

of hydrocodone as a cause for visiting an emergency room increased 37 percent among all age groups from 1997 to 1999. Also, mentions of clonazepam increased 102 percent from 1992 to 1999 (SAMHSA 2004).

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For more information, visit:

PartySmart.org/community/drugTalks.html



School & Community Drug Talks

Why do you say that everyone uses drugs?

We define drugs as anything taken into the body that alters perception. This can include anything from sugar to heroin.

Why do you include over-the-counter products and prescription drugs?

Rates of Drug Use:

Drug use and abuse remains prevalent, despite the numerous prevention efforts that have been implemented in schools and other community sites. Most of these prevention efforts target young people, who have not yet initiated drug use. In reality, almost all people have used a drug that can alter their perceptions. The most commonly used drugs are sugar and caffeine, but other drugs that fit this definition include Over-The-Counter (OTC) products, prescription drugs, alcohol, tobacco,

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co, herbal supplements, illegal drugs and more. Most drug use prevention programs focus on illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco, but few address the extent of available drugs that alter perception. There are risks involved with all drug use, though some drugs are riskier than others. The herbal supplement, Ephedra was used by many people to aid in weight loss and to enhance performance until April 2004, when it was banned due to adverse health effects including heart attack and stroke. Most prescription drugs and some OTC drugs have the potential for very serious adverse effects, even death. Cigarette smoking is the most preventable cause of disease and death in the United States. Even caffeine can cause nausea, vomiting, hypoglycemia, tremors, and blurred vision. While some drugs have social stigma, others are established, commonplace and accepted. This social stigma is not always related to the level of possible health risks associated with the drug. Most current drug prevention programs focus on very select drugs, while ignoring that fact that myriad drugs surround us all. Drug education programs should prepare our youth for living in a world full of drugs.

Over-The-Counter Drug Problems:

- The 2002 DASIS Report on people admitted for drug abuse treat-

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ment, reported that OTC admissions peak at age 16 (SAMHSA, 2002).

- According to the 2002 National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPIE) national survey, 59% of the Americans surveyed reported taking at least one OTC product in the past six months and 79% of the medical professionals surveyed said they were somewhat or very concerned about the inappropriate use of OTC medicines (NCL, 2002).
- In 2002, the Journal of the American Medical Association published the Sloane Survey which found that nearly 80 percent of American adults reported taking an OTC pain reliever at least once a week (NCL, 2002).
- The American Academy of Family Physicians reported in 2002 that there is a public perception that OTC products are not “real” medicine, a limited understanding about OTC ingredients, and a belief that “more is better” when treating headaches and pain with OTC products (NCL, 2002).
- Caffeine can cause nausea, vomiting, hypoglycemia, tremors, and

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blurred vision (Micromedex, 2000).

Prescription Drug Problems:

- The most commonly misused prescription drugs are opiates, CNS depressants and stimulants.
- In 1999, an estimated 4 million people, about 2 percent of the population age 12 and older used prescription drugs non-medically in the past month. Of these, 2.6 million misused pain relievers, 1.3 million misused sedatives and tranquilizers, and 0.9 million misused stimulants (USDHHS, 2001).
- The National Household Survey on Drug Abuse numbers indicate that the sharpest increases in new users of prescription drugs for non-medical purposes occur in 12 to 17 and 18 to 25 year-olds (Johnston, 2004).
- The number of American youth who are using prescription drugs for a psychiatric disorder has more than doubled between 1987 and 1996 now nearing the levels found in adults (Warner, 2003).
- The Drug Abuse Warning Network reported that mentions