

Kids are tempted to try drugs at an early age.

DRUGS

For some, the attraction is a response to boredom or curiosity.

For others, they provide an escape or desired mood change.

Still for others, what starts as a single act of rebellion grows into an uncontrollable habit of addiction.

WHAT DRUGS CAN DO TO YOUR TEEN'S BODY

Drugs interfere with the nervous system's basic functions. They can prevent muscles from working properly and make sleeping more difficult. Some cause weight gain or loss, bloodshot or glassy eyes, heart racing or diarrhea and acne. Here's a brief look at just some of the harmful side effects of some drugs.

INHALANTS such as sniffing glue, butane or computer dusting air sprays, starve your teen's body of oxygen and force the heart to beat irregularly and more rapidly. They can cause sudden death, suffocation, choking on vomit and heart attacks. Your child can develop liver, lung and kidney problems and lose his/her sense of smell or hearing. **Street names:** *Glue, Kick Bang, Sniff, Huff, Poppers, Whippets, Texas Shoeshine.*

METHAMPHETAMINES can cause instant death (heart failure). They can cause liver, kidney and lung damage, which can also kill your teen. Meth can cause severe brain damage and trigger chronic fatigue, paranoid or delusional

thinking, aggression and violent or psychotic behavior. It's very addictive. **Street names:** *Speed, Meth, Crystal, Crank, Tweak, Go-fast, Ice, Glass, Uppers, Black Beauties.*

CLUB DRUGS such as ECSTASY can cause loss of muscle control, blurred vision, seizures, brain damage and heart attacks on the spot. They can damage the neurons of your child's brain, impair their senses, memory, judgment and coordination. GHB and Rohypnol are used in "date rape" and other assaults because they can immobilize your teen or cause unconsciousness. Rohypnol can cause a kind of amnesia, making it impossible for your child to remember what he or she said or did under the effects of the drug. **Ecstasy street names:** *E, X or XTC.* **GHB street names:** *Liquid Ecstasy, Liquid X, Grievous Bodily Harm, Georgia Home Boy.* **Rohypnol street names:** *Roofies and R-2.*

HALLUCINOGENS can put your child in a coma or cause heart and lung failure. They increase your child's heart rate and blood pressure, and can cause disturbing psychological side effects, such as delusion and paranoia. They can also make your teen act irrational, aggressive or violent. **Street names:** *LSD, Acid, Blotter, Magic Mushrooms, Shrooms, PCP, Angel Dust, Boat, Ozone, Wack.*

COCAINE can cause heart attacks, seizures, strokes and respiratory failure. It can also cause muscle spasms and permanently damage nasal tissue. Cocaine may make your child feel paranoid, angry, hostile or anxious and lose interest in other areas of life. **Street names:** *Coke, Dust, Toot, Snow, Blow, Sneeze, Powder, Lines, Rock, Crack.*



THE REAL SCOOP ON... MARIJUANA

(Street names include: *Weed, Pot, Dope, Grass, Reefer, Ganja, Mary Jane, Blunt, Joint, Roach, Nail*) Marijuana is used by more kids than any other illicit drug. In fact, 2/3 of all marijuana users are younger than 18. Between 1991 and 2001, the number of 8th graders who used marijuana doubled. Today's marijuana is not the same drug used when you were in high school or college—it's far more potent. Studies suggest that today's pot contains more than twice the concentration of THC, the chemical that affects the brain, compared to the pot of 20 years ago.

It's not harmless

A small group of vocal people attempting to get marijuana legalized in America consider pot to be relatively safe, but it is not. It's addictive—especially among young people. More kids enter drug treatment centers for marijuana dependence than for all other illicit drugs combined. Marijuana use is 3 times more likely to lead to dependence among adolescents than adults. The earlier kids start using it, the more likely they are to become dependent on it or other illicit drugs later in life.

It affects the brain

Smoking marijuana leads to some changes in the brain similar to those caused by cocaine, heroin and alcohol. For young users, marijuana can lead to increased anxiety, panic attacks, depression and other mental health problems. Heavy marijuana use impairs the ability of young people to concentrate and retain information.

It affects the lungs

Regular marijuana users often develop breathing problems, such as chronic coughing and wheezing. Marijuana contains some of the same cancer-causing chemicals as tobacco. The amount of tar inhaled by marijuana smokers and the level of carbon monoxide absorbed by those who smoke marijuana, regardless of THC content, are 3-5 times greater than among tobacco smokers.

It's associated with other risky behaviors

Kids who use marijuana when they are young are more likely to engage in risky behaviors that can jeopardize their future, such as delinquency, having multiple sexual partners, perceiving drugs as not harmful, and having more friends who exhibit dangerous behavior.

It's a gateway drug

Pot is often a stepping stone for additional drug use. One survey found that 12- to 17-year-olds who use marijuana weekly are 9 times more likely than non-users to experiment with other illegal drugs or alcohol.



It affects performance

Marijuana affects alertness, concentration, perception, coordination and reaction time. These skills are often

needed on a job or for driving a car, so smoking pot can increase your teen's risk for injury due to an accident.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Be Open and Honest

Kids who learn about the risks of drug abuse from their parents or caregivers are less likely to use drugs than those who do not. Give them the facts about the physical, mental and emotional risks of drug use. Give real life examples from the news or people you know.

Be Clear

Set a "house rule" that nobody uses drugs. Period. If your child is at a party where drugs are being distributed, they should leave immediately. Emphasize the potential dangers of being where a drug bust occurs, even if they're not using the drugs.

Be on Call

Make it clear to your kids that you will pick them up immediately, no matter what time of night it is, if they feel uncomfortable or need to get away from a bad environment.

Be Home

Unsupervised hours are an invitation for trouble. Many kids get into trouble between 3:00 pm and 6:00 pm, and there

is a significant increase in marijuana use over the summer months. If you can't be home with your kids, be sure they're using their time in a positive manner (ideally supervised) such as playing school sports, working at a job or participating in after-school programs, youth groups or community clubs.

Be Aware

Know where your kids are at all times, and what they're up to. Don't be afraid to check up on them. Don't worry too much about your child resenting your persistence. Your job is to protect them, not pacify them.

Be Consistent

Establish very clear rules (and consequences for breaking them), and enforce them. If a rule is broken, the punishment should fit the crime and be motivation enough to avoid a repeat of the behavior.

Be Encouraging

Give your child positive feedback for making good choices and remind them how much you appreciate their commitment to being drug-free.