

## **Drug Busters Facts – Grade 7 Week 3**

### **Day 1**

1. The addiction process can be very hard to recognize. It usually starts with the occasional use of a drug, perhaps once a week with friends. This is called “occasional use.”
2. If occasional use continues, the person may begin to take the drug on a regular basis. Users like the feeling the drug gives them, so they take it several times a week and then every day. This is called “habitual use.”
3. As more of the drug is used, the brain changes. Certain nerves in the brain become used to the drug. This is called “tolerance.” The user then must take more and more of the drug to feel its effects. As the use continues, the chemicals in the brain change even more.
4. When the brain and body of the drug abuser need the drug to feel okay (or normal), then the third stage of addiction has occurred – “dependence.” If the drug, or drugs, are taken away, the dependent person feels very ill.
5. Dependence gives way to the last stage of the disease called “full-blown addiction.” Fully addicted people do not care about anything except getting and taking their drugs. There are few things in life worse than being an addict.

### **Day 2**

1. Addiction develops more rapidly in young people than in adults.
2. Alcohol is the most commonly abused substance in the United States.
3. Two of the greatest problems in society are alcohol abuse and alcoholism. An alcoholic has lost the ability to choose whether or not to drink and how much to drink. The alcoholic must drink.
4. In small to moderate amounts, alcohol slows reflexes, coordination, and motor activity. It increases the heart rate and dilates the blood pressure. In large amounts, alcohol makes it difficult to walk, talk, and think. It causes drowsiness.
5. A person who consumes large amounts of alcohol may become uncoordinated, confused, disoriented, fall into a coma, or even die.

### **Day 3**

1. There is no safe level of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. Women run the risk of miscarriage, and infants born to mothers who consume alcohol have a high chance of developing facial deformities, growth problems and mental retardation. The condition is called Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.
2. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is a preventable birth defect. Do not use alcohol during pregnancy.
3. The legal age to buy alcohol in most states is 21; alcohol is a drug.

4. Drinkers tend to become violent, casual about intimacy, and reckless in driving. Drinking and driving is the leading cause of death for youth under the age of 21. Ten teenagers die every day in the U.S. in accidents caused by drunk driving.
5. Nothing but time lessens the effects of alcohol. The liver eliminates 90% of alcohol at a constant rate of approximately one drink per hour.
6. The amount of alcohol consumed, not the type determines the Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC). 1 twelve-ounce can of beer is equal to 1 cocktail drink containing a one-and-a-half-ounce shot of 86 proof liquor is equal to 1 five-ounce glass of wine.

#### **Day 4**

1. Alcohol can cause stomach ulcers, bleeding sores that are very painful. Stomach cancer may be seen in heavy drinkers. Heavy drinkers are more likely to have high blood pressure, which means that the heart must work harder to pump blood throughout the body. That can lead to heart attacks.
2. The organ of the body most commonly damaged by alcohol abuse is the liver. Inside the liver, alcohol is chemically changed to become harmless. If you drink too much of it in a short periods of time (your liver becomes overloaded and can't change it fast enough), you will die of alcohol poisoning.
3. Too much alcohol in the liver over a period of time causes hepatitis; people are very sick with hepatitis.
4. Hepatitis may develop into cirrhosis if a person continues to abuse alcohol. This is a very serious disease in which portions of the liver die and become scarred. This may cause death if a person does not stop drinking.
5. Most elementary schools in the state of Texas have at least one fourth-grader that is an alcoholic. For students who start drinking in elementary school, 9 years old is the average age for students to drink their first alcoholic drink.
6. Alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana are dangerous also because they are known as "gateway" drugs. This means they can lead to the use of other – and sometimes, even more dangerous – substances, such as cocaine, crack heroin, and LSD.

#### **Day 5**

1. Prevention is the best "cure" for drug abuse. Rehabilitation takes years and is extremely costly both in terms of relationships and money – if it is successful.
2. Having a family mealtime is a protective factor in preventing drug abuse. This should be a pleasant time free from discussion of "problems."
3. Being involved in the community and doing volunteer activities helps to prevent drug problems from developing.
4. Children benefit from hearing adults other than parents discussing issues and having conversations.
5. The average age of first-time drug users in Texas is 12 years old.

DFW Community Newspapers

Drug Danger: In the Body. Joyca Traina, Ken Newbury, Barbara Weigand.

Let's All Work to Fight Drug Abuse, Collin County Sheriff's Office.