

FACTS ABOUT ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

How Big is America's Drug Problem?

Approximately 18 million American workers abuse alcohol and drugs. A startling 7.5 percent of the nation's work force report daily drinking, and an additional 7 percent report "heavy drinking". The economic and human costs to U.S. business are enormous.

Additionally, alcohol and drug abuse is linked to 72 percent of aggravated assaults, 54 percent of violent crimes, 50 percent murders, and more than 50 percent of fatal car accidents in America. Clearly, America's alcohol and drug problem has a direct, substantial and highly detrimental impact on all of us.

How Drugs affect the Workplace

- Absenteeism abusers are absent from work two-and-a-half times more frequently than non-users.
- Lost productivity 25 to 33 percent lower for abusers in 1997 abuse will cost employers 66 billion in lost productivity alone.
- Sick leave (health insurance rates are 300 percent higher for substance abusers; and workers' compensation claims (40 percent of industrial fatalities and 47 percent of industrial injuries can be traced to substance abuse.

The Hidden Costs are Immeasurable.

The effects of alcohol abuse can be seen across-the-board in American industries. Transportation Research Board estimated that 11.8 percent of fatal accidents, 5.4 percent of accidents involving injuries and 2.6 percent of accidents involving property damage involved alcohol impaired drivers.

What are the symptoms of Alcoholism?

- Physical Signs: Weariness/exhaustion; untidiness; depression anxiety; blank stares; slurred speech; suspiciousness; unsteady walk; apathy.
- Absenteeism: Frequent unreported absences: absences from work area more than usual and necessary; unusually high incidence of such common ailments as colds and headaches; consistently unplanned Monday/Friday absences.
- Work patterns: Inconsistent work quality; difficulty in recalling instructions; fluctuating periods of productivity; use of more time to complete work/increased missed deadlines; poor judgement; shorten attention span.
- Personal Relationships: overreaction to real or imagined criticism; frequent borrowing of money; avoidance of and withdrawal from, peers; domestic complaints; complaints from co-workers; persistent job transfer requests.

How Long Does Alcohol Stay in the System?

The maximum detection period for alcohol is generally not more than 10 to 12 hours since consumption, In contrast, marijuana can be detected in urine for up to several weeks, although 2 to 4 days is the norm for most marijuana users. (Depends on the frequency of use)

How Much Alcohol Causes Impairment?

Individual reactions to alcohol can vary dramatically because of numerous factors, including body weight, eating habits, sex age, health, family background, consumption rate and tolerance.

Intoxication is caused by the amount of alcohol in person's bloodstream. When you drink faster than your body can eliminate it, your blood-alcohol level increases. At a blood-alcohol level of as low as 0.04 percent (approximately 2 drinks in an hour for a 160-pound individual), your judgment and coordination are impaired, and your vision is impaired. It takes 1hour to 1 ½ hours to process one drink.

Alcohol does not need to be digested; it immediately affects your judgement, coordination, and depth perception.

How Alcohol Affects Your Driving Skills

Eye movements	. 03 to .05 the effects of alcohol interfere with voluntary eye movements impairing the eyes ability to rapidly track a moving target.
Psychomotor task	. 035 Alcohol affects eye-to-hand reaction time, making effective steering more and more difficult as BAC increases. Average reaction time is ¾ second when intoxicated 7 seconds
Attention Span	. 04 More time is required to read signs; alcohol-impaired drivers are unable to process information from all sources.
Ability to perform multiple tasks	. 02 Alcohol-impaired drivers tend to focus on only one task, when in fact several tasks (e.g. steering, tracking, and monitoring) are all required.

COCAINE

The word “cocaine” refers to the drug in both a powder (cocaine) and crystal crack) Form. It is made from the coca plant and causes a short-lived high that is immediately followed by opposite, intense feeling of depression, edginess, and a craving for more of the drug. Cocaine may be snorted as a powder, converted to a liquid form for injection with a needle, or processed into a crystal form to be smoked.

Cocaine affects your Body

People who use cocaine often don’t eat or sleep regularly. They can experience increased heart rate, muscle spasms, and convulsions. If they snort cocaine, they can also permanently damage their nasal tissue.

