more and more teens are saying no to cigarettes and illegal drugs, underage drinking has remained at the same high levels. Here are some facts about underage drinking in the U.S. that were made in the Call to Action:

- Young people who start drinking before the age of 15 are five times more likely to have alcohol problems later in life than those who begin drinking at age 21 or older.

***GENERAL'S**, continued on page 7*

***GENERAL'S**, continued from page 6*

- New research indicates that alcohol may harm the developing adolescent brain.
- There are approximately 11 million underage drinkers in the United States. Nearly 7.2 million (18.8 percent) are considered binge drinkers and more than 2 million (6 percent) are classified as heavy drinkers. By age 18, more than 70 percent of teens have had a drink.

Teenagers tend to be binge drinkers. That is, they don't drink every day, but when they do they drink a lot (five or more bottles of beer, glasses of wine or shots of liquor). When taken to extremes, binge drinking can result in alcohol poisoning and can be fatal.

- As they get older, the chance that young people will use alcohol grows. Over 11 percent of 12-year-old children (6th graders) say that they have used alcohol at least once. By age 13, that number doubles. By age 14 (8th grade), 41 percent of children have had at least one drink, and nearly 20 percent say they have been drunk at least once.
- Each year, approximately 5,000 people under the age of 21 die as a result of underage drinking that causes auto accidents, homicides, falls and other injuries, and suicides.

The Call to Action calls upon every member of society to recognize the severity of the underage drinking problem in the United States and work to prevent and reduce alcohol use by children and adolescents to protect them from the negative effects of underage drinking.

(Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking.* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, 2007.)

What is alcoholism?

Alcoholism, also called "alcohol dependence," is a disease. Its symptoms are:

- **craving—**a strong urge to drink;
- **loss of control—**not being able to stop once drinking begins;
- **physical dependence—**nausea, sweating, shaking and anxiety once drinking has stopped;
- **tolerance—**the need to drink more and more to get "high".

An alcoholic will continue to drink even though his or her drinking causes serious problems. The need to drink is very strong.

Alcoholism lasts a person's whole lifetime. Research shows that, like diabetes or heart disease, alcoholism tends to run in families. Part of the reason may be that children see their parents and relatives drinking and assume that this is a normal lifestyle.

Alcoholism cannot be cured, but it can be treated using counseling, medications and support groups. The safest thing for an alcoholic to do is give up drinking entirely. If a recovering alcoholic has even one drink, he or she may be right back at square one. The longer a person totally abstains from alcohol, the better the chances of remaining sober.

Alcohol can cause problems for anyone who drinks even if they are not dependent on alcohol. Problems meeting the demands of work or school, conflicts with family members and friends, and medical problems can all result from alcohol use. Even moderate drinking is dangerous if the drinker is going to drive or if the alcohol is mixed with certain medications.

People under age 21 should not drink. For support, visit:
Alcoholics Anonymous**—**for alcoholics as well as their families:
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org
National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACOA):
www.nacoa.org

What Is a Community Coalition?

Coalitions are local partnerships between parents, teachers, young people, law enforcement, health providers, the faith community, business and civic leaders, elected officials and concerned citizens who unite to make their communities safe, healthy and drug-free through education, advocacy and community action. These individuals come together to solve emerging programs in their community that are too big for one person alone.

By using multiple strategies and working with a variety of people in their area, community coalitions help turn their neighborhoods into safe, healthy and drug-free places to live. By bringing together all the key community players – including businesses, parents, youth, media, law enforcement, schools, faith organizations, health providers, social service agencies, and the government – coalitions help the community gain a more complete understanding of current problems and enable it to develop a comprehensive plan to address substance abuse.

Learn more at: **www.cadca.org**.

A San Diego Success Story

San Diego Teens Take Action Against "420 Day"

For most of us, April 20 is just another day on the calendar, but for some teens the day is known as "420 Day," a marijuana smoking holiday. With the help of its youth leaders, the North Coastal Prevention Coalition in San Diego County, Calif. aim to change this tradition. Through an aggressive media outreach and advocacy campaign, the coalition educates the community about this dangerous holiday, which they say glamorizes drug use.

The term "420" is a discreet way to refer to the consumption of cannabis and, by extension, a way to identify oneself with the drug subculture around cannabis. The term was coined by a group of teenagers at San Rafael High School in San Rafael, California in 1971, that would meet after school at 4:20 p.m. to smoke cannabis. As a result, April 20 has evolved into a counterculture holiday, where people gather to celebrate and consume cannabis. Celebrations for 420 can include anything from festivals to marijuana smoking contests on radio stations, and in San Diego, many youth often skip school to attend local marijuana smoking events.

To counter this, the North Coastal Prevention Coalition and its youth leaders partner with local schools, businesses and treatment centers to hold "Pulling a 180 on 420" and "420 Remix" events. The events include adventure sports and activities, music and dancing, in an attempt to not only keep students in school that day but also to teach teens that they can have fun without getting high. Youth coalition leaders help organize the events and encourage their peers to participate.

"Most parents don't have a clue about 420. We want to get the message out to them so that if parents see 420 written somewhere on their kid's bookbinder, they'll know that their youth is either thinking about smoking marijuana or already is," explained John Byrom, Community Collaboration Specialist for the North Coastal Prevention Coalition, an anti-drug coalition covering north San Diego County.

The anti-420 events are used to raise awareness about the harmful effects of marijuana use and to advocate for important policy changes. More recently, youth leaders lobbied the counties of San Diego and the cities of Oceanside and Vista to declare April 20 "Sober and Drug-Free Life Choices Day."

