

# Tips For Teens - Drug Prevention Information



# TIPS for TEENS

## TOBACCO USE

### THE TRUTH ABOUT TOBACCO USE

**SLANG FOR CIGARETTES:**  
**SMOKES/CIGS/BUTTS**

**SLANG FOR SMOKELESS TOBACCO:**  
**CHEW/DIP/SPIT TOBACCO/SNUFF**

## GET THE FACTS

**TOBACCO USE DAMAGES YOUR HEALTH.** Smoking, which is the most common cause of lung cancer, is also a leading cause of cancer of the mouth, throat, bladder, pancreas, and kidneys.<sup>1</sup>

**TOBACCO USE AFFECTS YOUR BODY'S DEVELOPMENT.** Smoking—including vaping, cigars, and hookah use—is particularly harmful for teens because your body is still growing and changing. Evidence shows that smoking has an impact on nearly every organ in a person's body.<sup>2</sup>

**TOBACCO CONTAINS ADDICTIVE INGREDIENTS.** Tobacco is a plant grown for its leaves, which are dried and fermented to put in tobacco products. It contains nicotine, an ingredient that can lead to addiction. The younger you are when you begin to smoke, the more likely you are to become addicted to nicotine.<sup>3</sup> According to the 2014 *Surgeon General's Report*, nearly 9 out of 10 adult smokers first tried smoking before age 18.<sup>4</sup>

**TOBACCO USE CAN KILL YOU.** Cigarette smoking is responsible for about 480,000 deaths per year in the U.S.<sup>5</sup> Worldwide, tobacco smoking and secondhand smoke combined cause nearly 7 million deaths per year.<sup>6</sup>

## ? Q&A

**Q. ISN'T SMOKING COOL?**

**A.** Advertisements often portray smoking as glamorous and sophisticated, but these ads are created to sell products and use youth-oriented themes.

**Q. IS SMOKELESS TOBACCO SAFE?**

**A. NO.** No form of smokeless tobacco is safe. It contains at least 30 chemicals that are known to cause cancer.<sup>7</sup>

**Q. DO MOST TEENS SMOKE?**

**A. NO.** Although the majority of teens don't smoke,<sup>8</sup> it's important to remember that cigarette use among teens is still harmful and should be prevented from becoming more popular.

**Q. DOESN'T SMOKING HELP YOU RELAX?**

**A. NO.** Use strategies such as exercise or talking to your friends to help calm your nerves.<sup>9</sup>

### THE BOTTOM LINE:

Tobacco use is dangerous and can be deadly. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust if you have questions.

### LEARN MORE:

Get the latest information on how drugs affect the brain and body at [teens.drugabuse.gov](https://teens.drugabuse.gov).

### TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TOBACCO, CONTACT:

**SAMHSA**

**1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)**

(English and Español)

**TTY 1-800-487-4889**

**[www.samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov)**

**[store.samhsa.gov](https://store.samhsa.gov)**



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Services Administration

# BEFORE YOU RISK IT!

- 1 KNOW THE LAW.** It is illegal for anyone under 18 to buy cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, or tobacco-related products. As of September 2018, six states and at least 350 localities have raised the minimum age to 21.
- 2 STAY INFORMED.** Young people often underestimate the addictiveness of nicotine and the effect of tobacco use on their health. This is why quitting can be difficult. A recent report revealed that about 45 percent of high school cigarette smokers tried to stop smoking in the past 12 months.<sup>10</sup>
- 3 BE AWARE.** It can be hard to play sports if you use tobacco. Smoking causes diseases that result in shortness of breath and dizziness.<sup>11</sup>
- 4 THINK OF OTHERS.** More than 41,000 nonsmokers die every year due to secondhand smoke exposure.<sup>12</sup> Secondhand smoke causes nearly 34,000 premature deaths from heart disease and more than 8,000 deaths from stroke each year in the United States among nonsmokers.<sup>13</sup>
- 5 GET THE FACTS.** Each day, about 1,700 people between the ages of 12 and 17 start smoking.<sup>14</sup> Many will suffer long-term health consequences.<sup>15</sup>

## MORE INFORMATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR FOR RESOURCES USED IN THIS

### "TIPS for TEENS,"

visit [store.samhsa.gov](http://store.samhsa.gov) or call  
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## KNOW THE SIGNS

How can you tell if a friend is using tobacco? Symptoms of tobacco use may include:<sup>16</sup>

- **Coughing**
- **Bad breath**
- **Smelly hair and clothes**
- **Yellow-stained teeth and fingers**
- **Frequent colds**
- **Bleeding gums (smokeless tobacco)**
- **Frequent mouth sores (smokeless tobacco)**



## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP SOMEONE WHO IS USING TOBACCO?

### BE A FRIEND. SAVE A LIFE.

Encourage your friend to stop using or seek help from a parent, teacher, or other caring adult.

For 24/7 free and confidential information and treatment referrals in English and Español, call SAMHSA's National Helpline at:

**1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)**  
or visit the SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator at:  
[findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

<sup>1</sup> National Cancer Institute. (2017). Harms of Cigarette Smoking and Health Benefits of Quitting. Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/tobacco/cessation-fact-sheet>

<sup>2,4,5,12,13,15</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2014). *The health consequences of smoking: 50 years of progress. A report of the surgeon general*. Retrieved from <https://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/50-years-of-progress/full-report.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> American Cancer Society. (2015). Why People Start Smoking and Why It's Hard to Stop. Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/tobacco-and-cancer/why-people-start-using-tobacco.html>

<sup>6</sup> World Health Organization. (2011). WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic. Retrieved from [http://www.who.int/tobacco/global\\_report/2011/en/](http://www.who.int/tobacco/global_report/2011/en/)

<sup>7</sup> American Cancer Society. (2015). Health Risks of Smokeless Tobacco. Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/tobacco-and-cancer/smokeless-tobacco.html>

<sup>8,14</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2018). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (HHS Publication No. SMA 18-5068, NSDUH Series H-53). Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/cbhsq-reports/NSDUHFFR2017/NSDUHFFR2017pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Smokefree.gov. (2017). Stress and Smoking. Retrieved from <https://smokefree.gov/challenges-when-quit/stress-mood/stress-smoking>

<sup>10</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2015. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 66(SS-6):1-174. Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/2015/ss6506\\_updated.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/2015/ss6506_updated.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> American Lung Association. (2016). Shortness of Breath Symptoms, Causes and Risk Factors. Retrieved from <http://www.lung.org/lung-health-and-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/shortness-of-breath/shortness-breath-symptoms-risks.html>

<sup>16</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2009). What You(th) Should Know About Tobacco. Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/youth/information-sheet/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/youth/information-sheet/index.htm)

# TIPS for TEENS

## E-CIGARETTES

### THE TRUTH ABOUT E-CIGARETTES



**SLANG: E-CIGS/E-HOOKAHS/  
VAPE PENS/VAPES/  
TANK SYSTEMS/MODS**

## GET THE FACTS

#### **E-CIGARETTES ARE A WAY TO INHALE NICOTINE AND MARIJUANA.**

The aerosol emitted can also contain other harmful substances, including heavy metals such as lead, volatile organic compounds, and cancer-causing agents.<sup>1</sup>

**E-CIGARETTES COME IN MANY SHAPES AND SIZES.** Some resemble pens, USB sticks, and other everyday items. Larger devices such as tank systems, or “mods,” do not resemble other tobacco products.

