

Substance Abuse & Different Types of Drugs



The abuse of narcotics and dangerous drugs...

Has greatly cost society in many ways. A large number of crimes have been committed as a direct result of drug trafficking and use. The cost to society has been in the form of taxpayers' dollars being used to investigate, prosecute, incarcerate, and rehabilitate the drug offenders. This, along with personal tragedies experienced by drug abusers and their families, causes this subject to be a concern for all.

KIDDIE DOPE AND LOOK-ALIKES

Although look-alikes are inexpensively produced and enormously profitable, they can be highly potent. These drugs, also known as "kiddie dope," usually contain nothing more than caffeine, ephedrine, aspirin, aspirin substitutes, or other non-controlled ingredients. The capsules closely resemble the colors, trademarks, and control numbers of prescription amphetamines and barbiturates. The caffeine and caffeine-like chemical in the look-alikes produce a mild stimulant effect. To obtain a noticeable "high" from these stimulants, the user must take a quantity of the capsules to achieve the same stimulant effect of several cups of coffee. Herein lies the danger of look-alike drugs they so accurately resemble their prescription counterparts that an unsuspecting user could inadvertently ingest 5 or 6 legitimate prescription capsules, thinking they are look-alikes. The resulting overdose could easily become fatal.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON DRUGS AND THEIR EFFECTS

What Is A Drug?

A drug is "any chemical substance that brings about physical, emotional, or mental changes in people. Alcohol, tobacco, and even caffeine (in coffee, tea, cocoa, and cola drinks) are drugs. However, the term "drug" is more typically used to refer to marijuana, amphetamines, barbiturates, tranquilizers, narcotics, cocaine, "crack," phencyclidine (PCP), volatile chemicals (glue and other inhalants), LSD, and heroin.

What Is Drug Abuse?

Drug abuse is the use of a chemical substance, legal or illegal, which causes physical, mental, emotional or social harm to a person or to people close to him or her.

There are different kinds of drug users:

- Experimenters who may try one or two drugs a few times out of curiosity about their effects.
- Recreational users use drugs to "get high" with friends on special occasions or at parties.
- Regular users use drugs constantly to achieve or maintain a desired state, but continue to attempt normal activity (work, school, housework, etc.)
- Dependent users can't relate to anything but drug seeking and drug taking. They experience mental or physical discomfort when they need drugs and will do anything to obtain them.

Stimulants

These are the "uppers" that stimulate the central nervous system. They make people more active, alert, and nervous. They usually relieve drowsiness and disguise the effects of fatigue and exhaustion. The stronger stimulant sometimes produces a temporary "euphoria" (high mood). Using stimulants regularly makes some people irritable and overactive. People who use stimulants over a long period of time and then stop go through a withdrawal and may feel anxious or depressed, get headaches or experience other symptoms.

Amphetamines

Use of amphetamines, especially when taken without a doctor's supervision, can lead to the yo-yo effect of "speed" - high one hour and down the next. Amphetamines can make people psychologically dependent and can cause physical and mental damage when used for an extended period of time. Street level amphetamines are usually manufactured in clandestine laboratories, by "cooks" who have little or no scientific background. Amphetamines produced under these conditions are often contaminated with chemical by-products that occur during the manufacture, many of which are poisonous, can cause cancer, or brain damage.

Cocaine

Cocaine, "coke" or "snow," usually seen in the form of a white powder, comes from the cocoa bush found in mountainous regions of some tropical climates. Cocaine is addictive, and can result in severe irritation

of membranes in the nostrils, throat, and sinuses. When taken in large doses for a long period of time, cocaine causes sleeplessness, anxiety, and occasionally delusions. Because of its rapid action and powerful stimulant "high," cocaine can easily be abused. A very potent form of cocaine, called "crack" is highly addictive. Known as a "rock" because of its pebble-like appearance, "crack" is smoked in a special pipe by the user and makes a crackling sound when being smoked.



Barbiturates

Twice as many people die from overdoses of barbiturates as from overdoses of heroin. Barbiturates, sometimes called "barbs", "downs", or "reds", cause mental confusion, dizziness, and loss of memory. People sometimes get so confused from barbiturates that they forget how many pills they have taken. Often this confusion can result in overdose. Barbiturates are addictive. In fact, people dependent on them have to be very careful coming off them as sudden withdrawal can cause fear, restlessness, convulsions, even death. It is vitally important to consult a physician before discontinuing the use of barbiturates. Barbiturates and alcohol make each other more powerful when taken together. Mixing even a few sleeping pills with alcohol can easily lead to an overdose and is a frequent cause of accidental death. Never let anyone take barbiturates or other downers if they have been drinking.

Depressants

One of America's biggest drug problems involves the misuse of prescription tablets and capsules. Some of these tablets and capsules are called "downers" and can be obtained in the black market or taken from the family medicine cabinet. There are many drugs in this category, including sedatives (tranquilizers) like Valium, Librium, and Xanax, and hypnotics (sleeping pills) like Nembutal, Seconal, Dalmane, and Placidyl.

