



# ANDORRA PEDIATRICS

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## Facts On "Killer Drugs"

*By Douglas Talbott, M.D.*

Millions of children are engaged in healthy sports activities. Some will become professional athletes or the Olympic champions of tomorrow. Do you ever wonder what makes these "superstars"? What gives them the edge over everyone else?

Answer: Having a healthy mind and body and staying away from drugs!!!

The first use of alcohol and illegal drugs can only lead to serious trouble, even death! Diet pills are drugs too, and are very dangerous. Don't be tempted!

### **No. 1 Killer: Cigarettes And Smoking!**

- Smoking is the number one killer drug and is directly related to the death of almost 400,000 people every year!
- Every day, more than 3,000 teenagers start smoking.
- After age 20, every pack of cigarettes can shorten your life by 137 minutes.
- Nicotine in cigarettes clogs your blood vessels and damages your lungs.
- Chewing tobacco can give you mouth cancer.

### **No. 2 Killer: Alcohol. Wine, Beer, Cocktails, And Wine Coolers**

- One can of beer contains as much alcohol as one ounce of hard liquor.
- One can of beer may affect your reasoning, judgment, breathing, body coordination, and can cause dizziness and light-headedness.
- One beer will affect you performance in sports.
- After five beers, you may become intoxicated (drunk) and it will take three and one half days to recover your reflexes and normal brain function.

### **No. 3 Killer: The Mixture Of Marijuana, Beer And Driving!**

- As kids get older, some are tempted to try marijuana and beer.
- Do not go for it! It can be deadly! It is the deadliest combination of drug activity for youth today!
- Beer and marijuana taken together can cause a unexpected drug overdose.
- Each doubles the effect of the other.
- One marijuana joint plus one beer is like drinking 3 beers or smoking 3 and 1/2 joints.

## Other Killer Drugs

### Cocaine

- You have read about some athletes who have used cocaine.
- Some have died after only using a small amount.
- Cocaine reduces performance on the field and can be addictive.
- Once you have become "hooked" on cocaine, it becomes very difficult to stop using it.
- First time users of cocaine think their performance is greatly improved.
- Cocaine fools the brain into believing one is doing great.
- Real performance gets worse and worse every time you use it.

### Steroids

- Use of steroids for performance is a popular myth, even though they increase weight and strength.
- Ben Johnson lost his 100-meter gold Olympic medal after admitting he took steroids.
- Steroids can cause wide mood swings and aggressive behavior, acne and pimples, bone damage, decrease sex drive and result in damage to your testicles.

### Marijuana

- Marijuana is illegal. You can get convicted of a crime, suspended, or thrown out of school for using, buying or selling it.
- Marijuana is very risky to your health.
- It impairs psychomotor skills and may contribute to car accidents.
- It impairs attention and memory, so you cannot concentrate, solve problems, or retain new information.
- It impairs development of healthy social relationships, possibly alienating and isolating young people from bonding with positive role models and good friends.
- It impairs your ability to make good decisions. Studies show that a young marijuana user is more likely to use bad drugs later in life than a person who doesn't use it. Remember that one person's problems-lack of focus and an inability to make good decisions-affect other members of the family!
- Keep on the right track. Marijuana reduces your ability to do things that demand concentration and coordination, like sports, acting and studying.
- Do the right thing. Using marijuana is far from the right thing-it will hurt, if not destroy, your education, family relationships and friendships.
- Say no to peer pressure. You really can do this, even though it's hard at first. And you will be surprised that once you establish yourself as a nonuser, you will end up with followers of your own.
- You do not need it. No matter what you hear in the movies or on the radio, marijuana does not increase your cool quotient.
- It is not always what it seems. Marijuana can be laced with crack cocaine or PCP without your even knowing it.
- Talk about problems. Whatever problems you have before you smoke marijuana will still be there when your high is over. Marijuana only makes the problems worse!.
- Everybody is not doing it. Feel better knowing this? As a matter of fact, the majority of 12 to 17 year-olds have never tried marijuana.

## **Answers To The 8 Most Asked Questions About Drugs**

### **Is it safe to drive after smoking pot?**

Absolutely not! The short-term effect of pot can last for 24 hours. This means that your coordination, reaction, timing and sight are very poor. Long-term effects can cause damage to your lungs, liver, and sex organs.

### **What is the best way to resist pressure from friends to take drugs?**

Tell them that "I know what drugs have done to people I have heard about or seen on TV. Drugs are not for me. I have other interests and do not need drugs to have fun."

### **Which drug is the worst, cocaine or heroin?**

They are both deadly and highly addictive. Cocaine speeds up your heart and makes you hyperactive. Heroin slows you down and makes you kind of lazy. It can give you AIDS if you inject it with a dirty needle.

### **Why do people get drunk from beer and alcohol?**

They drink too much at one time. Everybody has a different tolerance for alcohol depending on his or her physical conditions. Alcohol dulls the reactions of the brain and the nervous system. Heavy drinking reduces sugar in the blood causing dizziness, confusion, and vomiting.

### **If steroids make you stronger, why should I not use them like other kids my age?**

Steroid (anabolic) use among youth is a growing drug abuse problem. Steroids do increase your weight and muscle strength, but they can be very harmful-especially to young people. They can cause severe acne (pimples), and damage to your heart, kidneys, and sex organs. Steroids will also cause aggressive and violent behavior.

### **Which is worse, beer, wine, or whiskey?**

All alcoholic beverages are drugs and can be dangerous, addictive, and deadly. One ounce of whiskey contains the same amount of alcohol as one glass of wine or one can of beer.

### **My sister is pregnant. Will smoking cigarettes hurt her or the baby?**

If your sister smokes daily, chances are she will become a heavy smoker after high school. There is an increased incidence of stillborn death (baby dying before birth) and growth retardation in babies born to mothers who smoked during pregnancy.

### **What happens if my child is at a party that is busted by the police?**

In Pennsylvania, the police have the right to book your child. If convicted, your child will lose their driving license for a minimum of 6 months. If your child does not have a license yet, he/she will not be permitted to obtain one for a minimum of 6 months. The above may occur even if your child was not drinking.

Parents may receive a call from the police requesting the parent's presence at the home of a party that was busted. The police may require parent's presence before checking for alcohol. Please make your child aware of this law.

*By Charles R. Schuster, Ph.D., the director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NMA) in Washington, D.C.*

## **Saying No To Drugs Is Not Easy, So Here's Some Help**

**Question:** I am in sixth grade. All my friends tease me because I have not smoked marijuana or tried other drugs. They say it is the best way to cool off from all the stuff we have to do at school, like practices. They say it is not bad for you, and even that most of our parents did it, so why not. I am confused and I just do not think I want to do it, but I want to keep my friends, too.

**Answer:** Nothing is tougher than ear listening to that "still, small voice inside" when outside voices roar with very different messages. It is very difficult to resist the pressure friends put on us. We all want to be accepted, especially by our friends.

One thought to consider is that your friends might be looking for a different kind of leader, one who resists such pressures.

The bold truth is, we all want to be happy. We all want to be popular. We all want to learn skills to help us be successful adults.

Marijuana and other drugs are not the ticket to success. Instead, talk with adults, family members, and others you can trust. They will help.

**Even though perfection may be impossible to achieve...  
Never stop reaching for it.**

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