



HEADS UP REAL NEWS ABOUT DRUGS AND YOUR BODY

On the way to school



Homeroom

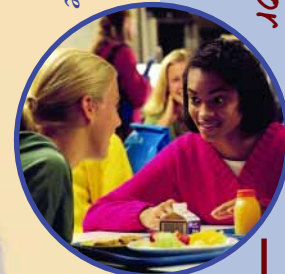
Connect with friends in between classes

...Wonder if I should go tonight?

...Should I finish studying for the quiz instead of talking with friends?

...Should I invite the new kids?

Break for lunch



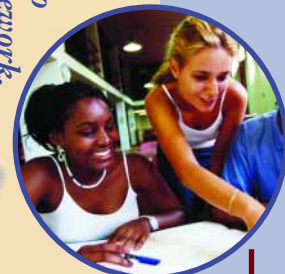
A Day in the Life of a Teen

Decisions at Every Turn

Drugs?
No, Thanks.

Study hall

...Do homework, then read?



After-school activities

...Do I ask if I'm starting on Saturday?



...R U going 2night?...

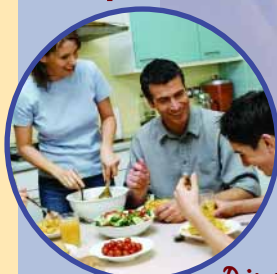
On the way home from school



Homework

Dinner

...Is it a good time to tell Mom and Dad about the dent in the car?

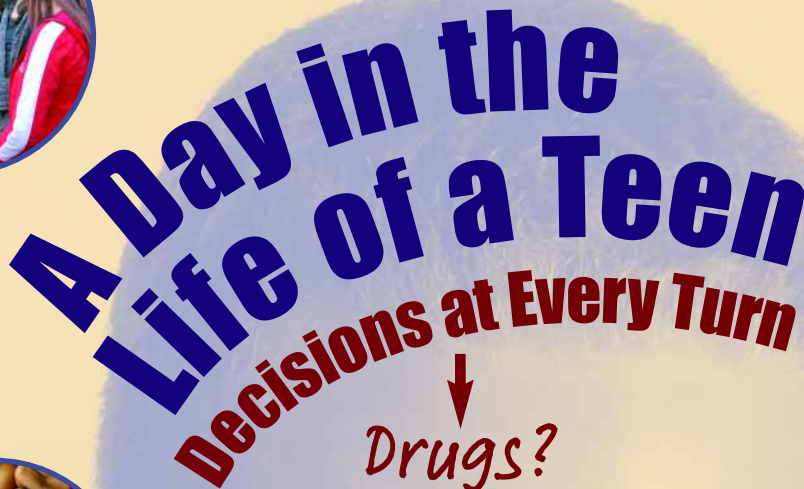


Surf Internet and check e-mail

...Should I tell him about the party?



Get together with friends



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HEADS UP:
The Way to Go

As a teen, you lead a life jam-packed with a thousand things. All day long you may participate in activities and interactions in and out of school, including team sports, going to parties, going to the library, hanging out with friends at the mall, studying, surfing the Internet, group activities, and text-messaging. The list goes on and on. If you think about it, you make a lot of choices while you're doing these activities and during the rest of your day. Some are big and some are small, but everything you do and say involves making a decision.

While you may not ever be faced with this situation, someday you may be confronted by a friend or a stranger with an offer to take drugs. What would you do? This article discusses making tough decisions in social settings where drugs may be offered to you, as well as the harmful effects that those drugs cause. A big factor in deciding what to do is understanding what can happen—the outcome or consequence of your choices.

You'll find out the facts and dangers of drug abuse as you continue reading, and you'll learn what you can do—and say—to protect yourself and navigate through social situations. Making decisions that seem uncool in front of your peers can be hard. But making decisions that can harm you can lead to dangerous consequences—short-term and long-term.

“I just wanted to fit in, but it didn't feel right to go along with what everyone was doing.”—Stacey, age 13

“We got to the party, and it was so out of control. I should have just left.” —Casey, age 16

HEADS UP:
You're Normal

As part of their public-health mission to research the health effects and impact of drugs, scientists at the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) study trends on the number of teens abusing drugs, the kinds of drugs they abuse, and teens' perceptions of drug availability and the harmfulness of using drugs.

