

SKILL SHARPENING TOOLS

More Facts



- Why is driving a vehicle under the influence of drugs or alcohol dangerous?

Driving is a complex task that requires concentration, alertness and motor coordination. Narcotics, cannabis, alcohol and other depressants affect the functioning of the brain. They reduce alertness, increase the time taken to react and also interfere with judgment. The sense of timing is poor and under the influence of drugs a person often takes a lot of risks like speeding and overtaking. These increase the risk of accidents and he can cause physical injury or death not only to himself but also to others.

- How can sharing of needles cause tetanus or malaria?

In malaria, the infection is carried in the blood. When a needle is shared without sterilizing it, even the small amount of blood present in it can carry and transmit the infection. Unclean needles that carry dirt can cause tetanus.

- Can delirium tremens become life threatening?

Yes. Close medical supervision is necessary as the patient may die due to various complications.

- Is the Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome treatable?

If the condition is identified early and thiamine (vitamin B1) is administered, good recovery is possible. But if treatment is delayed, the brain can be permanently damaged and this condition cannot be reversed. The patient will not be able to recollect or remember and will continue to confabulate to fill gaps in his memory.

- Apart from infection or inflammation of the skin, what other dermatological problems can drugs cause?

Ulcers can form on the skin, which if left untreated, can eat away the flesh and even destroy the bones.

- How does the embolus caused by air bubbles or thrombi affect the body?

Generally, the body tries to reduce the size of the embolus and absorb it. But this takes time. Unfortunately, the embolus can travel to other parts of the body and gets deposited in crucial pathways of the blood and blocks blood flow. When blood supply is shut off, the oxygen supply is also closed down and the cells in that part of the body can die. Depending on where the embolus is situated, the damage can be mild or severe.

- What is hepatitis? Is it treatable?

Infection in the liver is called hepatitis. With a low fat diet, rest and medication, the condition can be treated. But if the person continues to abuse drugs or alcohol, the liver which is already weak due to infection, breaks down further. Over a period of time, the impact can destroy the liver cells permanently and cause cirrhosis.

- Alcohol and some other drugs increase the sexual urge. How can they affect sexual functioning?

Drugs and alcohol reduce the inhibition and the user may show more interest in sex. But, due to the direct effect of drugs on the functioning of the body, the sexual performance becomes poor. The idea that consumption of alcohol or drugs will improve sexual performance is not true.

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- The ability to comprehend and remember is affected due to drug abuse. Is recovery possible?

It is true that drugs affect cognitive functions and can interfere with new learning. Initially, when the person gives up the use of drugs, his attention span is short and frustration tolerance is also low. But, with abstinence, and consistent efforts to improve his performance, significant recovery is possible.

- What can help the drug abuser recover quickly from drug related health problems?

Abstinence from alcohol and other drugs is an essential prerequisite for good physical and mental health. If he continues to take the drug, nothing can be done to improve his health condition. With abstinence, healthy food habits and regular exercise, in due course of time, he will be able to recover.



INTERNALIZING TOOLS

This is an activity to ensure that the facts related to drugs and drug abuse are understood. Prepare two sets of cards. Red cards will contain the information listed on the left and the blue cards will contain the details listed on the right. Mix all the cards and ask trainees to match the cards appropriately — one red card with one blue card. In the table below, the information has been listed correctly so that the left box corresponds to that on the right.

Red cards	Blue cards
1) Organ that helps metabolize drugs	liver
2) Organs that help excrete drugs	kidneys and lungs
3) Viral infection of the liver	hepatitis
4) Dead liver cells are replaced by scar tissue	cirrhosis
5) Level of sex hormones reduces	due to cannabis and alcohol abuse
6) When a pregnant woman uses alcohol or drugs it can cause	physical and mental retardation of the unborn foetus
7) Withdrawal from alcohol and other depressants can cause	seizures
8) Overdose deaths can occur due to	narcotic analgesics and depressant drugs
9) Abscess is caused by	use of unsterile needles
10) Ganja use can cause	psychiatric problems
11) Infection of the heart valves	endocarditis
12) Hepatitis B and C are common among	intravenous drug abusers
13) Inhaling solvents and amphetamines	can cause sudden death

14) Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome	brain damage associated with alcoholism
15) Ganja reduces WBC count leading to	reduced immunity
16) Cellulitis	skin problem caused by IV drug abuse
17) Chronic constipation caused by	narcotic analgesics
18) Embolus	blocking of blood supply in the vessels due to either a clot or air bubbles
19) Reduced platelet count	hinders blood clotting
20) Disorientation	inability to recognize people and place one is in
21) Hallucinations	seeing, hearing or feeling things which are not real
22) Symptoms of neuritis	tremors, tingling, numbness of hands and feet