

ILLEGAL DRUG AWARENESS



UNDERSTANDING DRUG ABUSE AND ADDICTION

People experiment with drugs for many different reasons. Many first try drugs out of curiosity, to have a good time, because friends are doing it, or in an effort to improve athletic performance or ease another problem, such as stress, anxiety, or depression.

Use does not automatically lead to abuse, and there is no specific level in which drug use moves from casual to problematic. It varies by individual. Drug abuse and addiction is less about the amount of substance consumed or the frequency, and more to do with the consequences of drug use. No matter how often or how little you are consuming, if your drug use is causing problems in your life – at work, school, home, or in your relationships – you likely have a drug abuse or addiction problem.

WHY DO SOME USERS BECOME ADDICTED, WHILE OTHERS DO NOT?

Your genes, mental health, family, and social environment all play a role in addiction. Risk factors include:

- Family history of addiction
- Abuse, neglect, or other traumatic experiences in childhood
- Mental disorder such as depression and anxiety
- Early use of drugs
- Method of administration – smoking or injecting a drug may increase its addictive potential

DRUG ADDICTION AND THE BRAIN

Addiction is a complex disorder characterized by compulsive drug use. While each drug produces different physical effects, all abused substances share one thing in common: repeated use can alter the way the brain looks and functions.

- Taking a recreational drug causes a surge in levels of dopamine in your brain, which trigger feelings of pleasure. Your brain remembers those feelings and wants them repeated.
- If you become addicted, the substance takes on the same significance as other survival behaviors, such as eating and drinking.
- Changes in your brain interfere with your ability to think clearly, exercise good judgment, control your behavior, and feel normal without drugs.
- No matter what you are addicted to the uncontrollable craving to use grows more important than anything else, including family, friends, career, and even your own health and happiness.
- The urge to use is so strong that your mind finds ways to deny or rationalize the addiction. You may drastically underestimate the quantity of drugs you are taking, how much it impacts your life, and the level of control you have over your drug use.

HOW DRUG ABUSE AND ADDICTION CAN DEVELOP

People who experiment with drugs continue to use them because the substance either makes them feel good or stops them from feeling bad. In many cases however, there is a fine line between regular use and drug abuse and addiction. Very few addicts are able to recognize when they have crossed that line. While frequency or the amount of drugs consumed don't in themselves constitute drug abuse or addiction, they can often be indicators of drug-related problems.

- Problems can sometimes sneak up on you, as your drug abuse gradually increases over time. Using drugs at an occasional party can change to using drugs a couple days a week, then everyday. Gradually, getting and using the drug becomes more and more important to you.
- If the drug fulfills a valuable need, you may find yourself increasingly relying on it. For example you may take drugs to calm yourself if you feel anxious or stressed, energize you if you feel depressed, or make you feel confident in social situations. Until you find alternative, healthier methods for overcoming these problems, your drug use will likely continue.
- Similarly, if you use drugs to fill a void in your life, you are more at risk of crossing the line from casual use to drug abuse and addiction. To maintain healthy balance in your life, you need to have other positive experiences, to feel good in your life aside from any drug use.

WARNING SIGNS THAT A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER IS USING DRUGS

Physical Warning Signs

- Bloodshot eyes, pupils larger or smaller than usual.
- Changes in appetite or sleep patterns. Sudden weight loss or gain.
- Deterioration of physical appearance, or personal grooming habits.
- Unusual smells on breath, body, or clothing.
- Tremors, slurred speech, or impaired coordination.

Behavioral Signs

- Drop in attendance and performance at work or school.
- Unexplained need for money or financial problems. May borrow or steal to get it.
- Engaging in secretive or suspicious behaviors.
- Sudden change in friends, favorite hangouts, and hobbies.
- Frequently getting into trouble (fights, accidents, illegal activities).

Psychological Signs

- Unexplained change in personality or attitude.
- Sudden mood swings, irritability, or angry outbursts.
- Periods of unusual hyperactivity, agitation, or giddiness.
- Lack of motivation; appears lethargic or "spaced out".
- Appears fearful, anxious, or paranoid with no reason.

WARNING SIGNS OF COMMONLY USED DRUGS

Marijuana: Glassy red eyes; loud talking, inappropriate laughter followed by sleepiness; loss of interest, motivation; weight gain or loss.

Depressants: Contracted pupils; drunk-like; difficulty concentrating; clumsiness; poor judgment; slurred speech, sleepiness.

Stimulants: Dilated pupils, hyperactivity; euphoria; irritability, anxiety; excessive talking followed by depression or excessive sleeping at odd times; may go long periods of time without eating or sleeping; weight loss; dry mouth and nose.