NIDA's mission is scientific but also includes sharing its research findings with the public, so its scientists seek to educate young people on the damage that drug

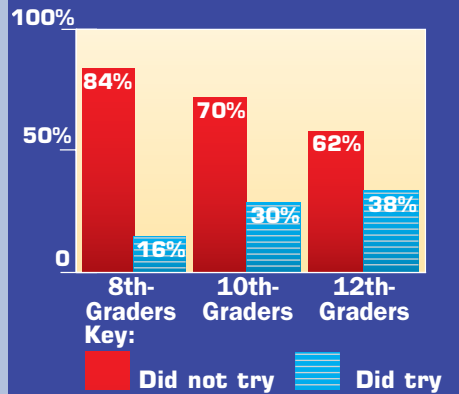
abuse and addiction can cause to their bodies and lives. Elizabeth Robertson, NIDA's

chief of prevention research, says that “teens tend to believe that other teens are using a lot more drugs, alcohol, and tobacco than they are.” In fact, researchers from the annual NIDA-funded Monitoring the Future (MTF) study found that more than 70 percent of 10th-graders in 2005 had not used illicit drugs in the year prior to their being surveyed.

This is important to know. When you *don't* abuse drugs, you are in the majority with other teens around the country. That's the good news. The reality is that one person using drugs is one too many: Drug abuse may destroy not only the life of the abuser, but the lives of those around him or her as well.

The MTF study also reveals the drugs that are most frequently abused by teens: prescription drugs, marijuana, alcohol, nicotine,

Percentage of Teens Surveyed in 2005 Who Did Not Try Any Illicit Drug in the Past 12 Months*—and Those Who Did



Key:
■ Did not try
■ Did try

This information is from the 2005 Monitoring the Future survey, a yearly study of the behaviors, attitudes, and values of teens in America. For more survey findings, see www.monitoringthefuture.org.

*“Illicit” refers to any drug that is illegal or used illegally. The results above do not include cigarettes or alcohol.

methamphetamine, inhalants, and MDMA (ecstasy). While these may seem like harmless “party drugs,” each carries serious side effects, both in the short and long term. Drug abuse can wreak havoc on your body, your current and future health, and your social circles, which most teens want to preserve.

HEADS UP:
It's All in Your Head

When you're with your friends, why does it seem so hard to say or do something other than what they're doing? A big reason has to do with the way your brain is wired. “The brain is built to learn by imitating,” says Jay Giedd, MD, who has spent a lot of time researching teenagers' brains (see sidebar). “Young children imitate their parents; adolescents imitate their peers.”

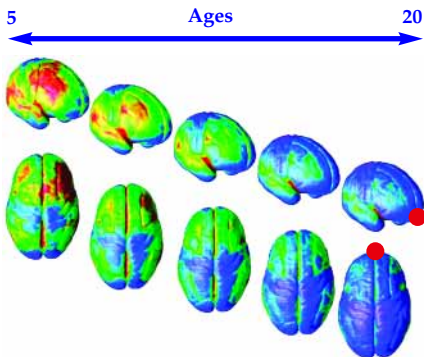


**HEADS UP
REAL NEWS
ABOUT DRUGS
AND YOUR BODY**

**The Teen Brain:
A Work in Progress**

Jay Giedd, MD, and his colleagues at the National Institute of Mental Health spent 15 years using MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) to map teens' brains. From early childhood through the teen years, participants came in every two years to have their brains scanned and studied.

This cutting-edge research gives the first-ever look inside the teen brain. It reveals that the teen brain is a work in progress. "The fact that your brain is still changing creates enormous abilities to learn," says Dr. Giedd, adding, "Following the living, growing brain in the same individuals over time really has been the key to understanding the path of development."



These images show 15 years of brain development for a healthy person, aged 5 to 20. The areas in red show parts of the brain that are still changing; the blue shows areas that are developed. The prefrontal cortex, indicated by the red circles, is the last part of the brain to develop. It is responsible for decision making and impulse control. As a person grows, his or her brain develops and matures, as the progression of the blue area shows.

© 2004 National Academy of Sciences, U.S.A. Gogtay, Nitin, Giedd, Jay N., et al. "Dynamic mapping of human cortical development during childhood through early adulthood." PNAS USA. 2004 May 25; 101(21): 8,174-8,179. Epub 2004 May 17, p. 8,178, fig. 3.

Dr. Giedd used brain-scanning techniques to determine that the prefrontal cortex—that's the part of the brain responsible for impulse control and decision making—does not fully develop in most people until around age 25.

Knowing this, picture yourself at a party watching friends abuse drugs. "Whatever else you might be reading or hearing, your brain is thinking, "This is what my group does, and this is what I need to do to fit in," says Dr. Giedd. But is it?

