

Frequently Asked Questions...

Q. Is cocaine really still a problem?

A. Yes. While the number of cocaine users has decreased from what was witnessed in the mid 1980, there have been nearly 2 million cocaine users every year since 1992.

Q. Isn't crack less addictive than cocaine because it doesn't stay in the body very long?

A. No. Both cocaine and crack are powerfully addictive. The length of time it stays in your body doesn't change that.

Q. Don't some people use cocaine to feel good?

A. Any positive feelings are fleeting and are often followed by some very bad feelings, like paranoia and intense cravings. Cocaine may give users a temporary illusion of power and energy, but it often leaves them unable to function.

Q. Isn't heroin a less dangerous drug if you snort or smoke it?

A. No. Heroin is heroin. There is no safe way of ingesting it. You can still die from an overdose or become addicted by snorting or smoking it.

Q. Can withdrawal from heroin kill you?

A. Although it is seldom fatal, withdrawal from heroin produces drug cravings, restlessness, muscle and bone pain, insomnia, diarrhea, vomiting, and other symptoms that usually last about a week, but may last for many months.

Q. Will heroin use alter my brain?

A. Yes. Heroin enters the neurons or cells of the brain and changes the speed of the chemicals in the brain. It not only affects your brain physically, but also affects the way you think.

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THE TRUTH ABOUT

Tips for Teens

Cocaine & Heroin

Elks

The Truth About Cocaine

Get The Facts...

Cocaine affects your brain.

The word “cocaine” refers to the drug in both a powder (cocaine) and crystal (crack) form. It is made from the coca plant and causes a short-lived high that is immediately followed by opposite, intense feelings of depression, edginess, and a craving for more of the drug. Cocaine may be snorted as a powder, converted to a liquid form for injection with a needle, or processed into a crystal form to be smoked.

Cocaine affects your body.

People who use cocaine often don't eat or sleep regularly. They can experience increased heart rate, muscle spasms, and convulsions. If they snort cocaine, they can also permanently damage their nasal tissue.

Cocaine affects your emotions.

Using cocaine can make you feel paranoid, angry, hostile, and anxious when you're not high.

Cocaine is addictive.

Cocaine interferes with the way your brain processes chemicals that create feelings of pleasure, so you need more of the drug just to feel normal. People who become addicted to cocaine start to lose interest in other areas of their life, like school, friends, and sports.

Cocaine can kill you.

Cocaine use can cause heart attacks, seizures, strokes, and respiratory failure. People who share needles can also contact hepatitis, HIV/AIDS, or other diseases.

Before You Risk It...

Know the law — Cocaine in any form is illegal.

Stay informed — Even first-time cocaine users can have seizures or fatal heart attacks.

Know the risk — Combining cocaine with other drugs or alcohol is extremely dangerous. The effects of one drug can magnify the effects of another, and mixing substances can be deadly.

Be aware — Cocaine is expensive. Regular users can spend hundreds and even thousands of dollars on cocaine each week.

Stay in control — Cocaine impairs your judgment which may lead to unwise decisions around sexual activity. This can increase your risk for HIV/AIDS, other diseases, rape, and unplanned pregnancy.

Look around you — The vast majority of teens aren't using cocaine. According to a 1998 study, less than 1 percent of teens are regular cocaine users. In fact, 98 percent of teens have never even tried cocaine!

The Truth About Heroin

Get The Facts...

Heroin affects your brain.

Heroin enters the brain quickly. It slows down the way you think, slows down reaction time, and slows down memory. This affects the way you act and make decisions.

Heroin affects your body.

Heroin poses special problems for those who inject it because of the risk of HIV, hepatitis B and C, and other diseases that can occur from sharing needles. These health problems can be passed on to sexual partners and newborns.

Heroin is super-addictive.

Heroin is highly addictive because it enters the brain so rapidly. It particularly affects those regions of the brain responsible for producing physical dependence.

Heroin is not what it may seem.

Despite the glamorization of “heroin chic” in films, fashion, and music, heroin use can have tragic consequences that extend far beyond its users. Fetal effects, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, violence, and crime are all linked to its use.

Heroin can kill you.

Heroin is one of the top three frequently reported drugs by medical examiners in drug abuse deaths.

Before You Risk It...

Know the law — Heroin is an illegal Schedule 1 drug, meaning that it is in the group of most highly addictive drugs.

Get the facts — In the 1990's, hospital emergency department episodes involving heroin nearly quadrupled among youths ages 12 -17.

Stay informed — The untimely deaths of several popular musicians and other celebrities may have influenced many young people to stay away from heroin use, but to others, the dangers are still not clear. The average age of first use was 21.3 in 1998.

Know the risks — Know the risks Because the strength of heroin varies and its impact is more unpredictable when used with alcohol or other drugs. The user never knows what might happen with the next dose.

Look around you — The vast majority of teens are not using heroin. According to a 1999 national study, only 2 percent report ever having tried it.