**E-CIGARETTE USE HARMS THE DEVELOPING BRAIN.** E-cigarettes typically deliver nicotine, a harmful drug to the youth brain and body. Teens are particularly vulnerable to the effects of nicotine since the brain is still developing during these years and through young adulthood.<sup>2</sup> People who use marijuana in an e-cigarette may experience the same side effects as they would if they smoked marijuana—all of which can be heightened if the person uses marijuana with another substance, such as alcohol.<sup>3</sup>

## ? Q&A

**Q. AREN'T E-CIGARETTES SAFER THAN SMOKING CIGARETTES OR USING SMOKELESS TOBACCO?**

**A.** Regular cigarettes are extraordinarily dangerous, killing half of all people who smoke long-term. However, youth use of tobacco products in any form is unsafe, including e-cigarettes. More research is needed to fully understand their impact on health.

**Q. CAN'T E-CIGARETTES HELP ME QUIT SMOKING REGULAR CIGARETTES?**

**A.** E-cigarettes may help non-pregnant adult smokers if used as a complete substitute for all cigarettes. However, there is no conclusive evidence that using e-cigarettes helps someone quit smoking for good.<sup>4</sup> The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved seven “quit aids” for quitting smoking, but e-cigarettes are not currently one of them.

**Q. AREN'T E-CIGARETTES USED MORE OFTEN BY ADULTS, NOT YOUTH?**

**A.** Youth are more likely than adults to use e-cigarettes. In 2018, more than 3.6 million U.S. middle and high school students used e-cigarettes in the past 30 days, including 4.9 percent of middle school students and 20.8 percent of high school students.<sup>5</sup>

#### **THE BOTTOM LINE:**

E-cigarettes are unsafe for young people. Whether a young person uses nicotine or marijuana in an e-cigarette, there can be dangerous health consequences.

#### **LEARN MORE:**

Get the latest information on how drugs affect the brain and body at [teens.drugabuse.gov](https://teens.drugabuse.gov).

#### **TO LEARN MORE ABOUT E-CIGARETTES, CONTACT:**

**SAMHSA**

**1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)**

(English and Español)

**TTY 1-800-487-4889**

**[www.samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov)**

**[store.samhsa.gov](https://store.samhsa.gov)**



# **SAMHSA**

Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration



# BEFORE YOU RISK IT!

1

**KNOW THE LAW.** People ages 18 and older are allowed to buy e-cigarettes in most states—other states have an age requirement of 19 or 21. However, just because e-cigarettes are legal for adults to purchase doesn't mean they are safe, especially for young people.<sup>6</sup>

2

**KNOW THE RISKS.** Nicotine is highly addictive and can harm the developing adolescent brain. The nicotine in e-cigarettes and other tobacco products can also prime young brains for addiction to other drugs, such as cocaine and methamphetamine.<sup>7</sup>

3

**LOOK AROUND YOU.** E-cigarettes are the most commonly used tobacco product among youth. However, four out of five U.S. students overestimate peer e-cigarette use. If you've never smoked or used other tobacco products or e-cigarettes, don't start.<sup>8</sup>



## MORE INFORMATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR FOR RESOURCES USED IN THIS

# "TIPS for TEENS,"

visit [store.samhsa.gov](http://store.samhsa.gov) or call  
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## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP SOMEONE WHO IS USING E-CIGARETTES?

### BE A FRIEND.

Encourage your friend to stop using or seek help from a parent, teacher, or other caring adult.

For 24/7 free and confidential information and referrals in English and Spanish, call SAMHSA's National Helpline at:

1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)

or visit the SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator at:  
[findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2018). Electronic cigarettes. *Smoking & Tobacco Use*. Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/e-cigarettes/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/index.htm)

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). (2016). *E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health. Retrieved from [https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/2016\\_SGR\\_Full\\_Report\\_508.pdf](https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/2016_SGR_Full_Report_508.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> NIDA. (2017). *Marijuana: Facts for Teens*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/marijuana-facts-teens/want-to-know-more-some-faqs-about-marijuana>

<sup>4</sup> NIDA. (2018). Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes). Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/electronic-cigarettes-e-cigarettes>

<sup>5</sup> Cullen, K. A., Ambrose, B. K., Gentzke, A. S., Apelberg, B. J., Jamal, A., & King, B. A. (2018). Notes from the field: Use of electronic cigarettes and any tobacco product among middle and high school students — United States, 2011–2018. *Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report*, 67(45):1276–77.

<sup>6</sup> CDC (2018). STATE System Tobacco 21 fact sheet. Retrieved from <https://chronicdata.cdc.gov/download/873a-if74/application%2Fpdf>

<sup>7</sup> HHS. (2016). Fact sheet. *E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Retrieved from [https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/2016\\_SGR\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_508.pdf](https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/2016_SGR_Fact_Sheet_508.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Agaku, I. T., Odani, S., Homa, D., Armour, B., & Glover-Kudon, R. (2018). Discordance between perceived and actual tobacco product use prevalence among US youth: A comparative analysis of electronic and regular cigarettes. *Tobacco Control*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29674512>

# TIPS for TEENS

## MARIJUANA



### THE TRUTH ABOUT MARIJUANA

**SLANG:** WEED/POT/GRASS/ REEFER/  
GANJA/MARY JANE/BLUNT/JOINT/TREES

## GET THE FACTS

**MARIJUANA AFFECTS YOUR BRAIN.** Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the chemical responsible for most of marijuana's psychological effects, affects brain cells throughout the brain, including cells in circuits related to learning and memory, coordination, and addiction.<sup>1</sup>

**MARIJUANA AFFECTS YOUR SELF-CONTROL.** Marijuana can seriously affect your sense of time and your coordination, impacting things like driving.