"This was a way to officially take that day away from pro-marijuana folks. Having youth lead this effort sent a powerful message about making sober and drug-free life choices," explained Victoria Carlborg, media specialist with the North Coastal Prevention Coalition. Next year, the coalition hopes to make this a statewide event.

For more information about the North Coastal Prevention Coalition, visit **www.northcoastalpreventioncoalition.org**.

HEADS UP REAL NEWS ABOUT DRUGS AND YOUR BODY

www.scholastic.com/HEADSUP

Drugs and the Body—It Isn't Pretty

Nicotine. Heroin. Cocaine. Marijuana. Inhalants. Methamphetamine. Steroids. They all cause damage. Check out this diagram to find out how each part of the body is affected by drugs of abuse.

BRAIN

Honey, I Shrunk My Brain!
Inhalants can actually shrink the part of the brain that controls body movements.

Tired and Moody
A chemical called serotonin helps you stay in a good mood and get enough sleep. Ecstasy messes with the serotonin in your brain.

Bye-bye, Brain Cells!
Methamphetamine use can damage a large number of brain cells in the limbic system (or emotional brain).

Super Slow
Messages speed from your brain to your muscles at more than 200 miles per hour. Inhalants can put the brakes on quick communication.

The Next Step?
A working short-term memory is required for learning and performing tasks that call for more than one or two steps. Marijuana can impair short-term memory.

NOSE

No More Nostrils
Snorting cocaine can create pimple-like abscesses that can turn into raw holes. The holes can eat away the cartilage that divides the nose.

MOUTH

Not a Good Look
Cigarette smoke discolors teeth. Smoking can also lead to gum disease and lost teeth.

Tense Teeth
Ecstasy use causes involuntary teeth clenching. Some users need to wear dental mouth guards. Others actually use pacifiers.

A Case of the Blahs
All drugs of abuse can make users lose the ability to feel normal happiness and pleasure.

How About a Mint?
Tar and nicotine build up on the teeth and tongue, leading to bad breath.

HEART

Body Blocking
Steroid use can lead to blocked blood flow to the heart or brain. The result: a stroke or a heart attack.

Fit as a...
Even very fit athletes can have a heart attack if they abuse cocaine or methamphetamine.

'N Sync
Inhalants can disrupt normal heart rhythms, which can cause a heart attack.

SKIN

Pizza Face
Steroids can cause acne pimples to pop up all over the face of a user.

LUNGS

Sticky Black Tar
Need we say more? It coats the lungs of tobacco and marijuana smokers.

Poisoned
When an abuser sniffs inhalants, the toxic gas can replace oxygen in the lungs. Without oxygen, the brain and body suffocate and die.

BONES

Forget About the NBA
Steroid use can keep bones from growing. Abusers may never reach their full, adult height.

Down in My Bones
Inhalants damage the marrow inside of bones.

LIVER

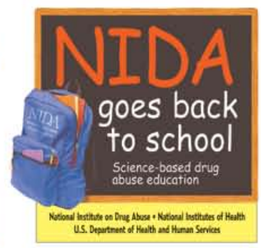
Risky Rupture
Steroid abuse has been associated with liver tumors and blood-filled cysts. Both the tumors and the cysts can rupture, causing internal bleeding.

KIDNEYS

Boiling Over
Ecstasy users risk kidney failure when their body temperature soars and they become dehydrated.

IMMUNE SYSTEM

Sharing More Than Needles
Drug abusers who share non-sterile injection equipment are at risk for contracting HIV, Hepatitis B and C, and other infectious diseases.



To order additional copies of this *Heads Up* poster at no charge call 888-720-0386 and refer to NIDA NOTES

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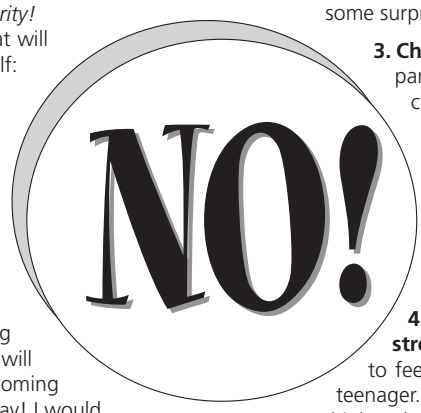
FROM SCHOLASTIC AND THE SCIENTISTS OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON DRUG ABUSE, NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.

III. Here's What You Can Do

Get Involved: Five Steps You Can Take Now

Role models are people we admire and want to be like. You might think that role models are always older people, or especially famous ones like athletes and movie stars. The truth is that you can be a role model for people your own age just by making a commitment not to do drugs, alcohol, or abuse prescription and OTC medicines. Sure, there are people who will say you're not cool, but there will be plenty of others who will be glad that you are taking a stand against drugs, and they'll be happy to join you. *And remember, kids who choose to abuse drugs and alcohol are in the minority!*

Here are some steps you can take that will help you to keep your promise to yourself:



1. **Rehearse ahead of time how you will refuse drugs if offered.** With a parent or friend, create some scenarios where you might need to resist an offer. Create various scenarios (parties, school corridors, a friend's home or even your own home) and take turns playing the role of the person offering the drugs *and* the role of the person refusing them. Decide ahead of time what you will say, and practice it. If you feel okay coming on strong, say something like, "No way! I would never do *any* drug!" or "Are you kidding? Don't you know what that stuff does? I don't want to die." If that seems like too much at first, a simple "No thanks" should do the trick. If it doesn't, then the person offering you drugs or alcohol is someone you can well afford to lose as a friend.
2. **Avoid threatening situations.** You never know when someone might try to get you to take a drug or try alcohol, but try to "feel out" situations before you get into the middle of them. If someone's parents are out of town and everyone is talking about the wild party planned for the weekend, you can be fairly sure drugs and/or alcohol will be involved. Remember, you might be totally astounded to find out who you know that uses drugs and alcohol. Some of the most popular kids in your school may be keeping some surprising secrets!
3. **Choose your friends wisely.** And be prepared to say goodbye to friends who decide to drink or drug. Teenagers choose various paths during middle school and high school. If old friends are following one you don't want to be on, tell them why and tell them goodbye, unless you think you can help. (See "How to Talk to a Friend Who Needs Help" for some excellent advice.)
4. **Find healthy ways to deal with stress and have fun.** It's perfectly normal to feel stressed and unhappy when you're a teenager. It's just part of the package—even if you think *nobody* has ever felt as sad or mad as you. There are plenty of healthy and fun things to do with your time that don't involve drugs or alcohol and can help you lead a more interesting and happy life. Get involved with music, try out for the school play or your favorite sports team, join a couple of school or church clubs, or volunteer in your community.
5. **Get involved in a community coalition.** You'll need to gather support from lots of different adults as well as people in your own age group, and you should be prepared for more of those remarks about how un-cool you are. Look to the group for friendship and support. They are the ones you want to be close to, not people who risk their health, their futures, and their lives with drugs.

A Closer Look

Make a list of ways to say "no." Choose your favorite ones. Say them often to yourself so you're prepared.

Teacher Tip

Use large strips of paper, and post some of your students' best "how to say no's" on your bulletin board.

TARGET: TRUTH

True or False?

Planning ahead how to refuse drugs, alcohol, and prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medicines is a waste of time.

Do You Know Who's Targeting You?

Did you know *you* are often the top topic of discussion of people in the advertising world? Big companies know teens have money to spend, and they compete every day for your dollars by running expensive ads. Maybe that's why you just had to have a certain cell phone or video game or brand of jeans. Ads showing beautiful, happy-looking teens surrounded by friends and using those products are hard to resist.

Cell phones and jeans are one thing—but the media targets teens in another less-obvious way. Movies, TV shows, music and music videos, and websites all too often portray drug and alcohol use as casual activities that cool people enjoy. Violence and sex, too, are often represented as perfectly acceptable. There are websites and particularly blogs that put no boundaries on the information they churn out—and it's often misleading or even dangerous information.

The media isn't likely to change. It's up to you to change your perceptions of it and how you react. How? You might find it easier to start with ads for products. Figure out how the advertiser is trying to appeal to you: Is the approach "Everyone cool is doing this" or "You deserve this product" or "You'll be happier and more popular if you buy this"?

Then begin to analyze other media.

- Do the characters in movies and television shows act in realistic ways? What would happen in real life to real people who followed the lifestyles they live on film?
- Is a certain kind of music "selling" you a lifestyle? If you're not sure, write down just the lyrics and evaluate what they really say.
- Who is responsible for the website you're visiting? Does it have an "about us" section? Does it give sources so you can double-check information? Are the sources reliable? Why does the website exist? What are the ads like? What do the site owners want from you?

The main thing to remember is to *think* before you *react*. Don't be a pawn in the media game.

A Closer Look

When you're watching a favorite TV show or movie, pay special attention to suggestions that it's okay to use drugs and alcohol.

Teacher Tip

With your class, analyze a selection of print ads directed at teens to discover the various ways media targets them. Also have students design their own anti-drug public service announcements that can be displayed around your school and provided to your local newspaper to publish. The lesson plan is on the next page.

TARGET: TRUTH

Which of the following could make you think drugs and alcohol are cool?

- Movies
- Television
- Music
- Websites
- All of these

Designing Anti-Drug Public Service Announcement (PSA) Ads

People are influenced by many factors, including their families, peers, teachers, etc. As we've said, another big influence on individuals is the media (TV, radio, CDs, the Internet, and advertisements).

Think of some examples of advertising that try to sell a product or service (soda, cereal, medicine, diet programs, tax assistance, etc.). Think of examples of ads that send a message (political-related ads, literacy ads, anti-drug ads, etc.).

In this activity you will create your own PSA print ads similar to real anti-drug advertising campaigns whose purpose is sending a message to people about the dangers of drug use, ways to help prevent drug use among young people, and the positive consequences of remaining drug-free. You can find some print ad examples at:
www.mediacampaign.org/mg/print.html

Answer the following questions to begin planning your Anti-Drug PSA ad.

1. **Which approach will you select for your Anti-Drug message?**
   - Positive Consequences — emphasizing positive consequences that can be achieved from living a drug-free life
   - Resistance Strategies — emphasizing different ways that teens can resist pressure to use drugs
2. **Who is your target audience?**
   Middle school teens, high school teens, parents, adult influences (such as teachers, coaches, family members, counselors, religious leaders, police, etc.) or other (describe).
3. **What is the message you want to send to your target audience?**
4. **What will be the best scenario to get your message across?**
5. **With what impression do you want to leave your audience?**
6. **What can you do to make your Anti-Drug PSA ad unique?**

Look at display ads throughout the newspaper to discover graphic elements (bold headlines, images, size of text, open space, etc.) and persuasive techniques used to get the message across to readers. Also try to determine the target audience of the advertiser. Some persuasive techniques are:

- **Testimonial:** A picture and/or statement from a famous person or someone who is trusted endorsing the product or issue.
- **Transfer:** Associating something we view with pride with a product (U.S. Flag, Statue of Liberty, sports team).
- **Glittering Generality:** General positive statements without specifics (It's good for you, Four out of five agree, etc.).
- **Plain Folks or Elitism:** Techniques that are designed to appeal to the common person or to those with high economic status.
- **Bandwagon:** Attempts to persuade by stressing the popularity of the product.