Inhalants: Watery eyes; impaired vision, memory and thought; secretions from nose or rashes around the nose and mouth; headaches and nausea; appearance of intoxication; drowsiness; poor muscle control; changes in appetite; anxiety; irritability; lots of cans/aerosols in the trash.

Hallucinogens: Dilated pupils; bizarre and irrational behavior including paranoia, aggression, hallucinations; mood swings; detachment from people; absorption with self or other objects; slurred speech; confusion.

Heroin: Contracted pupils; no response of pupils to light; needle marks; sleeping at unusual times; sweating; vomiting; coughing, sniffing; twitching; loss of appetite.

WARNING SIGNS OF TEEN DRUG ABUSE

While experimenting with drugs doesn't automatically lead to drug abuse, early use is a risk factor for developing more serious drug abuse and addiction. Risk of drug abuse also increases greatly during times of transition, such as changing schools, moving, or divorce. The challenge for parents is to distinguish between normal, often volatile, ups and downs of the teen years and the red flags of substance abuse. These include:

- Having bloodshot eyes or dilated pupils; using eye drops to try to mask these signs.
- Skipping class; declining grades; suddenly getting into trouble at school.
- Missing money, valuables, or prescriptions.
- Acting uncharacteristically isolated, withdrawn, angry, or depressed.
- Dropping one group of friends for another; being secretive about the new peer group.
- Loss of interest in old hobbies; lying about new interests and activities.
- Demanding more privacy; locking doors; avoiding eye contact; sneaking around.

WHEN A LOVED ONE HAS A DRUG PROBLEM

Speak Up. Talk to the person about your concerns, and offer help and support, without being judgmental. The earlier addiction is treated the better. Do not wait for your loved one to hit rock bottom! Be prepared for excuses and denial by listing specific examples of your loved one's behavior that has you worried.

Take care of yourself. Do not get so caught up in someone else's drug problem that you neglect your own needs. Make sure you have people you can talk to and lean on for support. And stay safe. Do not put yourself in dangerous situations.

Avoid self blame. You can support a person with a substance abuse problem and encourage treatment, but you cannot control your loved one's decisions. Let the person accept responsibility for his or her actions, an essential step along the way to recovery for drug addiction.

WHEN YOUR TEEN HAS A DRUG PROBLEM

Discovering your child uses drugs can generate fear, confusion, and anger in parents. It is important to remain calm when confronting your teen, and only do so when everyone is sober. Explain your concerns and make it clear that your concern come from a place of love. It is important that your teen feels you are supportive.

Five Steps Parents Can Take:

- Lay down rules and consequences
- Monitor your teen's activity
- Encourage other interests and social activities
- Talk to your child about underlying issues
- Get help

BUT DON'T

- Attempt to punish, threaten, bribe or preach.
- Try to be a martyr. Avoid emotional appeals that may only increase feelings of guilt and the compulsion to use drugs.
- Cover up or make excuses for the drug abuser, or shield them from the negative consequences of their behavior.
- Take over their responsibilities, leaving them with no sense of importance or dignity.
- Hide or throw out drugs.
- Argue with the person when they are under the influence.
- Take drugs with the drug abuser.
- Feel guilty or responsible for another's behavior.

STATISTICS OF DRUGS IN PEI

The escalating violence exhibited by drug groups and the variety of drugs now available in the market has made the illicit drug trade the most pressing organized crime threat identified in the province at this

time. The local drug market has evolved in recent years from a predominantly marijuana and cocaine based market to a more diverse mix including prescription and synthetic drugs for which there continues to be a high demand.

Prescription drugs (i.e.: Oxycotin and Dilaudid), crack cocaine, club drugs and cocaine remain the main drugs of choice in Prince Edward Island. According to the addictions facility in Mount Herbert, there are close to twice as many people in the province's methadone program than there were 18 months ago. Methadone is used by people trying to kick their addictions to heroin and painkillers. While methadone is also an opioid, it doesn't give people the same high as the drugs they were addicted to, and helps prevent painful withdrawal.

Abuse of prescription drugs has grown considerably in the province over the past five years with access to supply and cheaper prices as key components of the growing popularity. Although various methods of prescription fraud are being used to obtain the drugs locally, intelligence indicates a great percentage of prescription drugs on the street are being imported into the province. The provincial government is countering prescription drug fraud through the implementation of an integrated prescription monitoring database, the Drug Information System. The computerized pharmacy network connects pharmacists, physicians, and other authorized health care professionals with electronic medication profiles for all patients, an effective tool in the detection of misuse.

