

SKILL SHARPENING TOOLS

Common Doubts Clarified



- In addition to physical and mental health problems, what are the other hazards associated with drug abuse?

Safety hazards – Drugs of abuse reduce physical coordination, distort senses and affect judgment. These effects expose an individual to accidents, especially when he drives a vehicle or operates machinery.

Overdose – This can and does happen, unintentionally resulting in accidents or death.

Street drug hazards – Illegal drugs are often adulterated, exposing the user who is unaware of the drugs' properties and potency to unknown hazards.

Legal hazards – A person in illegal possession of drugs can be fined or imprisoned or both. A criminal record stays with the accused for life.

- What are 'gateway drugs' and why are they thus named?

Alcohol and tobacco are called 'gateway drugs'. Since all addicts start with these drugs and then proceed to abuse of other drugs, these are called 'gateway drugs'.

- What is 'cold turkey'?

'Cold turkey' is the term used by drug abusers to refer to the withdrawal symptoms of brown sugar. The patient feels hot and cold in turn and also has goose flesh (hair standing on end). Moreover, watering of the eyes and the nose gives the impression that he has a cold. That is why the term 'cold turkey' came to be used.

- Can smoking marijuana affect the lungs?

Marijuana contains approximately four times the tar content of cigarettes. Therefore it can contribute to lung cancer and other lung diseases.

- Why does the ganja user like to eat sweets?

Ganja interferes with the body's sugar balance and triggers a craving for sweets.

- What are designer drugs?

Some synthetic drugs are produced in the laboratory using unique drug combinations, giving rise to different, sometimes unforeseen, reactions. These drugs are very expensive and are used mostly in developed countries.

- What are ethyl and methyl alcohol?

Ethanol or ethyl alcohol is the chemical present in alcoholic beverages. Illicit arrack sometimes contains methyl alcohol. Methyl alcohol is poisonous and its consumption can lead to blindness and has been known to cause death.

- Does alcohol affect all individuals in the same way? What are the factors that influence the effect that alcohol has on people?

The factors that determine the effect include the following:

- a. Body weight – the effect of alcohol is more intense in the person who weighs less than in an individual who weighs more.

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- b. The amount of ethyl alcohol present in the beverage — distilled spirits like whisky and brandy have a higher percentage of ethyl alcohol (45-60%) compared to wine (12-16%) and beer (6-8%).
 - c. The effect is felt more quickly when the alcoholic beverage is mixed with soda than water. The carbon-dioxide molecules present in soda increase the rate of absorption of alcohol into the blood stream.
 - d. The speed of drinking — the liver detoxifies about 1 drink (30ml of distilled spirit) in one hour. So, if the intake is spaced out and alcohol consumed slowly the effect is less intense. If, instead, a person gulps his drinks and consumes a larger quantity within a shorter period of time, the effect is more pronounced.
 - e. Presence of food in the stomach — when alcohol gets mixed with food the absorption of alcohol into the blood is slowed down and the effect accordingly lessened. When a person drinks on an empty stomach, alcohol gets into the blood stream much faster, and the effect is thus felt quickly and in a more intense way.
 - f. The mood of the individual before drinking — if a person is tense the effect is less than when he is in a more relaxed frame of mind. The individual's expectation of the effect of the alcohol and the social environment in which he drinks also play a part.
- Alcohol tends to pep up a person because it is a stimulant. Is it true?

No. Alcohol is only a depressant. Alcohol's first action is to depress that part of the brain which controls inhibitions. Since the person becomes less inhibited, he immediately feels more relaxed. But his brain is being depressed or slowed down and not stimulated. Consumption of large quantities results in impairment of thought, judgment and coordination.
 - What should one do to make an intoxicated person sober?

Popular methods like drinking black coffee or having a cold shower will not help. Nothing can speed up the sobering process because the liver oxidizes alcohol only at a steady rate (one drink per hour). All that one has to do is to rest and wait for the liver to burn up the alcohol which has been consumed.
 - What is 'delirium tremens'?

It is the severest form of alcohol withdrawal. Rapid heart rate, sweating, high blood pressure and confusion develop. Hallucinations, delusions and agitated behavior are common. Fever is also present. Seizures may precede the onset of delirium. Physical illness predisposes this syndrome — a person in good health rarely develops delirium tremens during alcohol withdrawal.



INTERNALIZING TOOLS

QUIZ

- 1) Name the plant source of heroin.
- 2) What kind of addictive drug is present in cough syrups that are abused?
- 3) To which category of drugs does buprenorphine belong?
- 4) The addictive potential of heroin is low — true or false?
- 5) What is the psychoactive chemical present in ganja?
- 6) What are the kinds of drugs that come under the category of cannabis?
- 7) Smoking ganja is safe as it comes from a plant — true or false?
- 8) When is the effect of ganja stronger — when eaten or smoked?
- 9) To which category of drugs does LSD belong?
- 10) Beer drinkers never become alcoholics — true or false?
- 11) What kind of drugs can cause synesthesia?
- 12) If a drug abuser is eating a lot of sweets what kind of drug could he have taken?
- 13) Which category of drugs can cause itchy skin?
- 14) What is 'mainlining'?
- 15) Which is the most commonly abused drug in India?
- 16) What is the percentage of alcohol usually present in beer?
- 17) What is the name of the chemical present in alcoholic beverages?
- 18) Which drug can cause sudden death due to sniffing?
- 19) Of which drug is constipation the well-known side effect?
- 20) What is the connection between a drug's short-term effects and withdrawal symptoms?
- 21) A person can drive safely immediately after drinking three pegs of whisky — true or false?
- 22) Can painkillers become drugs of abuse?
- 23) If a person regularly takes vitamins and liver supplements, his liver will not be affected even if he drinks alcohol heavily — true or false?
- 24) Brown sugar reduces one's appetite — true or false?

ANSWERS

- 1) Poppy plant
- 2) Codeine
- 3) Narcotic analgesics
- 4) False
- 5) THC – delta-9-tetra-hydrocannabinol
- 6) Ganja/Marijuana
Hashish/Charas
Hashish oil
Bhang
- 7) False
- 8) When it is smoked.
- 9) Hallucinogens
- 10) False. As long as a person consumes a beverage that contains ethyl alcohol, he can become an alcoholic. Beer is not an exception.
- 11) Cannabis in high doses and hallucinogenic drugs
- 12) Cannabis
- 13) Narcotic analgesics
- 14) Injecting into the vein
- 15) Alcohol
- 16) 6-8%
- 17) Ethyl alcohol
- 18) Volatile solvents
- 19) Narcotic analgesics
- 20) The withdrawal symptoms are the opposite of the short-term effects.
- 21) False
- 22) Yes
- 23) False. The liver will be affected.
- 24) True