

Preventing substance use among Adolescents

Information leaflet

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- **What are drugs?**

Chemicals which can act on your brain and alter your state of mind

- **Why do teens use drugs?**

- i. Curiosity - As an 'EXPERIMENT' to see what is the effect of using these drugs
- ii. Lack of perspective- considering it 'COOL!'
- iii. To seek new experience
- iv. Pressure from peer groups or friends
- v. Wide availability of drugs
- vi. Greater tolerance towards the use of some substances - e.g.: Alcohol
- vii. Stress caused by family conflicts, lack of family structure, parents remaining distant from their teens, when parents do not set limits or ensure discipline for the teen, significant changes in the life of the teen (city, loss of a parent)
- viii. Escape from difficult reality or poor coping
- ix. Personality traits: low self-esteem, low self-confidence, aggressiveness, taking decision without understanding consequences(impulsivity) defiance, difficulty accepting being contradicted

x. Psychiatric disorders: conduct, hyperactivity and attention deficit, depression, anxiety and other personality disorders

- **Strategies to prevent drug addiction**

- **For young adults!**

i. "Practice saying no" - Build on your refusal skills

ii. Avoid boredom

iii. Develop and nurture interest in a sport, or performing arts or any other hobby

iv. Avoid peers who use drugs

v. Learn through reliable sources of information - critically analyse the information you read

vi. Get help early

vii. Be role models

- **Parents/teachers!**

i. Practice what you preach

ii. Talk often and openly about drugs - 'Open communication is the key'

iii. Promote and reinforce healthy habits

iv. Engage the students in a variety of co-curricular activities like sports, performing arts etc...

- **Consequences**

Drug use can cause acute complications (intoxication or overdose) or chronic, with lasting or even irreversible changes. Occasionally it can result in death.

Other risks are also considered when dealing with teenagers because all substances of abuse when used improperly increases the risk of accidents and violence by reducing our ability to make judgements especially among vulnerable adolescents.

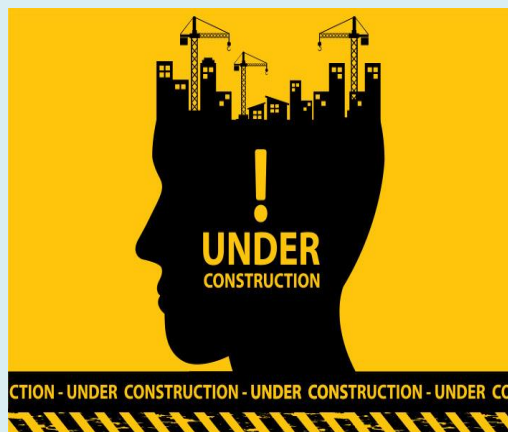
It causes changes in the brain circuits which makes people crave for more day by day. They may want to stop but they feel they cannot cut down.

- **Types of drugs** - Alcohol, Tobacco, Cannabis, Cocaine, Ecstasy,
- **While it is common to have addictions to chemicals, it can also be about certain habits! Habits such as computer gaming, internet, social media, mobile use etc.!!**

It may seem very attractive as it helps escape a reality that is very difficult for you. Or maybe you feel too pressured by your friends because they may call you old-fashioned geek or nerdy or boring child.

Also people who smuggle drugs play with your inexperience, many may even give it for free for the initial few times.

Adolescent brain is still under construction:



- A young brain is like a vehicle with poor breaks, as you grow older, your own ability to 'STOP-THINK-ACT' is better developed. You can make an informed decision knowing and understanding the consequences.
- **What can happen if you're driving a vehicle with poor breaks?** Especially when you don't know how to drive in the crowded streets of India?
- **Why 18 years !?!**
- As you grow older, it is important to learn to critically evaluate information provided on advertisements, media and then decide whether you wish to play this bet.
- It is wise to postpone decisions that have longterm consequences until you feel you are knowledgeable and experieced enough to take a wise call. This will ensure your safety and avoid unfortunate accidents.



So what next?

As young adults we learn to make informed decisions about our future, taking into consideration the vast risks as opposed to the short term "benefit"!

To be Safe-Healthy-Responsible citizens of India.

Where to take help?

You are free to contact us if you or your friend needs help. Mail us at capjipmer@gmail.com or visit us in the special clinic for adolescent mental health and deaddiction services on Saturday, OP-74, JIPMER, Puducherry.

Reliable sources of information:

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/principles-adolescent-substance-use-disorder-treatment-research-based-guide/introduction>

<https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/substance-use/index.html>