If you need to research background information (including drug facts) for the ads, log on to **www.freevibe.com**, a website for teens that includes drug facts.

Present your anti-drug PSA ads to the rest of the class. Discuss the approach used, the intended target audience, and any comments or suggestions that observers may have. All of the students in your class should vote on their two favorite ads.

Teacher Tip

As a service learning activity, display the ads around the school to further the anti-drug message. Send the two favorite ads to your local newspaper with a letter asking it to run the ads when space is available. (Activity modified from **www.antidrug.com**)

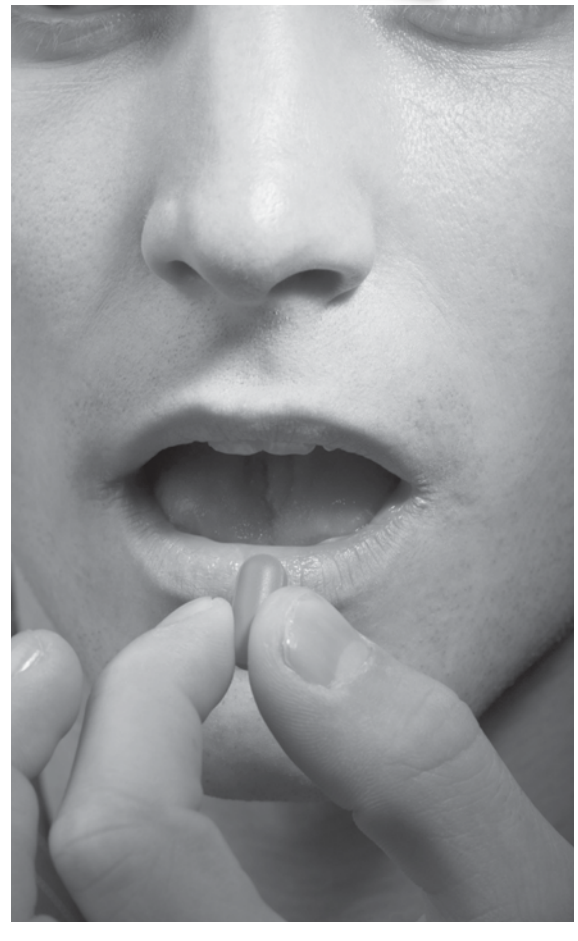
Making the Right Decisions

Sometimes it's easier to make decisions if you "get it all down in black and white." That phrase means to sort out all the "yes" and "no" and "maybe" reasons as you ask yourself questions about the decision you are trying to make. The diagram below is an example you can use to try this method out now. You can use the same diagram for other scenarios and other situations. You can also use it as a tool to help friends who are trying to make the right decisions. You simply need to change the "Choices" and "Questions to Ask Yourself" to fit the situation.

Scenario: You are at a friend's house with some other kids you don't know well, and suddenly someone pulls out five bottles of prescription medicines and says, "Let's see what happens if we all take a few of each of these." It seems like everyone else agrees with the idea. How about you? What is the best thing to do?

Read Choice #1. Then read the questions across the top of the diagram and mark your answers in the boxes: **yes, no,** or **maybe.** (The diagram has been started for you.) Continue on through all the choices and questions. Then circle your best choice.

CHOICES	Questions to Ask Yourself			
	Will this decision keep you safe?	**Will the other kids make fun of you?**	**Will you lose real friends?**	**Will you regret this decision later?**
1. Leave immediately and walk home if you are in a safe area.	***yes***	***maybe***		
2. Tell them about the dangers of prescription drug abuse.				
3. Threaten to call the police.				
4. Call a parent to pick you up from outside the home if possible.				
5. Try some of the pills, but tell yourself it will just be this one time.				
6. Go along with the group, but tell a school counselor what is going on the next school day.				



Join CADCA's National Youth Leadership Initiative

CADCA's National Youth Leadership Initiative (NYLI) teaches youth how to become effective community problem solvers, equipping them with the skills to address drug and alcohol-related problems in their communities.

Through the combination of education, collaboration, training, advocacy and practical application, young people and adults participate in a process designed to increase meaningful involvement by youth and young adults in planning and launching initiatives in their local communities. Youth learn how to help their communities be more effective in producing community change, how to identify community needs and resources, and how to analyze problems and goals. The training builds the relationship between the youth and adults and equips them to develop a strategic action plan that clearly defines the strategies that young people will carry out to address the problems and goals that the community is striving to effect.

The program also teaches youth how to become advocates in their communities, involving them in all aspects of long-term policy work and media advocacy. The goal is to empower youth to become active participants in changing the social norms of their communities.

Because young people are tuned in to the pulse of the problems, they have the information, insights and ingenuity required to surface local conditions and achieve long-lasting results. By providing young people the opportunity to be meaningfully involved, neighborhoods will enhance their ability to respond to salient issues. Learn more at: **www.cadca.org.**

How to Talk to a Friend Who Needs Help

Are you worried about a friend who is using drugs or alcohol? Do you want to voice your concerns to the person you care so much about? Good for you! But how do you start that kind of discussion? And how will your friend respond to your concerns? This article contains of steps that may help you.

