

- Describe the physical effects of methamphetamine use. Describe a "tweaker."
- Identify ways of avoiding drug use and addiction.

Follow-up Activities

- Have students search the Internet and other sources for information about the history of stimulant use to create colorful educational posters. Have each student choose one type of stimulant (i.e., caffeine, nicotine, ephedra, diet pills, illegal stimulants) to research and ask him or her to note any unusual facts about his or her chosen topic.
- Have students create colorful labeled diagrams to illustrate the action of neurotransmitters in a healthy person's brain and a meth abuser's brain.
- Have students create a poster showing the cycle of addiction. Use a large circle to represent the ongoing cycle of any addiction and illustrate the stages of heroin addiction around the circle.
- In peer discussion groups, have students share strategies for keeping themselves drug-free. Discuss the places where a person can find support if he or she is experiencing problems.

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our Web site at www.LibraryVideo.com

- www.drugabuse.gov/drugpages/methamphetamine.html
These pages from the National Institute on Drug Abuse Web site provide information about methamphetamine abuse and links to further resources on the topic.
- www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/
"Go Ask Alice!" is a Web site about sexuality and drug issues that provides factual, authoritative information using a harm reduction perspective.
- www.dea.gov/pubs/straight/meth.htm
"Get It Straight!" is a site for teens maintained by the Drug Enforcement Administration of the U.S. Department of Justice.
- www.prevlink.org/getthefacts/drugs/qmeth.html
The Alcohol and Drug Information Clearinghouse provides information on methamphetamine and other dangerous drugs.

Suggested Print Resources

- Hyde, Margaret O. *Drugs 101: An Overview for Teens*. Millbrook Press, Brookfield, CT; 2003.
- Triggler, David J., ed. *Ritalin (Drugs: The Straight Facts)*. Chelsea House Publishers, Broomall, PA; 2003.

For help with a drug problem, call 1-800-662-HELP or go to:
www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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COMPLETE LIST OF TITLES

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • ALCOHOL & ALCOHOLISM | • MARIJUANA |
| • ALCOHOL: TEENAGE DRINKING | • METHAMPHETAMINE & OTHER STIMULANTS |
| • CLUB DRUGS | • STEROIDS |
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DRUG Education for Teens™

METHAMPHETAMINE & OTHER STIMULANTS

Grades 7 & up

Successful prevention education must empower teens to develop their own decision-making skills and assume responsibility for making choices that keep them healthy and safe. It is important to convey that most youths do not use drugs. In fact, smoking, drinking and other drug use has fallen among teens in recent years.

Nonetheless, drug related problems continue to devastate families and communities. Prepared with credible information, students develop an understanding of the risks involved in the use of any drug and learn that you don't have to be an addict for drugs to change your life.

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Before Viewing the Program

Engage the group with the following discussion points before viewing the program. Brainstorm a list of responses and record them on the chalkboard or flipchart. After viewing the video, refer to the list and add or revise if necessary.

- Why do people use drugs?
- What is addiction?
- Do you know of someone who is addicted to drugs? What is his or her life like?
- Is there a type of person more likely to become addicted to drugs?
- What is your image of a drug addict?
- Where can a person find support if they are experiencing problems?

Background

Stimulants are drugs that speed up your activity level, give you more energy and curb your appetite. Caffeine is a stimulant found in a number of foods including coffee, tea, chocolate and many soft drinks. Nicotine, found in tobacco products, is also a powerful stimulant. Some stimulants are legally prescribed as anti-depressants, diet drugs, or are given to children with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) to help their behavior. Other stimulants can be purchased over-the-counter at pharmacies and health food store. Just because the drugs are legal doesn't mean they're safe. All stimulants are addictive, and the more powerful the stimulant, the greater the chance of abuse and addiction. Drugs known as "speed" are extremely dangerous stimulants sold illegally on the street.

Cocaine is a powerful stimulant that is smuggled illegally into the U.S. and sold on the streets. One of the most frightening stimulants is methamphetamine, known as "meth" or "crank." This drug can quickly and easily trap users into a hopeless web of addiction and tragedy. Methamphetamine is an amphetamine derivative that is most commonly produced illegally in clandestine labs and abused. It is snorted, injected, or smoked. Smoking or injecting meth can produce a "high" within five to ten seconds. Immediately after smoking or intravenous injection, the user experiences an intense "rush" that lasts only a few minutes. Snorting produces effects within three to five minutes, and ingesting meth orally produces effects within 15 to 20 minutes that last anywhere from 8 to 24 hours.