**MARIJUANA AFFECTS YOUR LUNGS.** Marijuana smoke deposits four times more tar in the lungs and contains 50 percent to 70 percent more cancer-causing substances than tobacco smoke does.<sup>2</sup>

**MARIJUANA USE IS NEGATIVELY LINKED WITH OTHER ASPECTS OF YOUR HEALTH.** Chronic marijuana use has been linked with depression, anxiety, and an increased risk of schizophrenia in some cases.<sup>3</sup>

**MARIJUANA IS NOT ALWAYS WHAT IT SEEMS.** Marijuana can be laced with substances without your knowledge.<sup>4</sup> "Blunts"—hollowed-out cigars filled with marijuana—sometimes contain crack cocaine.

**MARIJUANA CAN BE ADDICTIVE.** Not everyone who uses marijuana becomes addicted, but some users develop signs of dependence.

## ? Q&A

**Q. ISN'T SMOKING MARIJUANA LESS DANGEROUS THAN SMOKING CIGARETTES?**

**A. NO.** Both marijuana and cigarette smoke can be harmful. More research is needed to fully understand the connection between marijuana and long-term effects such as cancer.<sup>5</sup>

**Q. CAN PEOPLE BECOME ADDICTED TO MARIJUANA?**

**A. YES.** Marijuana use can lead to a marijuana use disorder, which takes the form of addiction in severe cases.<sup>6</sup>

**Q. WHAT ARE THE OTHER RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH MARIJUANA USE?**

**A.** In addition to the physical and mental risks associated with marijuana use, people who use marijuana have also reported less academic and career success, as well as lower life satisfaction and more relationship problems.<sup>7</sup>

### THE BOTTOM LINE:

Marijuana affects the development of teen brains. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust if you have questions.

### LEARN MORE:

Get the latest information on how drugs affect the brain and body at [teens.drugabuse.gov](https://teens.drugabuse.gov).

### TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MARIJUANA, CONTACT: SAMHSA

1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)  
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# BEFORE YOU RISK IT!

- 1 KNOW THE LAW.** Marijuana is a Schedule I drug.<sup>8</sup> According to federal law, it is illegal to buy or sell marijuana.
- 2 GET THE FACTS.** Using marijuana can cause memory problems and mood changes, and long-term use may lower intelligence.<sup>9,10</sup>
- 3 STAY INFORMED.** Research suggest that teens usually try alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana before other drugs, though most people who use marijuana do not use other drugs.<sup>11</sup>
- 4 KNOW THE RISKS.** Marijuana affects your coordination and reaction time, raising your risk of injury or death from car crashes and other accidents. Co-use of alcohol or other drugs heightens crash risks.<sup>12</sup>
- 5 LOOK AROUND YOU.** Most teens aren't smoking marijuana. In fact, only 6.5 percent of youth ages 12 to 17 said that they had smoked marijuana in the past month.<sup>13</sup>



# KNOW THE SIGNS

How can you tell if a friend is using marijuana? Symptoms of marijuana use may include:<sup>14</sup>

- **Poor physical coordination**
- **Red eyes**
- **Unusual smell on clothing**
- **Problems with short-term memory**
- **Anxiety**



# WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP SOMEONE WHO IS USING MARIJUANA?

## BE A FRIEND. SAVE A LIFE.

Encourage your friend to stop using or seek help from a parent, teacher, or other caring adult.

**For 24/7 free and confidential information and treatment referrals in English and Español, call SAMHSA's National Helpline at:**

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or visit the SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator at:  
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# MORE INFORMATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR FOR RESOURCES USED IN THIS

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<sup>1,2,3,5,12</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). Research Reports: Marijuana. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/letter-director>

<sup>4</sup> Gilbert, C. R., Baram, M., & Cavarocchi, N. C. (2013). Smoking wet: Respiratory failure related to smoking tainted marijuana cigarettes. *Texas Heart Institute Journal*, 40(1): 64-67.

<sup>6</sup> Medical News Today. (2017). Marijuana 'may be worse than cigarettes for cardiovascular health'. Retrieved from <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/318854.php>

<sup>7</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). Marijuana. *Drug Facts*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana>

<sup>8</sup> Drug Enforcement Administration. (2018). Drug Scheduling. Retrieved from <https://www.dea.gov/druginfo/ds.shtml>

<sup>9</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017). Marijuana and Public Health. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/health-effects.html>

<sup>10</sup> Meier, M. H., Caspi, A., Ambler, A., Harrington, H., Houts, R., Keefe, R. S. E., McDonald, K., Ward, A., Poulton, R., & Moffitt, T. E. (2012). Persistent cannabis users show neuropsychological decline from childhood to midlife. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 109(40), E2657-E2664. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3479587/>

<sup>11</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2015). Marijuana: Facts for Teens. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/marijuana-facts-teens/want-to-know-more-some-faqs-about-marijuana>

<sup>13</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2018). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (HHS Publication No. SMA 18-5068, NSDUH Series H-53). Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/cbhsq-reports/NSDUHFFR2017/NSDUHFFR2017.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> American Addiction Centers. (2018). What Are the Signs That Someone Is High? Retrieved from <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/marijuana-rehab/how-to-tell-if-someone-is-high/>

# TIPS for TEENS

## SEDATIVES

### THE TRUTH ABOUT SEDATIVES

**SLANG: BENZOS/PHENNIES/  
RED BIRDS/REDS/YELLOW  
JACKETS/ YELLOWS/DOWNERS/  
SLEEPING PILLS/TRANKS<sup>1</sup>**

## GET THE FACTS

**SEDATIVES CAN BE ADDICTIVE.** Although sedatives are often used to treat insomnia, they can be harmful when taken in ways other than as prescribed by a doctor, such as to self-medicate for depression or anxiety. Long-term use may result in needing larger doses to achieve the desired sedation and calming effects, which can lead to addiction.<sup>2</sup> In some cases it is possible to misjudge how much more is needed, leading to overdose.

**SEDATIVES CAN HARM YOUR BODY.** It's possible to overdose on sedatives. When someone overdoses on sedatives, their breathing often slows or stops, which decreases the amount of oxygen that reaches the brain. This can cause short- and long-term effects on the nervous system, including coma, permanent brain damage, and even death.<sup>3</sup>

**SEDATIVES CAN BE DEADLY.** When mixed with alcohol, sedatives slow heart rate and breathing even more, which can lead to death.<sup>4</sup> Alcohol and sedatives work synergistically, meaning their efforts are much more potent than when they are used separately.