Fentanyl

Fentanyls are a family of compounds that mimic the effect of heroin. Some derivatives of fentanyl are thousands of times more potent than heroin. Doses of smaller than a grain of salt can be fatal. Because they are so potent, fentanyls must be diluted by mixing them with other powders. If this mixing is not done properly and uniformly, some doses will be safe while others could be deadly.

Glue and Other Inhalants

Sniffing glue and inhaling other volatile chemicals, such as deodorant, hair spray, or even gasoline can cause a high. These materials are poisonous and very dangerous. Part of their intoxicating effect comes from cutting off oxygen to the brain or affecting the lungs. Overdoses of these chemicals can damage the liver, heart, kidney, brain, blood and central nervous system.

Hallucinogens

Hallucinogens (also called psychedelics) are drugs which affect sensation, thinking, self-awareness, and emotion.

Changes in time and space perception, delusions, and hallucinations may range from mild to overwhelming, depending on the dose and quality of the drug. Effects vary; the same person may have different reactions on different occasions. Many natural and synthetic hallucinogens are in use. LSD, a synthetic, is the most potent and best studied. Mescaline (from the peyote cactus), psilocybin (from the Mexican mushroom), morning glory seeds, DMT, DOM (STP), PMA, MDA, and others have somewhat similar effects.

LSD

Lysergic Acid comes from a fungus (ergot) and was first converted to lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) in 1938. It was not until 1943 that its psychoactive properties became known.

Effects of LSD vary greatly according to dosage, personality of the user, and conditions under which the drug is used. Basically, it causes changes in sensation. Users describe changes in depth perception and in the meaning of the perceived object. Illusions and hallucinations often occur. The sense of time and self are altered. Sensations may seem to "cross over" - that is, music may be seen or colors heard.

Physical reactions range from minor, such as dilated pupils, rise in temperature and heartbeat, or a slight increase in blood pressure to tremors.

Marijuana and Hashish

Marijuana, hashish, and hashish oil come from a plant called Cannabis. The dried, chopped leaves are called

Marijuana. The dark brown resin from the tops of the plant is hashish, with hashish oil being distilled from the hashish. The cannabis plant gets its effects primarily from a drug called delta-9-tetra-hydro-cannabinol, THC for short. Smoking or eating THC brings most of the "high."

Narcotics

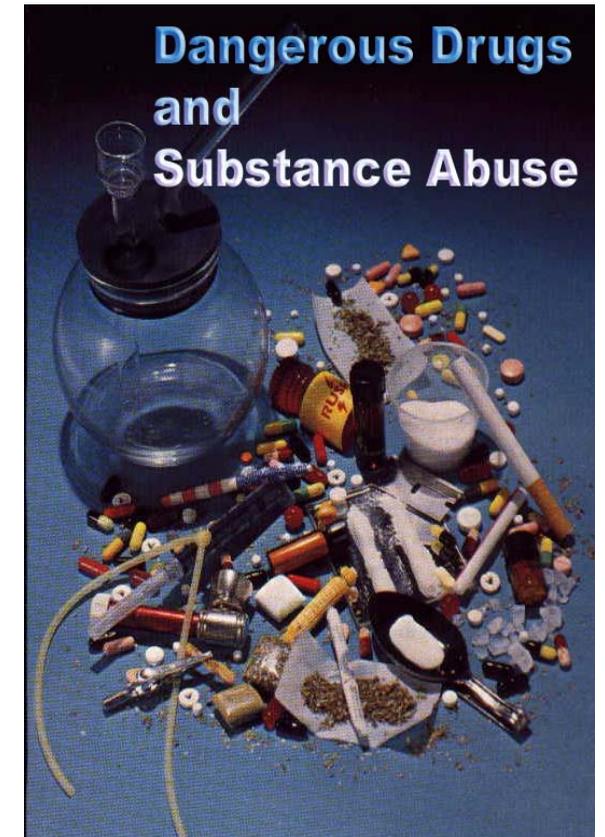
Narcotics are derived from opium or are synthesized, and are highly addictive. Used medically as pain killers, they depress the central nervous system and eventually make people physically and mentally dependent. Codeine and Demerol are common synthetic narcotics. The "opiates," a more powerful class of narcotics derived from the opium poppy, including opium, morphine, and heroin. Although the medical effects of the drug may be no more severe than those of the barbiturates, the great need of heroin often leads to personal desperation, crime and intense suffering.

PCP

One serious drug of abuse, phencyclidine (PCP), is a tranquilizer for animals. PCP ("hog" or "angel dust") produces a feeling of numbness in arms and legs, and can cause hallucinations.

Sprinkled on tobacco or marijuana cigarettes or taken in capsules, PCP can create temporary psychosis very much like acute schizophrenia. It often leads to paranoia and has been linked with serious violence.

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Special thanks to:
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