Effects of Stimulants

All stimulants increase activity in the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord). They increase heart rate, blood pressure and body temperature. They release more sugar into the bloodstream.

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Stimulants act on the "pleasure circuit" of the brain by increasing the levels of certain neurotransmitters present in each synapse — the space between the brain's billions of nerve cells. This causes feelings of pleasure and euphoria. An increase in central nervous system activity means that heart rate, blood pressure and body temperature increase. More sugar is released into the bloodstream, causing effects that can vary from a mild feeling of alertness to nervousness and insomnia. Other effects are increased physical activity, decreased appetite, increased respiration, hyperthermia, and euphoria. The altered neurotransmitter levels can lead to irritability, violent behavior and paranoia. Serious medical complications can occur, including heart damage, strokes and psychosis.

When a chronic user stops taking stimulants, withdrawal symptoms can include depression, anxiety, fatigue, paranoia, aggression, and an intense craving for the drug. Severe behavioral problems can persist for weeks or even months. Methamphetamine addicts are the most difficult to treat. One reason is that, over time, the drug destroys the ability of the user to feel pleasure. Many brain cells lose their ability to function permanently, leaving the chronic user unable to feel anything without the drug.

Focus Questions

1. What are stimulants?
2. Why do people use stimulants?
3. What foods contain caffeine?
4. How do people use stimulants?
5. Why do chronic methamphetamine users progress from snorting to smoking to eventually injecting it?
6. How do amphetamines affect the body?
7. How does methamphetamine use affect the mind?
8. How does methamphetamine "trick" the brain?

Vocabulary

caffeine — A stimulant drug (chemical formula $C_8H_{10}O_2N_4 \cdot H_2O$) found in coffee, tea, cacao, and some other plants. The drug increases the blood pressure, stimulates the central nervous system, promotes urine formation, and stimulates the action of the heart and lungs.

cocaine — A dangerous stimulant drug (chemical formula $C_{17}H_{21}NO_4$) found in the leaves of the coca plant.

detoxification — A process of allowing the body to rid itself of a drug while managing the symptoms of withdrawal; often the first step in a drug treatment program.

ephedrine — A stimulant drug (chemical formula $C_{10}H_{15}NO$) found in the leaves of the Ephedra sinica, or ma huang plant.

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methamphetamine — A highly addictive synthetic stimulant drug (chemical formula $C_{10}H_{15}N$) also known as crank, ice, speed and glass.

attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) — A mental condition affecting children and adults that is characterized by problems with attention, impulse behavior, and overactivity.

nicotine — A stimulant drug (chemical formula $C_{10}H_{14}N_2$) found in the leaves of the tobacco plant. In small doses the drug stimulates heart activity, increases blood pressure and reduces appetite.

neurotransmitter — A chemical released by a neuron at a synapse to relay information to an adjacent nerve cell.

nucleus accumbens — An area deep in the brain that is activated when a person has feelings of pleasure or pain.

dopamine — A neurotransmitter involved in the brain's interpretation of pleasure.

psychological dependence — A craving or compulsion for repeated use of a drug despite any adverse effects that may occur.

physical dependence — The process that occurs when the body has adapted to the presence of a drug and reduces its own production of neurotransmitters. When drug users develop physical dependence, withdrawal symptoms occur if use of the drug is reduced or stopped abruptly.

relapse — To slip back into addiction.

stimulants — A group of drugs that excites the central nervous system, increases alertness, and alleviates fatigue. Many stimulants are known on the street as "speed."

synapse — The space between neurons in which neurotransmitters are released.

tolerance — A process involving the body's lessening response to a drug, making it necessary for users to take higher doses of the drug to achieve the same effects once reached with lower doses.

withdrawal — Symptoms of illness that occur when an addict discontinues use of a drug.

Discussion Topics

- Substance abuse among adolescents and young adults has declined since the mid-1990s. Is this surprising? What are some reasons that could account for the decline?
- Discuss the fact that drug abuse costs the nation nearly \$110 billion a year. Illicit drug abuse contributes to many social ills plaguing society: violent crime, the spread of AIDS, poverty, homelessness, teenage pregnancy, school dropout rates, family violence and rising healthcare costs.

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