Cocaine affects your emotions

Using cocaine can make you feel paranoid angry, hostile, and anxious even when you’re not high.

Cocaine is addictive

Cocaine interferes with the way your brain processes chemicals that create feelings of pleasure, so you need more and more of the drug just to feel normal. People, who become addicted to cocaine start to lose interest in other areas of their life, like school, friends, and sports.

Risks

Combining cocaine with other drugs or alcohol is extremely dangerous. The effects of one drug can magnify the effects of another and mixing substances can be deadly.

Symptom

- Σ Red blood shot eyes
- Σ A runny nose or frequently sniffing
- Σ Acting withdrawn, depressed, tired, or careless about personal appearance
- Σ Losing interest in family, job.
- Σ Frequently needing money

How Cocaine affects you’re Driving Skills

- Σ The most dramatic effects of cocaine with respect to driving are on vision. Cocaine may cause a higher sensitivity to light, halos around bright objected, and difficulty focusing. Users have also reported blurred vision, glare problems, and hallucinations, particularly “snow lights” weak flashes or movements of light in the peripheral field of vision, which tend to make drivers swerve toward or away from the lights. Some users have also reported auditory hallucinations (ringing bells) and olfactory hallucinations.

- Σ Cocaine can also heighten irritability, excitability, and startle response. Users have reported that sudden sounds, such as horns or sirens, have caused them severe anxiety coupled with rapid steering or braking reactions, even when the source of the sound was not in the immediate vicinity of their vehicles.

- Σ Everyone surveyed reported attention lapses while driving and ignoring relevant stimuli such as changes in traffic signals.

Marijuana (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol)

Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug in America today. The term marijuana, as commonly used, refers to the leaves and flowering tops (buds) of the cannabis plant. A tobacco like substance produced by drying the leaves and flowering tops of the cannabis plant, marijuana varies significantly in its potency, depending on the source and selection of plant materials used..

Marijuana contains known toxins and cancer-causing chemicals, which are stored in fat cells for as long as several months. Some of the effects of marijuana also included dry mouth-increased heart rate reddening of eyes impaired motor skills. Marijuana users experience the same health problems as tobacco smokers, such as bronchitis, emphysema and bronchial asthma. Extended use increases risk to the lungs and reproductive system, as well as suppression of the immune system. Occasionally, hallucinations, fantasies and paranoia are reported.

Length of Time Detectable after use:

4-5 days for casual user, up to 70 days for “heavy users”

How Cannabis Effects You’re Driving Skills

- Σ Experimental evidence indicates that cannabis impairs the skills important for driving. Perception and attention are greatly affected and various tracking functions are also impaired. Tests on driving simulators showed the biggest impairment caused by cannabis was in perceiving and responding to potentially hazardous situations. Combined with alcohol, sedatives, and various other drugs, cannabis heighten their effects on thinking, behavior, and muscle control.

OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATIONS

Some drugs have depressant side effects along with their main effect. Included in this category are cough medicines, cold remedies, drugs to prevent motion sickness or nausea, and antihistamines to control allergy symptoms. Taken on their own, but especially when

combined with alcohol, they can cause drowsiness, slower reaction times, and decreased attention and coordination.

ANTI-DEPRESSANTS

The sedative effect of some antidepressants can impair vigilance, significantly decrease reaction time, and seriously affect a person's ability to handle a vehicle properly. Users should be particularly careful when driving demands divided attention.

TRANQUILIZERS & BARBITURATES

Tranquilizers and barbiturates are particularly dangerous in conjunction with alcohol because the mixture increases the accident risk beyond that found with anyone of the drugs alone. On their own minor tranquilizers can slow reaction time, decrease eye-hand coordination, and interfere with one's judgment. The major tranquilizers impair information processing, especially at the onset of treatment. However, these considerations need to be weighted against the possibility of even greater impairment of someone's ability to drive when depressed, anxious, preoccupied, or irritable without the beneficial effects of such medications as tranquilizers or antidepressants. Even moderate doses can effect your motor skills.