Make a Plan.

Prepare yourself ahead of time. Think through the situation. (See the "Key Talking Points" below, and add your own that relate to the situation.) You will want to zero in on the things in your friend's life that you know are important, such as other friends, family relationships, future plans, and so forth. Try rehearsing how you will begin the conversation. Work on a tone that shows you are serious, but be careful to keep anger out of your voice. (If you want to find out more facts about the specific drug your friend is using, consult the websites on page 15.)

Try a Written Invitation.

You may feel most comfortable writing a note to your friend to invite him or her to talk. Tell them you're concerned that something "just doesn't seem right" and that you wanted to let them know you are there any time they want to talk about anything that is upsetting them. If there is no response other than "I'm fine," then you'll want to initiate the talk yourself.

Let's Talk.

Choose a place where you and your friend can talk without being interrupted. Remember to keep your voice calm but strong, and make it clear that you are here because you care about your friend and are truly concerned.

Remember your Key Talking Points. Personalize the conversation. Perhaps you actually saw your friend using drugs or alcohol; maybe your friend was always an honor student and is now barely getting by, or even skipping classes. You may be aware of uneasy family relationships, or your formerly chatty pal is now quiet and secretive. Sum it up by saying something like "You just aren't *you* any more. I miss you. I want you back."

Listen.

After you've told your friend how you feel, ask for a response. *Really* listen. Don't interrupt to make a point of your own. Nod reassuringly or make short comments that you understand what your friend is saying. If they say they want to stop, offer your help and ask them if they think they need a professional's help.

Continue the Conversation.

Even if your friend has already decided to seek professional help, he or she will need your ongoing support. Before you end your first discussion, decide on a time when you can meet again to touch base in a one-on-one way about how things are going. For yourself, don't be afraid to talk to an adult you can trust for the best ways you can support your friend.

Key Talking Points

- I don't want anything to happen to you or for you to hurt yourself.
- We all count on you. Your brothers/sisters (if applicable) look up to you/care about you, as do I. What would they do if you were gone?
- Look at all the things that you would miss out on. Drugs and alcohol can ruin your future and chances to… keep your drivers' license, graduate, go to college and get a job.
- What can I do to help you? I am here to support you.
- Are there other problems you want to talk about?
- Are you feeling pressure to use? Let's talk about it.
- I love you and I won't give up on you.
- If you need professional help or you need an adult to talk to, I can help you find someone. I will be here to help you and support you every step of the way.

It's Not Your Fault

Trying to help a friend with a drug or alcohol problem is very difficult. It's just as difficult for adults who try to help their friends. You may get discouraged if you cannot convince your friend to stop using drugs or alcohol. Always keep in mind that your friend's drug or alcohol use is NOT your fault. Your friend is the only one who can decide to stop. It's very possible that no matter how hard you try, you can't convince your friend to stop using drugs or alcohol. If you have tried your best and have run out of options, you need to think about your own well-being.

- Seek support from other friends or trusted adults. Once you take the step to try to help a friend, you will find that you take some of the weight of the problem on your own shoulders. You'll probably need help lifting it off.
- Limit the time you spend with your drug or alcohol-using friend. Remember your friend's use may also be putting you at risk.

Start thinking about yourself instead of the problem. Get out and participate in activities that you enjoy to take your mind off of the situation.

IV. Parents: The Biggest Influence

Not Your Kids? Here's How to Make Sure!

Could you be the parent of a drug abuser? If your immediate reaction is "Not my kid!" you've got company. Even kids who are not guilty of any wrongdoing become protective of their privacy during adolescence, and their parents expect this part of growing up. However, kids are masters at hiding what they don't want you to see. It can take some detective work to be sure your children aren't abusing drugs or alcohol.

You may have secretly searched his or her room and been relieved not to find any drug paraphernalia. You've monitored your child's My Space or You-Tube or Facebook site and haven't found any alarming pictures or posts? That could be a good sign. But prescription medications have now become the drug of choice for many teens. Approximately one in five teenagers has reported abusing a prescription medicine, and one in 10 has reported having abused cough medicine. When they combine either with alcohol, the game gets more dangerous.

Here are some tips and suggestions for protection and detection:

- **Educate yourself.** Learn the slang terms that kids use to describe cough medicine abuse, like Dex, Robo and Triple-C.
- **Safeguard medicines at home.** Monitor your medicine cabinet and note which products you have and how many.
- **Properly throw away medicine that you are no longer using in the trash.** It is not wise to keep medicine, such as pain medicines, around for when you might need them in another instance. In the majority of those situations, medicine will have expired or is not the right medicine for your specific injury or ailment. It is always best to consult with your healthcare provider and stay away from self-diagnosing or self-prescribing.
- **Communicate with your teen.** Talk to your teens about all types of drug abuse, including prescription drug and cough medicine abuse. Studies have shown that kids whose parents discuss the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse with them are 50% less likely to use either.
- **Teach your kids to respect medicines.** Remind your children that it is never safe to abuse prescription and OTC medicines, use someone else's medications, and it is not OK to do it even just once. Young people are dying or becoming seriously dependent on a variety of drugs.
- **Monitor your teens' Internet usage.** Many websites promote medicine abuse, either by providing instructions, abuser communication groups or videos. Always be aware of what your teenagers are doing online.
- **Recognize the signs of medicine abuse.** The warning signs include missing or empty bottles or packages of prescription or over-the-counter medicines and changes in behavior. If your teen takes medications, you should be in control and dole out the necessary amount.
- **Get to know your child's friends and their parents.** Listen carefully when your child talks to his or her friends. (Check "A Drug is a Drug" section and become familiar with street terms.) If you have a gut instinct that a new friend is less than trustworthy, be extra vigilant.
- **Double check.** As an extra check, have your child call you during the party at a prearranged time—for example, about four hours after the party begins. If you get the "None of the other kids have to do that" response, insist that they can't go to the party unless they agree to call. Let them know that if you don't hear from them, you will be calling the house yourself. If they know they will be talking to you at some point during the evening, they may be less likely to drink or take drugs for fear you will be able to "tell."
- **Wait up** (or wake up) when your child comes home in the evening. Knowing you'll be there for "check in" can be a great deterrent to unwise behavior. Have a brief conversation about how the evening went. Watch for signs of odd or unexplained behavior such as slurred speech, unsteady walk or dizziness, sweating, nausea, dilated pupils, drowsiness, vomiting, and numbness of extremities.
- **Talk to your school** about the new D.A.R.E. America curriculum on prescription and OTC medicine abuse. Officers are trained and ready to teach the lesson plans in their schools. For example, if they know that prescription and OTC medicine abuse is an issue, even more than illegal drug use, they can emphasize the material accordingly and get information to the kids, parents and teachers if they are facing a particular issue at school.
- **Be a good role model.** Don't abuse drugs or alcohol yourself.
- **Most important: TALK.** You have undoubtedly seen television and magazine ads advising you to talk to your kids about drugs. Studies have shown that kids whose parents discuss the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse with them are 50% less likely to use either. For suggestions on how to do this, see "How to Talk to Your Kids: Teachable Moments" that follows.

While it would be nice if parents could trust their teenagers 100%, it's a bit unrealistic to do so. Peer pressure is the driving force of much adolescent behavior. Most kids want to feel that they're part of the group, and it can be hard not to cave in to fit in. While these steps are not easy or pleasant, helping your child make drug- and alcohol-free choices is well worth the effort. Years down the road, they will thank you for doing the right thing today.

Target: Truth

True or false?

You would know for sure if your child was abusing drugs just by the way he or she acts.

How to Talk to Your Kids: Teachable Moments

Notice the word "moments" in the title? That's because a one-time conversation is not likely to be effective. Just as occasions arise to reinforce math or reading skills, there are particularly good opportunities to talk about drugs and alcohol.

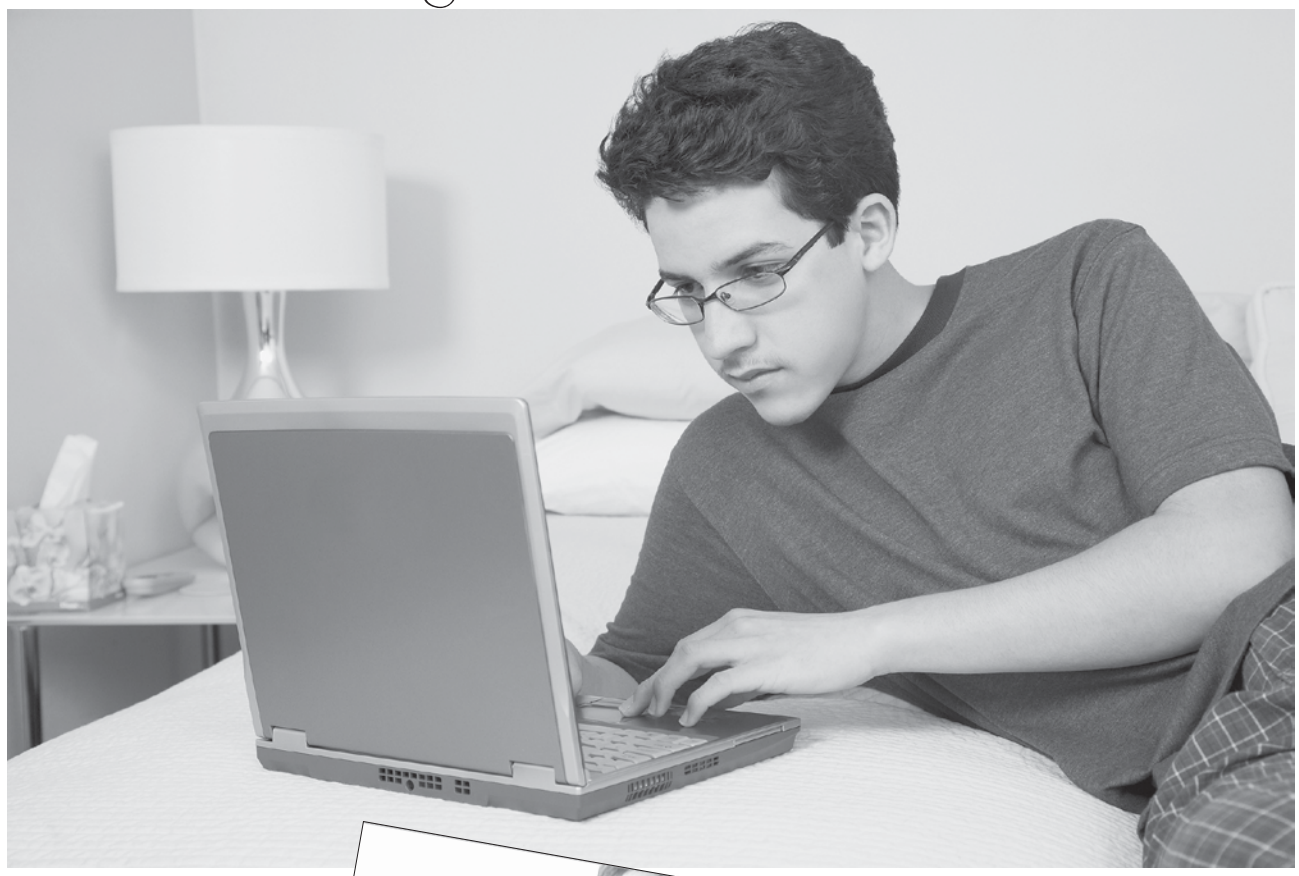
When you're driving with your teen, you've got a captive audience. An activity you enjoy together, whether it's fishing or jogging, sets a positive tone for a talk. You might kick it off with a remark about a drug or alcohol related accident or other incident, or a conversation you had with friends about their child's addiction problems and how difficult it has been for the family.