Key Findings on Student Alcohol and Drug Abuse for Canada:

The findings were based on data collected during 2007-2008 for students in grades 7, 9, 10 and 12 (i.e. , youth approximately 12-18 years old). Of particular note was the remarkable consistency across all jurisdictions of substance use estimates by gender and grade. Key findings include:

- A significant increase in prevalence of alcohol and cannabis use from grade 7 to grade 12. For example, in grade 7, depending on the province, 3% to 8% report past-year cannabis use versus 30% to 53% among their grade 12 counterparts.
- Alcohol use in the past year is about twice as prevalent as cannabis use for all grades combined (46% to 62%) versus (17% to 32%) respectively.
- 19% to 30% of all students report consuming five or more drinks on one occasion in the past month. When examining 12th graders alone approximately half (41% to 55%) report consuming five or more drinks on one occasion

RCMP in Prince County are making it more difficult for dealers to sell prescription pills, especially highly addictive and powerful hydromorphone drugs. In 2011 RCMP stepped up their enforcement efforts on dealers and doubled their pill-related charges over the previous year. In 2011 there were approximately 25 cases where charges were laid in Prince County involving prescription pills, including roughly five to seven cases in involving West Prince residents, said Corporal Andy Cook, of the Prince District JFO Drug Unit.

So far this year there have been about 10 cases in Prince County where charges have been laid, with two West Prince males charged in the past week, including one in Alberton. Many of the charges are for hydromorphone content pills. The prescription pill trade can be quite lucrative, said Cpl Cook. For instance, a single 30 mg pill prescribed for pain relief, known as "Big Red", can fetch \$100 on the street. But the pills can take a terrible toll on users, with one of the two persons charged with

collectively committing 50 break and enters claiming he consumed as many as two to three Big Reds a day, said Cpl Cook. Although tolerance levels can vary from individual to individual, that level of consumption is likely to lead to overdose and death if it is continued for any length of time, he said. Others could suffer overdoses at lower levels.

Though the price of drugs on the streets can fluctuate, Cpl Cook says it appears cracking down on dealers has caused prices to rise, due to a decrease in the drugs' availability. He said it's not uncommon after police arrest a dealer, for "everyone to become scared" and temporarily curtail their operations. Other pills seized by RCMP in their investigations include Percocets, known as "perks" and, to a lesser extent oxycodone as well as Tylenol 3 and other codeine pills.

Cpl Cook says RCMP are hearing more about illegal prescription drugs in West Prince this year through tips from the public and from information gleaned from informants. In Prince County and West Prince pills can be acquired in a number of ways, including getting a prescription filled by a doctor, stealing from a pharmacy, or buying from someone who has a prescription, said Cpl Cook. Pills can also be obtained through fake prescriptions and break and enters into homes.

***THIEF IS ON THE RISE TO OBTAIN THESE PRESCRIPTION PILLS. REMEMBER TO ALWAYS DISCARD PRESCRIPTION BOTTLES BY DROPPING THEM OFF TO ANY PHARMACY.**

COMMON DRUGS FOUND IN PEI



Amphetamines are known as uppers, bennies, and pep pills. They are a group of artificial stimulants, the group includes; dextroamphetamine (dexies), methamphetamine (speed, crystal, meth, crank), and smokable methamphetamine (ice). These all have similar effects. These drugs come in tablets and capsules that can only be taken orally. They can also appear as off-white crystals, chunks, and powders, which may be sniffed or injected.



Cannabis is the most widely used illegal drug in Canada. There are three forms; marijuana (the dried left of the plant), hashish and hash oil (both from plant resin). Marijuana (weed) and hashish (hash) are usually smoked in cigarettes (joints or reefers), in cigars (“blunts”), and in pipes or water pipes (bong).



Ecstasy is also called E, XTC, X, and MDM. It comes in tablets; they can be any color and may have a design on one side.



GHB was developed as a sleep aid, and it is also known as G or Liquid X. It is sold as a clear liquid or white powder.



Ketamine is a general anesthetic also known as K, Special K, and Vitamin K. It is sold as a liquid, capsule, crystal, or white powder. It is colorless, odorless, and tasteless.



Rohypnol is a tranquillizer, also known as Roofies or Roche. It is sold as a small white tablet. It is colorless, tasteless, odorless, and it easily dissolves in drinks. This is sometimes referred to as “date rape” drug because of its reported use in sexual assault.



Cocaine is also known as coke, C, snow, and flake. It is a fine white powder. It is usually snorted, or dissolved in water to be injected.