Because a teen's prefrontal cortex is not fully developed, his or her brain relies on the limbic systems to make decisions.

The limbic system is responsible for emotional reactions, especially those involving pleasure or excitement. But it also helps create feelings of drive and motivation, so that if you put your mind to something, you can accomplish it.

**HEADS UP:
The Shape of Things**

Research shows that *when teens think things through, they make good choices about risk.* That's important to know, because when you're a teenager, the pathways in your brain are strengthened each time you repeat an activity or skill. Your daily experiences—and decisions—actually shape your brain. As you grow, the brain trims away pathways that aren't used. Those nerve connections that are used



frequently through repeating skills or experiences are made stronger. So, the key is to make your experiences as positive and safe as possible—and that means thinking about things beforehand. If someone offers you drugs, you'll be more likely to give the answer you want if you've planned it out in advance.

**HEADS UP:
Make a Plan**

How do you plan it out in advance? There are many different strategies and ways to say no to drugs. One person who has studied

"Some people in our class started smoking marijuana. My friends and I agreed—we'd stick together and not try it."—Tasha, age 14

what influences kids to abuse drugs is NIDA-sponsored researcher Gilbert J. Botvin, Ph.D.,

professor at Weill Medical College of Cornell University and director of the school's Institute for Prevention Research. Dr. Botvin has developed successful prevention programs based on his research. He has proved that teaching kids to practice saying "no" in social settings is one of the best ways to help them avoid abusing drugs.

Most teens *start* using drugs in social situations. The first thing to do is learn how to say "no, thanks" in a casual way. You might think that other kids will make a big deal of it, but that's unlikely. "Kids and adults have an exaggerated view of the extent to which people are likely to pressure them to use substances," Dr. Botvin says.



Symptoms of Drug Overdose: Why You Must Act Immediately



But if you feel that a simple “no” won’t work, you have other choices. Dr. Botvin and his colleagues have developed some approaches that are presented in the chart below. These techniques have been tested with thousands of teens—and they work. Dr. Botvin says that kids who learn these techniques and use them are 50 to 60 percent less likely than others to abuse drugs.

HEADS UP: *The Choice Is Yours*

Now that you have the facts about what drugs can do to you, it’s time to give serious thought to how you’ll handle

social situations that may involve drugs. Talk about the techniques below with your friends and others close to you. Plan and practice what you will do in advance. And remember,

- Abnormal pupil size (either too small or too large)
- Sweating
- Agitation (restlessness, increased tension, irritability)
- Tremors (involuntary shaking movements)
- Seizures
- Problems with walking
- Difficulty breathing
- Drowsiness
- Unconsciousness
- Hallucinations
- Delusional or paranoid behavior
- Violent or aggressive behavior

Remember, if you suspect a friend may be suffering from a drug overdose, **get help immediately.**

If you suspect a friend may be suffering from an overdose or a toxic reaction to a drug, you must act. **Call 911 or get to a hospital.** You or your friend might get in trouble when an adult finds out that you’ve been around drugs, but that’s far better than your friend being dead, or in a coma.

It’s not possible for someone to sleep off an overdose. Taking a cold shower or drinking coffee will not help either. Drug and alcohol overdoses can stop the heart from beating or the lungs from breathing.

Drug overdose symptoms vary widely depending on the specific drug(s) used, but may include:

the vast majority of teens make the smart choice for their bodies and their minds: They don’t use drugs.

For help with a drug problem or to locate treatment centers, go to www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov, or call the national hotline at 1-800-662-HELP.

Ways to Give Drugs the Brush-off

THE TECHNIQUE	WHAT TO SAY
A Simple No Don’t make it a big deal. Be polite.	<i>No, thanks.</i>
Tell It Like It Is Be yourself and say it in a language that you’re comfortable with.	<i>No, thanks. I don’t drink or I don’t do drugs.</i>
Give an Excuse People make excuses all the time.	<i>I have to meet my friend or I’ll get kicked off the team.</i>
Change the Subject This can distract people.	<i>No, thanks. Hey—did you see that strange outfit Mary was wearing?</i>
Walk Away or Leave the Situation It’s common at parties to have a brief interaction, then wander off or leave entirely.	Say <i>no</i> , then walk to another group.
The Big Stall This works with escalating pressure. It doesn’t mean you will actually try it later.	<i>No, maybe later.</i>
The Broken Record Give one reason, then repeat the reason, but don’t get into a debate or argument—it doesn’t help.	<i>No, thanks—it makes me sick.</i> Repeat it if a person pressures you.