Newspapers and television also offer teachable moments. Nearly every day there is a story about a drug dealer or drunk driver who has been arrested or an incident related to drugs or alcohol. Television documentaries about drugs present another teachable moment. Watch them together, and discuss them afterwards. Ask your kids questions that require more than a one-word answer. For example, ask "Why do you suppose the boy in that story took all those pills?" instead of "Shouldn't he have known better?"

Remember, whenever and wherever your talks, they should be two-way conversations, not a lecture. Make your family position on drugs and alcohol clear, but show plenty of love and concern—not anger or suspicion. Try for an "open forum" feeling, where everyone feels free to express their opinions and feelings.

When should you have your first talk with your teen? As soon as you can. Be on the lookout for the first teachable moment. Then look for another one. And another. Keep talking.

The Internet: Are They Really Doing Their Homework?



Sure, some of the time they are doing homework. But what about the rest of the time? Which websites are your children visiting? What kind of information are they reading?

There are many ways to enter the cyber world. Personal laptops can travel everywhere and even cell phones have Internet capability. A large number of middle-school and high-school students have their own personal computers, and these are usually located in their rooms, behind doors that are conspicuously kept closed. It has become more and more difficult for parents to police their children's Internet activities.

You've probably heard about how easily kids can access websites that tell them how to build bombs. You may have cautioned your children about online relationships—or perhaps you've even been invited to view a few appalling homemade videos or you've read some blog entries that left you feeling worried about the virtual world where your kids spend so much time.

But what about drug and alcohol abuse? What slots do they occupy on the Internet?

First, the good news. There are many great websites dedicated to helping teens stay straight and sober. (There is a list on page 15.) These sites give factual information and some feature forums where teens can speak to one another. Being anonymous can be a real plus for teens who are afraid of "sounding dumb" or who want to find help but don't want anyone they know in the "real world" to realize that they have a problem.

There is also some bad news, and you need to know it. In 2007, Nielsen BuzzMetrics studied millions of blogs, public chat rooms, messages boards and other Internet locations that teens visit. About 2% of the posts explicitly mentioned drugs or alcohol. Teens interviewed in the study admitted to connecting with drug dealers on the Internet, seeking information about ways to get high, and sharing information about drug experiences. Kids can purchase prescription drugs online from less-than-scrupulous suppliers by simply posing as adults who need the medicine. Kids used to learn about drugs on the street. Now "the street" is anywhere they can connect to the Internet, and the amount of misinformation they're getting is alarming.

So what can parents do to eliminate or limit the amount of information a child gleans from the Internet? Here are some tips that may help.

1. Insist that the only place there is a computer in your home is the room where you are most often—for example the family room or living room.
2. Install Internet filtering and monitoring software. Check it frequently.
3. Learn Internet lingo so you will know that "POS" means "Parent Over Shoulder" and "KPC" means "Keeping Parents Clueless." (For a crash course, go to **www.theantidrug.com** and search for e-monitoring/internet lingo.)
4. Have "the talk" about the Internet. Make sure your teen is aware that there is a great deal of misinformation online, and that since it is a public forum, it isn't safe to reveal personal information. Set clear limits for what is acceptable. If kids go beyond those limits, enforce consequences.
5. Talk frankly about the availability of drugs online and watch for suspicious packages delivered to your home. Explain that it is illegal to purchase prescription drugs without a doctor's order, and that taking drugs ordered online can be especially dangerous because there is no way to know what a fraudulent supplier is sending. It could be a sugar pill—or it could be deadly.
6. Does your teen have a blog or website? You should be a frequent visitor, and you should not feel uncomfortable questioning him or her about anything that you don't understand or that you find objectionable.

You're not alone if you feel a bit overwhelmed at the prospect of having to monitor your teen's cyberspace behavior so closely. Just remember, this is the world today's kids live in much of the time. If you want to know more about your teen, you need to learn as much as you can about his or her Internet experiences.

V. If You Want to Stop Something, Start Something

Spare Your Time

Time is at a premium for most busy families today. It seems that we race from one activity to the next and that we're always behind on something. This in itself is a testament to the value of time spent facing real problems in the real world.

Teen drug and alcohol abuse are problems that are best faced by a community coalition—a group of concerned citizens, from teenagers to grandparents and teachers. The old saying that there is strength in numbers is true.

