

Drug Busters – Drugs Alcohol and the Brain

Week 3 Facts – Grade 8

Day 1

1. Heroin was developed from morphine; it is 10 times stronger than morphine and is more addicting. It is called, chiva, horse, smack, junk, or H.*
2. Heroin affects almost all parts of the body. Users often overdose because the purity of heroin varies and therefore the dosage cannot be regulated; an overdose can quickly lead to death.*
3. If you are around someone who goes to sleep and cannot be easily aroused after consuming large quantities of drugs, do not leave them alone. Inform an adult regarding the drug consumption; get them to a hospital.*
4. Use of heroin by pregnant women can cause miscarriage, early birth or the babies' death. Babies can be born addicted and suffer withdrawal (which includes seizures and nausea).*
5. Heroin is highly addicting. Withdrawal begins 4 to 6 hours after the last dose; it can be very severe (muscle aches, nausea, seizures, etc.) and lasts several days.
6. Heroin changes the neurochemistry of the brain, so you are literally incapable of loving another person in the same way.

Day 2

1. Cocaine is one of the biggest drug problems in the U.S. Its other names are snow, crack, and coke. It is highly addicting.*
2. Cocaine users experience a “high” which lasts about one hour and then a “crash” into depression causing a search for more cocaine to get back to the “high.” Overdose can cause death. Withdrawal produces paranoia, depression, and anxiety*.
3. Cocaine is very dangerous for pregnant women causing miscarriage, premature birth, and stillbirth. Babies can be born addicted to the drug and suffer withdrawal symptoms.*
4. LSD, lysergic acid diethylamide, is in the class of drugs known as hallucinogens. They cause auditory, visual, or somatosensory hallucinations, paranoia or dream-like states which can be extremely frightening. A user's mood, thought, and/or perceptions are altered by this drug. People using LSD frequently cause themselves physical harm and exhibit violent behavior toward others.*
5. Flashback reactions from LSD occur months and even years after the last dose of the drug. Terrifying thoughts and feelings about death, insanity, injuries and fatal accidents occur.
6. LSD users must take progressively higher doses of the drug in order to achieve the same level of intoxication. This is extremely dangerous and can result in convulsions, coma, heart and lung failure and death.
7. Cocaine blocks chemicals in the brain and affects the central nervous system.

Day 3

1. “Put-downs” and “name-calling” are verbal assaults which undermine positive feeling; these are aggressive, verbally acts. This form of bullying has been traced as a contributing factor in suicidal deaths among teens.
2. In 1993, 2500 adolescents in New York were jailed. 60% of these abused drugs and alcohol. In a study ([Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine](#), 1999) carrying guns and weapons was associated with earlier use of marijuana, cocaine, or alcohol use.*
3. One of the most critical factors for a child's positive development is that the child becomes attached to at least one adult who believes in the child and gives consistent care, acceptance and support. Any adult (teacher, bus driver, relative, coach, neighbor) can help a child develop into a person with good social behavior that rejects violence, drugs, and alcohol.

4. Children who exhibit violent tendencies come from all walks of life, not necessarily from homes with a drug or alcohol problem or a low income, nor are they born that way.*
5. The extent to which a society condones violence has great impact on the values and attitudes of individuals.*
6. Gun-related homicide rates for teens have increased 150% since 1985.

Day 4

1. Recent surveys found an alarming increase in the popularity of MDMA (ecstasy). Many young people think ecstasy is safe, however, research paints a much different picture. Prevention efforts must educate teens and young adults with messages to counter the misconception that ecstasy is safer than other drugs.
2. Ecstasy is a chemical belonging to the amphetamine family and has properties of both stimulants and hallucinogens. Many people report distorted time and perception while under its influence. Its effects last about four to six hours.
3. Taking ecstasy leads to a significant depletion of serotonin and it takes the brain a long time to rebuild what is needed to perform important physiological and psychological functions.
4. Eighteen months after a short use of ecstasy regions of the brain showed substantial loss. Ecstasy users experience many different psychiatric changes such as anxiety, paranoid thoughts, obsessive traits and disturbed sleep, among others. Use of ecstasy can have long lasting effects on memory, emotional health and thinking processes. These losses can last as long as seven years.
5. The greatest concern with ecstasy use is the effect this drug has on the heart. Someone who has taken ecstasy and has increased physical activity such as dancing is at risk of heart damage because the heart does not pump blood normally with this drug present.

Day 5

1. Each year, 50,000 people die in the U.S. from drug use.*
2. Through studies conducted on the brain, scientists have identified the addicted brain as distinctly different from the non-addicted brain. After substance addiction (the people were no longer using drugs) the total volume of the prefrontal lobe of the brain (both left and right hemispheres) was significantly smaller than for non-addicted individuals. This change did not reverse itself with the passage of time.*
3. Parents and others need to watch for the warning signs of drug abuse; these include physical changes, hostility, loss of interest in school or hobbies.*
4. Setting positive goals for the future helps children achieve positive outcomes in life.
5. Neighbors can help protect children from violent behaviors and drugs by monitoring behaviors and getting to know the child.
6. Adults need to model positive, responsible attitudes and behaviors so that children learn acceptable ways to handle difficulties and constructive use of time and energy.
7. Parents and adult mentors of children can change the outcome of a young person's life.

DFW Community Newspapers.

Middle School Health Education Curriculum, Grade 8. Plano Independent School District.

Search Institute. "40 Developmental Assets."

The Addicted Brain. Catherine Christie and Susan Mitchell.

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) report, MDMA/Ecstasy Research: Advances, Challenges, Future Directions. A Scientific Conference, July 2001