



# DRUGS + YOUR LIFE

Drugs don't just mess with your brain and body, they mess with your life. Behind every statistic are teens who thought, "It won't happen to me"—but it did. In addition to addiction and other health problems, using drugs can also have real and serious consequences for other aspects of your life. The information to the right is just a glimpse of their impact.

## Bad Grades

High school students who use marijuana are **1.5 to 2 times more likely** to have a C average or lower as students who do not use marijuana.<sup>1</sup>



## Accidental Death

Drivers ages 16–20 are **17 times more likely** to die in a crash when alcohol is involved.<sup>3</sup>



### ► More Info:

For additional facts about drug effects on the brain and body, visit [scholastic.com/headsup](http://scholastic.com/headsup) and [teens.drugabuse.gov](http://teens.drugabuse.gov).



## Violent Behavior

Teens who have used drugs in the past year are about **2 times more likely** as teens who have not used drugs to be involved in violent behavior.<sup>2</sup>

### Could It Happen to You?

The “times more likely” examples on these pages compare a teen’s chances of experiencing a particular consequence if a teen uses a specific drug versus a teen not using that drug.

Consider the two diagrams to the right. If each banana peel represents a chance to slip, you are three times more likely to slip in the scenario presented in the lower diagram.



1 time



3 times

Sneaker illustration, © minimi/Stockphoto; banana peel, © timoph/Stockphoto.

## Blackouts

Drinking large amounts of alcohol in a short period of time (“binge drinking”) causes blood alcohol levels to rise very rapidly. This quickly impairs a person’s balance, motor skills, and decision making, and can also cause a “blackout,” a period of time for which an intoxicated person cannot remember key details about a specific event or the event itself. Intoxicated persons risk losing control of what happens to them before, during, and after a blackout, and can find themselves in dangerous or unwanted situations. Because of how females metabolize alcohol, they may be at greater risk for blacking out.<sup>4</sup>

### Think About It:

- What kinds of unwanted situations can people find themselves in if they drink too much?
- What is an example of a consequence from drinking too much that can’t be undone?
- Why do you think the loss of control caused by drinking too much is similar to giving someone else control of your decisions?



## EVALUATING STATISTICS

If we could see the future with certainty—like with a crystal ball—we would always make good decisions. In the real world, without crystal balls, we have statistics to help us make smart choices. Valid statistics are calculated from studies measuring the behavior of groups of people (the sample) during a defined period of time. With statistics, we can weigh the likelihood of an event happening to us based on the experiences of others.

Valid statistics are:

- ✓ Published by a reliable source that presents data in a scientific, objective way
- ✓ Collected from a large sample size of people who were chosen randomly and given anonymity to ensure accuracy
- ✓ Consistent over time, demonstrating the study isn’t a fluke

The statistics presented on these pages are from health studies that showed how drugs cause harm. Understanding what valid—that is, trustworthy—statistics mean can help us draw important conclusions and make better decisions about our lives.

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<sup>1</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 2006; <http://oas.samhsa.gov/2k6/academics/academics.htm> <sup>2</sup> SAMHSA, 2006; <http://oas.samhsa.gov/2k6/youthViolence/youthViolence.htm> <sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control, 2012; <http://cdc.gov/Vitalsigns/pdf/2012-10-vitalsigns.pdf> <sup>4</sup> National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2004; <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/arh27-2/186-196.htm>