## ? Q&A

**Q. IF I HAVE BEEN TAKING SEDATIVES EVERY DAY FOR A FEW WEEKS OR LONGER, IS IT SAFE TO STOP TAKING SEDATIVES WHENEVER I WANT?**

**A. NO.** Talk to your doctor. Withdrawal symptoms can be life-threatening and include seizures, increased heart rate, blood pressure, and temperature, as well as visual hallucinations.<sup>5</sup>

**Q. AREN'T SEDATIVES LESS DANGEROUS THAN OTHER DRUGS?**

**A. NO.** In fact, sedative overdoses have increased. A recent study showed that the most commonly prescribed sedatives called benzodiazepines were responsible for nearly 30 percent of deaths from medications.<sup>6</sup>

**Q. ARE SEDATIVES LESS HARMFUL THAN DRINKING?**

**A. NO.** The effects of sedatives can be harmful and are similar to alcohol intoxication. Symptoms include impaired attention and judgment, inappropriate behavior, decreased reflexes, and lack of balance when walking.<sup>7</sup>

### THE BOTTOM LINE:

Even when used as directed, sedatives carry risk. But when misused, sedatives are more dangerous and can even be deadly. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust if you have questions.

### LEARN MORE:

Get the latest information on how drugs affect the brain and body at [teens.drugabuse.gov](https://teens.drugabuse.gov).

### TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SEDATIVES, CONTACT:

**SAMHSA**  
1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) (English and Español)

TTY 1-800-487-4889

[www.samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov)  
[store.samhsa.gov](https://store.samhsa.gov)



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# BEFORE YOU RISK IT!

1

**KNOW THE LAW.** It is illegal to use sedatives without a valid prescription, or to give or sell them to others.<sup>8</sup>

2

**KNOW THE RISKS.** Even if you have a prescription for sedatives, it is unsafe to use them with other depressants, especially alcohol. Even taking them with some over-the-counter cold and allergy medications could heighten their effects and have deadly consequences.<sup>9</sup>

3

**LOOK AROUND YOU.** Even if you think your peers are effectively using sedatives to cope with depression or anxiety, the truth is that a very small number of teens are misusing the substances in this way. In 2018, approximately 0.3 percent of youth ages 12 to 17 misused prescription sedatives in the past year.<sup>10</sup>



## MORE INFORMATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR FOR RESOURCES USED IN THIS

**"TIPS for TEENS,"**

visit [store.samhsa.gov](http://store.samhsa.gov) or call  
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## KNOW THE SIGNS

How can you tell if a friend is using sedatives? Potential side effects and symptoms include:<sup>11</sup>

- **Drowsiness**
- **Slurred speech**
- **Poor concentration**
- **Confusion**
- **Dizziness**
- **Problems with movement and memory**
- **Slowed breathing**



## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP SOMEONE WHO IS MISUSING SEDATIVES?

### BE A FRIEND. SAVE A LIFE.

Encourage your friend to stop using or seek help from a parent, teacher, or other caring adult.

For 24/7 free and confidential information and treatment referrals in English and Spanish, call SAMHSA's National Helpline at:

**1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)**

or visit the SAMHSA Treatment Services Locator at [findtreatment.gov](http://findtreatment.gov)

<sup>1</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). (2019). Central Nervous System Depressants. *Commonly Abused Drug Charts*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/commonly-abused-drugs-charts#CNSdepressants>

<sup>2,3</sup> NIDA. (2018). Prescription CNS Depressants. *Drug Facts*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/prescription-cns-depressants>

<sup>4</sup> NIDA. (2019). Central Nervous System Depressants. *Commonly Abused Drug Charts*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/commonly-abused-drugs-charts>

<sup>5</sup> NIDA. (2018). Prescription CNS Depressants. *Drug Facts*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/prescription-cns-depressants>

<sup>6,7</sup> Weaver, M. F. (2015). Prescription sedative misuse and abuse. *The Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine*, 88(3), 247-256.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. (2013). Prescription Drugs Fast Facts. Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gov/archive/ndic/pubs5/5140/5140p.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> NIDA. (2019). Central Nervous System Depressants. *Commonly Abused Drug Charts*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/commonly-abused-drugs-charts>

<sup>10</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2019). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed tables*. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/2018-nsduh-detailed-tables>

<sup>11</sup> NIDA. (2019). Central Nervous System Depressants. *Commonly Abused Drug Charts*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/commonly-abused-drugs-charts>

# TIPS for TEENS

## HIV

### THE TRUTH ABOUT HIV

**SLANG: THE VIRUS/  
HI-FIVE/THE BUG/  
THE DEADLIEST CATCH**

# GET THE FACTS

**HIV AFFECTS YOUR BODY.** The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) weakens your body's immune system, making it less able to fight against diseases and infections. The virus is spread through contact with certain bodily fluids, including blood, semen, pre-seminal fluid, rectal fluids, vaginal fluids, and breast milk from a person with HIV.<sup>1</sup> The virus can also be spread through high-risk drug use such as injecting drugs and sharing equipment used with drug injection.

**HIV AFFECTS YOUTH—THOUGH MANY YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T KNOW THEY HAVE HIV.** In 2017, the number of youth ages 13 to 24 who received an HIV diagnosis reached 8,164.<sup>2</sup> However, this age group is the least likely to know their HIV status: In 2015, an estimated 51 percent of those living with HIV were unaware they had been infected.<sup>3</sup>

**HIV IS PREVENTABLE.** Abstaining from sex, using protection during sex, and avoiding drug use can help prevent HIV infection. There also are HIV prevention medicines such as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for people who don't have HIV but who are at high risk of becoming infected. Among people who inject drugs, PrEP reduces their risk of HIV infection by more than 70 percent when taken daily.<sup>4</sup>

**HIV IS TREATABLE.** Although there is currently no cure for HIV, with proper treatment, a person can live a long and otherwise healthy life with HIV and prevent it from progressing to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), the most advanced stage of HIV infection. Taking HIV antiretroviral therapy (ART) as prescribed can lower a person's HIV levels to become undetectable, allowing them to live longer, healthier lives while also reducing their risk of transmitting HIV.<sup>5</sup>

## ? Q&A

**Q. CAN I GET HIV FROM TOUCHING A PERSON OR AN OBJECT?**

**A. NO.** HIV isn't an airborne virus, and you can't get HIV from shaking hands or hugging a person who is infected. You also can't get it from touching objects used by a person with HIV.<sup>6</sup>

**Q. CAN I GET HIV IF I USE DRUGS?**

**A.** Injection drug use is a leading cause of transmission.<sup>7</sup> Also, alcohol and drugs can affect your judgment, leading you to engage in risky behavior such as having unprotected sex. The best way to reduce your risk of HIV is to avoid using drugs and other substances.<sup>8</sup>

**Q. WHO IS AT THE HIGHEST RISK FOR GETTING HIV?**

**A.** While those who use IV drugs or have unprotected sex are at greater risk, HIV can affect anyone regardless of sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, gender, or age.<sup>9</sup>

### THE BOTTOM LINE:

HIV is harmful but preventable. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust if you have questions.