If your community already has an organization committed to facing and dealing with teen drug and alcohol abuse problems, find out what you can do to help. Find out whether your city or town has a community anti-drug coalition and join it! Just about everyone is capable of stuffing envelopes, making posters, and setting up chairs for a community meeting. Maybe you can lend your writing or graphic expertise to a brochure, flyer or website. Perhaps you're great at public speaking. Or maybe you have strategies to contribute that can help keep youth from using drugs and alcohol. Think of something that you enjoy doing, and how it can translate to helping your community.

There is another old saying: "Many hands make light work." Encourage everyone you know to lend a hand, and you've got the ball rolling with only a little effort.

To find out if there is a community anti-drug coalition in your area, contact CADCA at 800-54-CADCA or visit www.cadca.org.

Speak Your Mind

Apathy is a word used to describe a lack of concern. One example of apathetic behavior is not bothering to recycle a soda can, even when the recycling bin is right next to the trash can. Apathetic behavior where drugs and alcohol are concerned can have much more serious effects. It is always easier to do nothing, say nothing, and let someone else worry about a problem than it is to speak out and try to solve a problem things.

In the pages of this supplement, you've learned some facts about drug and alcohol abuse among teens. You've learned about side effects that can be fatal and about how drugs and alcohol can affect behavior, relationships and school performance.

You've also practiced writing your own anti-drug messages, thinking logically to make good decisions, and learned some tips about how to help a friend who has a problem with substance abuse.

Whether you're a teen or an adult, you now have the tools you need to take action. At the bottom of this page there are several dozen reliable websites where you can find more information and ideas. Don't let apathy about drugs and alcohol affect your community, your school, your friends, and your family. Instead, speak your mind. Speak out against drugs and alcohol!

Tell a Friend

When you're "on a mission," it's easier with the support of friends. Think about it. Who do you know that would be interested in joining you to plan a school-wide or community-wide war on drugs and alcohol? Make a list and talk to the people on it. Remember, friends can be any age. If you're an adult, don't forget to include teens on your list. If you're a teen, don't forget to include adults. Everyone's input is valuable. Find a location. Schedule your first meeting. Start the move toward a safer, healthier community.

Save a Life

It's true that drug and alcohol abuse can have fatal consequences. It happens all the time. But they steal lives in other ways too. Friends of substance abusers say, "She just wasn't herself any more," or "I felt like I didn't even know who I was talking to." Drugs and alcohol take people away from their families and friends to a place that is only about getting more of the drug or another drink. Addicts convince themselves that what they are doing is really okay, that everyone is doing it, and that the people begging them to stop or find help don't understand. A person who lives that way has—temporarily or permanently—lost his or her present and future to drug or alcohol addiction.

You can save your own present and future by saying no to drug and alcohol use. You can save others' lives by speaking out, telling friends, and getting involved in anti-drug campaigns. Don't wait for someone else to do it.

Resources to Help You Get Started

For Youth

American Council for Drug Education:
www.acde.org

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America:
www.cadca.org

D. A. R. E. America
(Drug Abuse Resistance Education):
www.dare.com

www.DoseofPrevention.org

www.DXMstories.com

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information:
http://ncadi.samhsa.gov

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism:
www.niaaa.nih.gov

National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teens:
http://teens.drugabuse.gov

National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign:
www.freevibe.com &
www.whatsyourantidrug.com

Partnership for a Drug-Free America:
www.drugfree.org

Too Smart to Start
(Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration):
http://toosmarttostart.samhsa.gov

US Department of Justice,
Drug Enforcement Administration:
www.usdoj.gov/dea/pubs/straight/intro.htm

For Teachers, Parents and other Adults

Coalition Pathways, Inc.: **www.coalitionpathways.com**

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America: **www.cadca.org**

D. A. R. E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education): **www.dare.com**

Department of Health and Human Services: **http://prevention.samhsa.gov**

Five Moms Campaign: **www.FiveMoms.com**

Federal Resources for Educational Excellence:
www.free.ed.gov/subjects.cfm?subject_id=61&res_feature_request=1
(Teaching and learning resources about substance abuse from various federal agencies.)

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information: **http://ncadi.samhsa.gov**

National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign: **www.theantidrug.com** (See special sections for teachers.)

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism: **www.nia.nih.gov**

National Institute on Drug Abuse: **www.nida.nih.gov**

National Poison Control Hotline: 1-800-222-1222 (This connects you automatically to your local center.)

Office of National Drug Control Policy: **www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov**

Partnership for a Drug-Free America: **www.drugfree.org** & **www.timetotalk.org**

Stop Medicine Abuse: **www.StopMedicineAbuse.org**

Stop Underage Drinking: **www.stopalcoholabuse.gov**
(Three downloadable PDF Action Guides based on the Surgeon General's Call to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking. There is one for families, one for communities and one for educators.)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: **http://nrepp.samhsa.gov**
(NREPP has developed a searchable database of interventions for the prevention and treatment of mental and substance use disorders to help people, agencies, and organizations implement programs and practices in their communities.)

Too Smart to Start (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration):
http://toosmarttostart.samhsa.gov

Take a look at the most powerful weapon in the fight against teen medicine abuse:

YOU

Educate yourself, talk to your kids and safeguard your medicines

Today some teens are abusing medicines, such as prescription & over-the-counter medicines, to get high. Parents have the power to help stop it. Go to StopMedicineAbuse.org for concrete steps you can take to safeguard your kids.

Be a hero. Educate yourself and join the fight against teen medicine abuse.

PhRMA CADCA CHPA