Crack is cocaine chemically changed so it can be smoked, and it is also known as “rock”.



Opioid Drugs are effective painkillers. Opioid medications include; codeine, morphine, hydromorphone, oxycodone, fentanyl, meperidene, pentazocine, and propoxyphene. These can be taken in tablet form or injected, and are highly addictive if misused or abused.



Gravol is a nonprescription drug. Some people abuse these drugs because large doses can produce a “high” and hallucinations.



Heroin is also known as smack, horse, junk and H. Heroin looks like a white or brownish powder. Heroin can be injected, snorted, or smoked.



Inhalants are also known as solvents, which are substances that people sniff. Almost any solvent can be inhaled: cooking spray, gasoline, kerosene, light fluid, antifreeze, paints, and nail polish remover.



LSD is commonly known as “acid” and is very powerful. Pure LSD the size of an aspirin is enough for 3,000 doses. It is odorless, tasteless and it is a fine white powder that is sold in capsules or tablets. It can also be diluted in liquid and then absorbed into sugar cubes, gum, candy, cookies, or even postage stamps that can be eaten or licked.



Magic Mushrooms are also known as shrooms or mushrooms. They can be eaten fresh or dried.



PCP is also known as angel dust. It can be sold as a powder, liquid or tablet and can be smoked, swallowed, or injected.



Ritalin is used to treat ADHD in children. There is concern that some adults and youth are abusing Ritalin to get high. People who abuse Ritalin usually crush it into powder to snort it or dissolve to inject it.



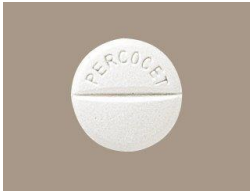
Steroids have two major effects on the body: anabolic which builds muscle and androgenic which makes you more masculine. Steroids are usually taken orally or injected.



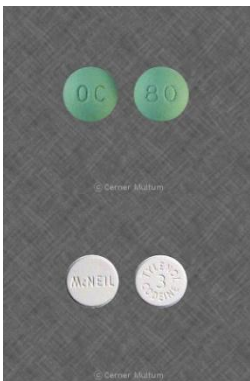
Talwin and Ritalin are known as Ts and Rs, Ts and Rits, One and Ones, Crackers, and Set. When injected together, Talwin, a painkiller, and Ritalin, it produces a high like a mixture of heroin and cocaine would.



Tranquilizers and Sleeping Pills Some tranquilizers and sleeping pills have been linked to date rape.



Percocets are also known as Perks, which are prescribed for moderate to severe pain. Oxycodone may be habit forming and should be used only by the person it was prescribed for. Never share Percocet with another person, especially someone with a history of drug abuse or addiction. Keep the medication in a place where others cannot get to it.



OxyCotin is also known as Oxy and OC on the street. It was developed in 1995 for people needing around-the-clock pain relief, so they don't have to take pills as often. When taken as prescribed, OxyContin is safe, but when it is taken in other ways, it can be very dangerous.

Tylenol NO. 3 is also known as T3. The combination of acetaminophen and codeine is used to relieve moderate to severe pain.

DRUG AWARENESS QUIZ

1. Many first try drugs out of _____, to have a good time.
2. Drug abuse and addiction is less about the amount of _____ consumed or the _____, and more to do with the _____ of drug use.
3. Addiction is a complex disorder characterized by _____.
4. Early use is a risk factor for developing more serious _____ and _____.
5. _____ is the most widely used illegal drug in Canada.
6. Ritalin is used to treat _____ in _____.
7. _____ which builds muscle and _____ which makes you more masculine.
8. LSD is commonly known as _____ and is very powerful.
9. Discovering your child uses drugs can generate _____, _____, and _____ in parents.
10. Ecstasy comes in tablets; they can be any _____ and may have a _____ on one side.
11. Do not attempt to _____, _____, _____ or _____ when talking to a loved one with a drug problem.
12. Do not _____ with the person when they are under the influence.
13. Do not feel _____ or _____ for another's behavior.

DRUG AWARENESS ANSWERS

1. Curiosity
2. Substance, frequency, consequences
3. Compulsive drug use
4. Drug abuse, addiction
5. Cannabis
6. ADHD, children
7. Anabolic, Androgenic
8. Acid
9. Fear, confusion, anger
10. Color, design
11. Punish, threaten, bribe, preach
12. Argue
13. Guilty, responsible

Information Credit

Information has been obtained by...

- © Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse 2011
- RMCP Annual Report 2011
- www.peicanada.com
- www.helpguide.org