

COMMON MYTHS VS FACTS ABOUT ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

MYTH

FACT

"Natural" drugs are safer than synthetic ones

Marijuana, khat, psychedelic (magic) mushrooms, other "natural" highs still alter brain chemistry and produce dangerous side effects

People who overuse alcohol and drugs just lack willpower

Prolonged use of alcohol and drugs causes the brain to change the chemical balance of the body making it difficult for some people to simply stop using alcohol or drugs without support

People with substance use disorders are bad people

People with substance use disorders are sick people who need help

People who have substance dependence can easily move back to occasional use

Substance dependence is difficult to control due to repetitive use even in the face of negative consequences

If it is prescription, it must be safe; you cannot get addicted to something your doctor prescribes

Prolonged use of prescription drugs can be dangerous and addictive especially if the user exceeds prescribed dosage or takes a combination of drugs

Alcohol is a stimulant

Alcohol is a depressant though initial effects may be euphoric; cumulative effect of alcohol depresses the brain (slows breathing, heart rate, lowers blood pressure)

Alcohol is an aphrodisiac

Alcohol reduces inhibitions and may stimulate your interest in sex but reduces ability to perform

If you have a high alcohol tolerance, you do not have a drinking problem

If you feel nothing after several drinks, you DO have a problem

Everybody reacts to alcohol the same way

Alcohol affects everyone differently. Depends on various factors (body weight, gender, body chemistry, your expectations)

Driving high is safer than driving drunk

Marijuana affects alertness, concentration, perception, coordination, reaction time

Coffee, cold shower will help sober someone up

None of these methods work. Blood alcohol concentration only diminishes at set, slow pace as liver metabolizes alcohol. Depending on your weight, it takes about three hours to eliminate every two drinks

Marijuana is harmless

Use of marijuana causes anxiety, memory loss, trouble thinking and concentrating, difficulty sleeping, lower productivity, missing days of school/work

Marijuana is not addictive

Heavy marijuana use can lead to physical dependence (develop withdrawal symptoms like anxiety, irritability, difficulty sleeping)

Marijuana is not as bad for you as tobacco

Marijuana is linked to respiratory problems just like tobacco

Smoking shisha is a safer alternative than smoking cigarettes

Shisha smokers may absorb more toxic substances than cigarette smokers. An hour long shisha smoking session involves 200 puffs while smoking an average cigarette involves 20 puffs

Shisha smoke is filtered through water removing all harmful chemicals

Shisha smoking delivers nicotine, cancer-causing chemicals, tar, metals, carbon dioxide. Can damage lungs and heart as much as cigarette smoke

Adapted from
www.bhin.usmc-mccs.org
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