### LEARN MORE:

Get the latest on how HIV affects the brain and body at [hiv.gov](http://hiv.gov).

### TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HIV, CONTACT:

**SAMHSA**

**1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)**

(English and Español)

**TTY 1-800-487-4889**

**[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)**

**[store.samhsa.gov](http://store.samhsa.gov)**



**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration



# BEFORE YOU RISK IT!

1

**KNOW THE RISKS.** Because the effects of drugs and alcohol use can result in poor judgment, their use can lead to risky behaviors that increase the chances of getting or transmitting an HIV infection, such as unprotected sex or sharing needles when injecting drugs. In 2017, 2,389 people who inject drugs were diagnosed with HIV.<sup>10</sup>

2

**STAY INFORMED.** Interactions between HIV medicines and illegal drugs can increase the risk of harmful side effects. In addition, drug and alcohol use can further harm a person with HIV by weakening their immune system and damaging their liver.<sup>11</sup>

3

**LOOK AROUND YOU.** In 2017, 38,739 people were diagnosed with HIV in the U.S., and an estimated 1.1 million people were living with HIV at the end of 2015. Of those people, about 1 in 7 did not know they were infected.<sup>12</sup>



## FIND HELP AND TREATMENT

For 24/7 free and confidential information and treatment referrals in English and Spanish, call SAMHSA's National Helpline at:

**1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)**

or visit the SAMHSA Treatment Services Locator at [findtreatment.gov](http://findtreatment.gov)

You also can visit the HIV Testing Sites & Care Services Locator at [hiv.gov/locator](http://hiv.gov/locator) to search for health centers and other service providers near you.

<sup>1</sup> National Institutes of Health (NIH). (2018). HIV/AIDS: The Basics. *AIDSinfo*. Retrieved from <https://aidsinfo.nih.gov/understanding-hiv-aids/fact-sheets/19/45/hiv-aids-the-basics>

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2019). HIV in the United States and Dependent Areas. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/statistics/overview/cdc-hiv-us-ataglance.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> HIV.gov. (2019). U.S. Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/data-and-trends/statistics>

<sup>4</sup> CDC. (2019). PrEP. *HIV Basics*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/prep.html>

<sup>5</sup> CDC. (2018). HIV Treatment. *HIV Basics*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/livingwithhiv/treatment.html>

<sup>6</sup> CDC. (2018). HIV Transmission. *HIV Basics*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/transmission.html>

<sup>7</sup> CDC. (2018). Diagnoses of HIV Infection in the United States and Dependent Areas, 2017. *HIV Surveillance Report*, 29. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/library/reports/surveillance/cdc-hiv-surveillance-report-2017-vol-29.pdf>

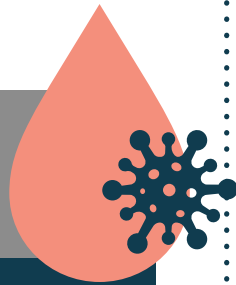
<sup>8</sup> CDC. (2018). HIV Transmission. *HIV Basics*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/transmission.html>

<sup>9</sup> HIV.gov. (2017). Who Is at Risk for HIV? Retrieved from <https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/about-hiv-and-aids/who-is-at-risk-for-hiv>

<sup>10</sup> HIV.gov. (2019). U.S. Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/data-and-trends/statistics>

<sup>11</sup> NIH. (2018). HIV and Drug and Alcohol Users. *AIDSinfo*. Retrieved from <https://aidsinfo.nih.gov/understanding-hiv-aids/fact-sheets/25/84/hiv-and-drug-and-alcohol-users>

<sup>12</sup> HIV.gov. (2019). U.S. Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/data-and-trends/statistics>



## MORE INFORMATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR FOR RESOURCES USED IN THIS

**"TIPS for TEENS,"**

visit [store.samhsa.gov](http://store.samhsa.gov) or call

**1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)**

(English and Español).

PEP NO. 20-03-03-002 REVISED 2020

**SAMHSA**

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



# TIPS for TEENS

## HALLUCINOGENS



### THE TRUTH ABOUT HALLUCINOGENS

**SLANG:** LSD: acid, yellow sunshine, tab, blotter, yellow submarine, tripping; MUSHROOMS/PSILOCYBIN: little smoke, magic mushrooms; PEYOTE: cactus, buttons; PCP: angel dust, peace pill, dippers, greens<sup>1</sup>

## GET THE FACTS

**HALLUCINOGENS HAVE A RANGE OF NEGATIVE EFFECTS.** Hallucinogens are a group of drugs that include those listed above, as well as ayahuasca, ketamine, and salvia. They may alter a person's awareness of his or her surroundings, thoughts, and feelings, or they might cause someone to see or feel things that aren't real.<sup>2</sup>

**HALLUCINOGENS CAN AFFECT YOUR BRAIN LONG-TERM.** Hallucinogens can affect the brain chemical serotonin—which regulates things such as sleep, muscle control, and mood—and the chemical glutamate—which regulates pain perception, learning, and memory, among other areas.<sup>3</sup> Because of its impact on the brain, hallucinogens can cause lasting consequences for a user, such as psychosis or mental disorders.<sup>4</sup>

**HALLUCINOGENS CAN BE UNPREDICTABLE.** A person can feel the effects of using hallucinogens as soon as 20 minutes after using them, but the effects can last as long as 12 hours.<sup>5</sup>

**HALLUCINOGENS CAN BE ADDICTIVE.** People can develop an addiction to or tolerance of hallucinogens. If a person uses LSD on a regular basis, for example, they would need to take higher doses over time to feel its effects, which can lead to dangerous outcomes, such as risky behavior potentially resulting in injury and death due to an altered perception of reality.<sup>6</sup>

## ? Q&A

**Q. IF DEXTROMETHORPHAN (DXM) IS USED IN THE COUGH MEDICINES I CAN BUY AT A PHARMACY, DOESN'T THAT MEAN IT'S SAFE TO USE ON ITS OWN TOO?**

**A. NO.** When a substance such as DXM is used in an over-the-counter medicine, the medicine is only safe when taken according to the directions. DXM toxic effects include hallucinations, distorted perceptions, impaired muscle movement, impaired memory, and possibly seizures with some cough medications.<sup>7</sup> Also, your heart and lung functions can slow or even stop, potentially causing an overdose death. Misusing these medications with alcohol is even more dangerous as they work more strongly together.<sup>8</sup>

