Tips For Teens

The Truth About Cocaine

Q&A

Q. Is cocaine really still a problem?

A. Yes. In 2001, more than 1.1 million people tried cocaine, a level of first use not seen since 1988.[2]

Q. Isn't crack less addictive than cocaine because it doesn't stay in your 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 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 emotionally, physically, and sexually.

Info

To learn more about cocaine or obtain referrals to programs in your community, contact:

SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information
800-729-6686

TDD 800-487-4889

linea gratis en español
877-767-8432

The bottom line: If you know someone who has a problem with cocaine/crack cocaine, urge him or her to stop or get help. If you use it—stop! The longer you ignore the real facts, the more chances you take with your life.

It's never too late. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust.

Do it today!

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention
www.samhsa.gov

Curious about the TV ads of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign? Check out the Web site at www.freevibe.com or visit the Office of National Drug Control Policy Web site at www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov.

Tips For Teens

The Truth About Cocaine

Slang—*Coke, Dust, Toot, Snow, Blow, Sneeze, Powder, Lines, Rock (Crack)*

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, even 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 and 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 contract 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 risks. 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 2002 study, less than 1 percent of teens are regular cocaine users. In fact, 97 percent of teens have never even *tried* cocaine.[1]

Know the Signs...

How can you tell if a friend is using cocaine? Sometimes it's tough to tell. But there are signs you can look for. If your friend has one or more of the following warning signs, he or she may be using cocaine or other illicit drugs:

- Red, bloodshot eyes
- A runny nose or frequent sniffing
- A change in groups of friends
- Acting withdrawn, depressed, tired, or careless about personal appearance
- Losing interest in school, family, or activities he or she used to enjoy
- Frequently needing money

What can you do to help someone who is using cocaine? Be a real friend. Save a life. Encourage your friend to stop or seek professional help. For information and referrals, call the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at 800-729-6686.

For more information, go to www.ncadi.samhsa.gov

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