**Q. IF SALVIA ISN'T ILLEGAL, DOESN'T THAT MEAN I'M ALLOWED TO USE IT?**

**A. NO.** Even though there aren't federal laws prohibiting the use of salvia, it is illegal in 29 states and several countries. Research shows that the effects of salvia can include hallucinations, vision changes, and being unable to tell what's real and what isn't.<sup>9</sup>

**Q. PEYOTE COMES FROM A CACTUS. IF IT'S FROM A PLANT, IT MUST BE SAFE, RIGHT?**

**A. NO.** Peyote has side effects including hallucinations, altered body image, severe vomiting, headaches, muscle weakness, and impaired motor coordination.<sup>10</sup>

### THE BOTTOM LINE:

Hallucinogens are dangerous and can be deadly. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust if you have questions.

### LEARN MORE:

Get the latest information on how drugs affect the brain and body at [teens.drugabuse.gov](https://teens.drugabuse.gov).

### TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HALLUCINOGENS, CONTACT:

**SAMHSA**

1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) (English and Español)

TTY 1-800-487-4889

[www.samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov) | [store.samhsa.gov](https://store.samhsa.gov)



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# BEFORE YOU RISK IT!

1

**KNOW THE LAW.** Hallucinogens are illegal for use by people of any age, and law enforcement officials are trained to recognize when someone may have used hallucinogens.<sup>11</sup>

2

**KNOW THE RISKS.** While there are different risks depending on the hallucinogen used, they all have dangerous potential outcomes. If a person takes a high dose of PCP, they could have a seizure, go into a coma, or even die.

3

**LOOK AROUND YOU.** Even if you think your peers are using hallucinogens, the truth is that a very small number of teens use hallucinogens. The latest research shows that 1.5 percent of young people between ages 12 and 17 had used hallucinogens in the past year in 2018.<sup>12</sup>



## MORE INFORMATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR FOR RESOURCES USED IN THIS

### "TIPS for TEENS,"

visit [store.samhsa.gov](http://store.samhsa.gov) or call  
1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)  
(English and Español).

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## KNOW THE SIGNS

How can you tell if a friend is using hallucinogens? Potential side effects and symptoms include:<sup>13</sup>

- **Hallucinations**
- **Nausea/vomiting**
- **Loss of appetite**
- **Mixed senses (e.g., "seeing" sounds or "hearing" colors)**
- **Excessive sweating**
- **Paranoia**
- **Weight loss**
- **Memory loss**
- **Anxiety**
- **Depression and suicidal thoughts**
- **Persistent psychosis/hallucinations**
- **Speech problems**
- **Social withdrawal and disorganization**



## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP SOMEONE WHO IS USING HALLUCINOGENS?

### BE A FRIEND. SAVE A LIFE.

Encourage your friend to stop using or seek help from a parent, teacher, or other caring adult.

For 24/7 free and confidential information and treatment referrals in English and Spanish, call SAMHSA's National Helpline at:

1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)

or visit the SAMHSA Treatment Services Locator at: [findtreatment.gov](http://findtreatment.gov)

<sup>1,2,3</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). (2016). Hallucinogens. *Drug Facts*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/hallucinogens>

<sup>4</sup> Office of National Drug Control Policy. (n.d.). Drug facts: Hallucinogens. *Above the Influence*. Retrieved from <https://abovetheinfluence.com/drugs/hallucinogens/#facts>

<sup>5,6</sup> NIDA. (2016). Hallucinogens. *Drug Facts*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/hallucinogens>

<sup>7</sup> National Institutes of Health (NIH), U.S. National Library of Medicine, National Center for Biotechnology Information. Compound Summary: Dexamethasone. *PubChem Database*. Retrieved from <https://pubchem.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/compound/5743>

<sup>8</sup> NIDA. (2017). Cough and cold medicine (DXM and codeine syrup). *NIDA for Teens*. Retrieved from <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/cough-and-cold-medicine-dxm-and-codeine-syrup>

<sup>9</sup> NIDA. (2017). Salvia. *NIDA for Teens*. Retrieved from <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/salvia>

<sup>10,11</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration. (2017). *Drugs of abuse: A DEA resource guide*. Retrieved from [https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/sites/getsmartaboutdrugs.com/files/publications/DoA\\_2017Ed\\_Updated\\_6.16.17.pdf#page=70](https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/sites/getsmartaboutdrugs.com/files/publications/DoA_2017Ed_Updated_6.16.17.pdf#page=70)

<sup>12</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2019). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (HHS Publication No. PEP19-5068, NSDUH Series H-54). Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/2018-nsduh-annual-national-report>

<sup>13</sup> NIDA. (2016). Hallucinogens. *Drug Facts*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/hallucinogens>



# TIPS for TEENS

## OPIOIDS

### THE TRUTH ABOUT OPIOIDS

**SLANG: O.C./OXY/PERCS/VIKE/M/MONKEY/  
WHITE STUFF/LEAN/SCHOOLBOY/SIZZURP/  
PURPLE DRANK/LOADS**

## GET THE FACTS

**OPIOIDS AFFECT YOUR BRAIN.** Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription, such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, morphine, and many others.<sup>1</sup> They affect both the spinal cord and brain to reduce the intensity of pain-signal perception as well as brain areas that control emotion.<sup>2</sup> They can also affect the brain to cause euphoria or “high.”<sup>3</sup>

**OPIOIDS AFFECT YOUR BODY.** Opioids slow down the actions of the body, such as breathing and heartbeat. Even a single dose of an opioid can cause severe respiratory depression (slowing or stopping of breathing), which can be fatal; taking opioids with alcohol or sedatives increases this risk.<sup>4</sup>

**OPIOIDS ARE ADDICTIVE.** Even though heroin is highly addictive, more people struggle with addiction to prescription pain relievers.<sup>5</sup> Many young people who inject heroin report misuse of prescription opioids before starting to use heroin.<sup>6</sup>

**OPIOIDS CAN KILL YOU.** Drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the United States, with 68,690 drug overdose deaths between March 2017 and March 2018.<sup>7</sup> More than 46,000 of those deaths involved opioids.<sup>8</sup>

**OPIOID ADDICTION IS TREATABLE.** Methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone are medications that are FDA-approved to treat opioid use disorder. For more information, visit <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/medications-to-treat-opioid-addiction/efficacy-medications-opioid-use-disorder>.

## ? Q&A

**Q. MY DOCTOR PRESCRIBED ME OPIOIDS. DOESN'T THAT MEAN THEY'RE SAFE?**

**A.** Prescription opioids—when used long term or incorrectly—can cause the brain to become reliant on the drug and are addictive.<sup>9</sup>

**Q. IF I USE OPIOIDS, WILL I BECOME ADDICTED?**

**A.** Prescription opioids can cause physical dependence when used as directed or addiction if misused; illegal opioids such as heroin are also highly addictive. People who regularly use prescription opioids or heroin often develop tolerance, which means that they need higher and/or more frequent doses of the drug to get the desired effects.<sup>10</sup>

### THE BOTTOM LINE:

Many people are prescribed opioids out of medical necessity, but opioids can still be dangerous and addictive. Even if someone is prescribed one of these medications—such as hydrocodone, oxycodone, and morphine—misuse of these substances is rampant. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust if you have questions.

### LEARN MORE:

Get the latest information on how drugs affect the brain and body at [teens.drugabuse.gov](https://teens.drugabuse.gov).

### TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OPIOIDS, CONTACT:

**SAMHSA**  
**1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)**  
(English and Español)

**TTY 1-800-487-4889**  
**[www.samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov)**  
**[store.samhsa.gov](https://store.samhsa.gov)**



**SAMHSA**  
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# BEFORE YOU RISK IT!

- 1** **KNOW THE LAW.** Heroin is illegal and addictive.<sup>11</sup> If you are caught with prescription opioids that are not yours, you can be imprisoned, fined, or both.<sup>12</sup>
- 2** **KNOW THE RISKS.** Using opioids repeatedly can lead to higher tolerance.<sup>13</sup> Other risks include addiction and overdose death.
- 3** **LOOK AROUND YOU.** A recent study found that 38.5 percent of the people who misused prescription pain relievers got them from a friend or relative for free; 34.6 percent were prescribed the medication by one doctor.<sup>14</sup>



## KNOW THE SIGNS

How can you tell if a friend is using opioids?

Side effects of opioid use include:<sup>15</sup>

- **Constipation, nausea, vomiting, and dry mouth;**
- **Sleepiness and dizziness;**
- **Confusion;**
- **Decreased breathing; and**
- **Itching and sweating.**

Behavioral signs and symptoms of opioid addiction include:<sup>16</sup>

- **A change in peer group;**
- **Carelessness with grooming;**
- **Decline in academic performance;**
- **Missing classes or skipping school;**
- **Loss of interest in favorite activities;**
- **Changes in eating or sleeping habits; and**
- **Deteriorating relationships with family and friends.**



## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP SOMEONE WHO IS USING OPIOIDS?

### BE A FRIEND. SAVE A LIFE.

Encourage your friend to stop using or seek help from a parent, teacher, or other caring adult.

**For 24/7 free and confidential information and treatment referrals in English and Español, call SAMHSA's National Helpline at:**

**1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357) or visit the SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator at [findtreatment.samhsa.gov](https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov)**

<sup>1</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). Opioids. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids>

<sup>2</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). Misuse of Prescription Drugs. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/misuse-prescription-drugs/which-classes-prescription-drugs-are-commonly-misused>

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2014). The Facts About Buprenorphine. Retrieved from <https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma14-4442.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Jones, C. M., Paulozzi, L. J., & Mack, K. A. (2014). Alcohol involvement in opioid pain reliever and benzodiazepine drug abuse-related emergency department visits and drug-related deaths - United States, 2010. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 63(40), 881-885. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6340a1.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2017). Medications for Opioid Use Disorder. Retrieved from <https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma18-5063pt2.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). Prescription opioids and heroin. *Research Report Series*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/relationship-between-prescription-drug-heroin-abuse/prescription-opioid-use-risk-factor-heroin-use>

<sup>7</sup> National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). (2018). Provisional Drug Overdose Death Counts. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/drug-overdose-data.htm>

<sup>8</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). Opioid Overdose Crisis. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids>

<sup>9</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). What is heroin? *Drug Facts*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/heroin>

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of Justice & Drug Enforcement Administration. (2015). *Drugs of abuse: A DEA resource guide*. Retrieved from [https://www.dea.gov/pr/multimedia-library/publications/drug\\_of\\_abuse.pdf](https://www.dea.gov/pr/multimedia-library/publications/drug_of_abuse.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Addiction.com. (2015). Before You Share That Pain Medication. Retrieved from <https://www.addiction.com/12040/before-you-share-that-pain-medication/>

<sup>12</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2016). Opioids. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/atod/opioids>

<sup>13</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2018). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/2017-nsduh-annual-national-report>

<sup>14</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017). Opioid Overdose. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/opioids/prescribed.html>

<sup>15</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2014). *Principles of adolescent substance use disorder treatment: A research-based guide*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/principles-adolescent-substance-use-disorder-treatment-research-based-guide/frequently-asked-questions/what-are-signs-drug-use-in-adolescents-what-role-can-parents-play-in-getting-treatment>

## MORE INFORMATION



**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR FOR RESOURCES USED IN THIS "TIPS for TEENS," visit [store.samhsa.gov](https://store.samhsa.gov) or call 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) (English and Español).**

PEP NO. 19-08 REVISED 2019

# TIPS<sub>for</sub> TEENS

## HEROIN



### THE TRUTH ABOUT HEROIN

**SLANG: SMACK/HORSE/BROWN SUGAR/JUNK/  
BLACK TAR/BIG H/DOPE/SKAG/NEGRA/SKUNK/  
WHITE HORSE/CHINA WHITE/CHIVA/  
HELL DUST/THUNDER**

## GET THE FACTS

**HEROIN AFFECTS YOUR BRAIN.** Heroin, an illicit opioid, enters the brain quickly. It slows down the way you think, reaction time, and memory.<sup>1</sup> Over the long term, heroin can change the brain in ways that lead to addiction.

**HEROIN AFFECTS YOUR BODY.** Heroin slows down your heartbeat and breathing, sometimes so much that it can be life-threatening. Heroin poses special problems for those who inject it because of the risks of HIV, hepatitis B and C, and other diseases that can occur from sharing needles.<sup>2</sup>

**HEROIN IS HIGHLY ADDICTIVE.** Heroin enters the brain rapidly and causes a fast, intense high. Repeated heroin use increases the risk of developing an addiction; someone addicted to heroin will continue to seek and use the drug despite negative consequences.<sup>3</sup>

**HEROIN IS NOT WHAT IT MAY SEEM.** Other substances are sometimes added to heroin. They clog blood vessels leading to the liver, lungs, kidneys, and brain and lead to inflammation or infection.<sup>4</sup> Powder sold as heroin may also contain other dangerous chemicals, such as fentanyl, that increase the risk of fatal overdose.<sup>5,6</sup>

**HEROIN CAN KILL YOU.** Heroin slows—and sometimes stops—breathing, which can result in death. In 2015, there were 2,343 overdose deaths related to heroin or other illicit opioids among people ages 15 to 24.<sup>7</sup>

**HEROIN ADDICTION IS TREATABLE.** Medication, in combination with behavioral treatment, can help people stop using heroin and recover from addiction.<sup>8</sup> Building a support system that helps people stop using heroin and other opioids is also important. Medications such as buprenorphine, methadone, and naloxone greatly increase the chance of recovery and reduce the risk of overdose. Friends and family members should have naloxone nearby if possible in case of overdose.<sup>9</sup>

\* No official support of or endorsement by SAMHSA or HHS for the opinions, resources, and medications described is intended to be or should be inferred. The information presented in this document should not be considered medical advice and is not a substitute for individualized patient or client care and treatment decisions.

## ? Q&A

**Q. IS IT TRUE THAT HEROIN ISN'T RISKY IF YOU SNORT OR SMOKE IT INSTEAD OF INJECTING IT?**

**A. NO.** Heroin is very dangerous regardless of how it is used. While injecting drugs carries additional risk of infectious disease, taking heroin can be dangerous in any form. You can still die from an overdose or become addicted by snorting or smoking it. Heroin may also be mixed with synthetic opioids such as Fentanyl, which can be fatal in small doses regardless of how they are taken.<sup>9</sup>

**Q. WHAT DOES HEROIN LOOK LIKE?**

**A. HEROIN CAN BE A WHITE OR DARK BROWN POWDER OR A BLACK TAR.** People selling heroin often mix in other substances, such as sugar, starch, or more dangerous chemicals.<sup>10</sup> Pure heroin is dangerous as well, despite the common misperception that it is safer.<sup>11</sup>

**Q. WILL HEROIN USE ALTER MY BRAIN?**

**A. YES.** Heroin use alters brain circuits that control reward, stress, decision-making, and impulse control, making it more difficult to stop using even when it is having negative effects on your life and health. Frequent use also can lead to tolerance and withdrawal, so you need more of the drug just to feel normal.<sup>12,13</sup>

### THE BOTTOM LINE:

Heroin is illegal, addictive, and dangerous. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust if you have questions.

### LEARN MORE:

Get the latest information on how drugs affect the brain and body at [teens.drugabuse.gov](https://teens.drugabuse.gov).

### TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HEROIN, CONTACT:

**SAMHSA**

**1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)**

(English and Español)

**TTY 1-800-487-4889**

**[www.samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov)**

**[store.samhsa.gov](https://store.samhsa.gov)**



**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration



# BEFORE YOU RISK IT!

- 1 KNOW THE LAW.** Heroin is an illegal Schedule I drug, meaning that it is addictive and has no accepted medical use.<sup>14</sup>
- 2 GET THE FACTS.** Any method of heroin use—snorting, smoking, swallowing, or injecting the drug—can cause immediate harm and lead to addiction or death.<sup>15</sup>
- 3 KNOW THE RISKS.** Using heroin can change the brain, and the changes may not be easily reversed.<sup>16</sup>
- 4 LOOK AROUND YOU.** The majority of teens are not using heroin. According to a 2015 national study, fewer than 1 out of 1,000 adolescents ages 12 to 17 were current heroin users.<sup>17</sup>



## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP SOMEONE WHO IS USING HEROIN?

### BE A FRIEND. SAVE A LIFE.

Encourage your friend to stop using or seek help from a parent, teacher, or other caring adult.

For 24/7 free and confidential information and treatment referrals in English and Spanish, call SAMHSA's National Helpline at:

**1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)**

or visit the SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator at

**[findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov)**

<sup>12,4,11,16,20</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2014). *Research report series: Heroin*. (NIH Publication Number 14-0165). Retrieved from <http://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/rrheroin-14.pdf>

<sup>3,8,9,12,15</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2017). *Drug facts: Heroin*. Retrieved from <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/heroin>

<sup>5</sup> Drug Enforcement Agency. (2016). DEA warning to police and public: Fentanyl exposure kills. *Headquarters News*. Retrieved from <https://www.dea.gov/divisions/hq/2016/hq061016.shtm>

<sup>6</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2016). *Drug facts: Fentanyl*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/fentanyl>

<sup>7</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). (2017). Drug overdoses in youth. *NIDA for Teens*. Retrieved from <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/drug-overdoses-youth>

<sup>10,14,18</sup> U.S. Department of Justice and Drug Enforcement Administration. (2015). *Drugs of abuse: A DEA resource guide*. Retrieved from [https://www.dea.gov/pr/multimedia-library/publications/drug\\_of\\_abuse.pdf](https://www.dea.gov/pr/multimedia-library/publications/drug_of_abuse.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2007). Drugs on the street (Module 5). *Brain Power: Grades 6–9*. Retrieved from <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/brain-power/grades-6-9/drugs-street-module-5>

<sup>17</sup> Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2016). *2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed tables*. Retrieved from <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH-DeTTab-2015/NSDUH-DeTTab-2015/NSDUH-DeTTab-2015.htm>

<sup>19</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (n.d.). Heroin (smack, junk) facts. *Easy-to-Read Drug Facts*. Retrieved from <https://easyread.drugabuse.gov/content/heroin-smack-junk-facts>



## KNOW THE SIGNS

### HOW CAN YOU TELL IF A FRIEND IS USING HEROIN?

Signs and symptoms of heroin use are:<sup>18,19,20</sup>

- **Euphoria**
- **Drowsiness**
- **Impaired mental functioning**
- **Slowed movement and breathing**
- **Needle marks**
- **Boils**

Signs of a heroin overdose include:

- **Shallow breathing**
- **Extremely small pupils**
- **Clammy skin**
- **Bluish-colored nails and lips**
- **Convulsions**
- **Coma**

The drug naloxone can save the life of someone overdosing on heroin. Naloxone can be administered by anyone witnessing an overdose or by first responders.

For more information on naloxone training and availability, visit [www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/naloxone](http://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/naloxone).

## MORE INFORMATION



FOR MORE INFORMATION OR FOR RESOURCES USED IN THIS "TIPS for TEENS," visit [store.samhsa.gov](http://store.samhsa.gov) or call 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) (English and Español). PEP NO. 18-02 REVISED 2018