

DRUGS

Every day 15,000 teens use drugs for the first time¹, and 50% misuse them at least once⁶. These include benzos, bath salts, meth, over the counters, prescriptions, marijuana, etc. All negatively affect IQ, memory, mental illness', cancer, lungs, the immune system, the heart, etc. Many teens use marijuana, where THC is nearly 5 times stronger than it was 20 years ago⁸, and E-cigarette use increased 900% in 2015¹², with 17%-37% of teens between grades 8-12 using, usually by vaping⁷, which includes harmful ingredients like aerosol, formaldehyde, acrolein, lead, diacetyl, etc. One JUUL pod's nicotine equals a pack of cigarettes'¹⁵. The Bible doesn't explicitly mention drugs, but tells us to be sober (1 Peter 1:13, 4:7, 5:8), to primarily allow God to influence our mind (Rom. 12:2), to obey the law (Titus 3:1) and be wise choosing friends (1 Cor. 15:33). We can't live for both God and drugs (Matt 6:24). Just because something is "ok" doesn't mean it's "good" (1 Cor. 6:12). For those struggling with drugs, God helps us have self-control (2 Tim. 1:7) and the ability to say no (Titus 2:11-12), so we can glorify Him in everything we do (1 Cor. 10:31) and live in freedom with Jesus (Gal. 5:1).

STATS & QUOTES TO CONSIDER

In the next 24 hours, 15,006 teens will use drugs for the first time.

Every 7 minutes a youth is arrested for a drug crime.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, more than 16 million Americans age 12 and older took a prescription pain reliever, tranquilizer, stimulant or sedative for nonmedical purposes at least once in 2005. In 2008, nearly 2 million teens between the ages of 12 and 17 abused prescription drugs, and more than 15 percent of high school seniors reported non-medical use of at least one prescription medication within the past year.

Teens use benzodiazepines for the same reasons they use alcohol: to relax, to relieve stress, to reduce inhibitions and to get high. While doctors may prescribe benzodiazepines to treat various disorders, repeated use, large doses, or abuse of benzos can result in a variety of negative side effects.

In a recent study, 3.4% of tenth grade students and 5.2% of high school seniors reported using cocaine in the past year. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, about 6 million people over the age of 12 have used cocaine at least once in the past year. Cocaine use causes a host of negative short-term and long-term effects.

Bath salts (also known as ivory wave and vanilla sky) are chemically similar to cocaine or crystal methamphetamine. Typically marketed as salts one would use in an actual bathtub or plant food, they cause a host of negative side effects including disorientation, racing heartbeat, confusion, aggression and seizures, to name a few. Teens abuse bath salts for their energy and euphoria-inducing effects.

Spice (also called K2, moon rock and fake marijuana) is a drug made from shredded dried plant materials and chemicals. Spice causes side effects such as drowsiness, relaxation, paranoia, nausea, appetite loss, hallucinations, rapid breathing and restlessness.

Heroin—also known as smack, h, ska or junk—is an opiate and central nervous system depressant processed from morphine. All methods of heroin use can cause addiction and death from overdose.

Methamphetamine—also known as speed, meth, chalk, ice, crystal or glass—is an extremely addictive stimulant that adversely affects the central nervous system, sometimes permanently damaging and depleting dopamine and serotonin receptors in the brain. Teens use meth for its euphoria-inducing effects. Users risk countless short-term side effects, death from overdose and long-term health consequences such as brain damage (which resembles Alzheimer's disease.)

Effects of over-the-counter drugs vary greatly, but each can cause death if used incorrectly. Mixing OTC drugs is particularly dangerous, as incompatible ingredients produce severe side effects such as nausea, dizziness, a dangerous drop in blood pressure, hallucinations, seizures, an irregular or fast heartbeat, brain damage and buildup of toxins in the body that can damage the heart or liver.

All types of prescription drugs can cause serious damage to users, especially when combined with other substances or when used in high doses. For example, long-term use of opioids or central nervous system depressants can lead to physical dependence and addiction. Opioids can cause drowsiness, confusion, constipation and, depending on dosage, depress breathing. Central nervous system depressants slow brain functioning, cause confusion and lead to poor judgment. If combined with alcohol or with other medications that cause drowsiness, they can slow heart rate and respiration to dangerous levels. Taken repeatedly or in high doses, stimulants can cause anxiety, paranoia, dangerously high body temperatures, irregular heartbeat, seizures, weight loss and insomnia.

Marijuana use causes a host of negative side effects for everyone, but it is particularly detrimental for teenage students. Marijuana decreases learning, judgment and motor skills and diminishes initiative and motivation. Clinical studies show that smoking marijuana leads to cognitive delays that can last up to 24 hours, causing reductions in one's ability to concentrate,

consolidate memories and develop verbal and mathematical abilities. In the long term, The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) warns that marijuana use places teenagers at risk for future brain development abnormalities.

The earlier in one's life that drug abuse begins, the more likely an individual will be to become addicted.

In some cases, the pleasurable effects of these drugs (the euphoria that drug abusers seek) are only temporary. As the patient develops a tolerance to the drugs, the desired effects lessen, and the euphoria goes away. Some individuals may assume that the drugs are no longer working, so they increase their dosage so they can feel the effects.

The short-term effects of marijuana include problems with memory and learning, distorted perception, difficulty in thinking and problem-solving, and loss of coordination. Among youth, heavy cannabis use is associated with cognitive problems and increased risk of mental illness.

The United States consumes 80% of the world's prescription painkiller supply, despite not even making up 5% of the world's population

Smoking weed just once could change a teenager's brain

In terms of illicit drugs, teens use marijuana the most. More high school seniors smoke pot than smoke cigarettes at this point, and as of 2015, high school seniors are about as likely to smoke weed as they are to drink.

According to experts, around 13% of people who start smoking pot as teenagers become dependent on it. Regular marijuana use can cause a drop in IQ of up to 8 points. Considering that nearly 3,300 teens try weed for the first time every day, it's an undeniable problem that's impacting high schoolers everywhere.

- 35.1% of 12th graders have smoked pot in the past year
- 21.3% of 12th graders have smoked pot in the last 30 days
- 16.6% of 10th graders have smoked pot in the last 30 days
- 6% of 12th graders say they use marijuana every day
- 81% of 12th graders say it would be easy to get marijuana
- Only 32% of 12th graders feel that regular marijuana use is harmful

Approximately 50% of teens have misused drugs (prescription or illicit) at least once in their life.

The most striking finding of this year's (2018) Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey of drug use and attitudes among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders in hundreds of schools across the country is a substantial and significant increase in vaping. Overall, rates of vaping are second only to alcohol among substances surveyed, with 17.6 percent of 8th graders, 32.3 percent of 10th graders, and 37.3 percent of 12th graders reporting past-year vaping.

As with other vaping measures, marijuana vaping increased significantly from when it was first measured in 2017 to 2018. While past month marijuana vaping is fairly low—reported by 2.6 percent of 8th graders, 7.0 percent of 10th graders, and 7.5 percent of 12th graders—these numbers represent respective increases of 59.7 percent, 62.7 percent, and 50.6 percent over 2017 rates. Daily marijuana use continues to outpace daily cigarette use across grades, reflecting a steep decline in daily cigarette use and fairly stable daily marijuana use.

In just one year, rates of past-year vaping increased by about one-third in all grades.

Students were also asked what substances they had consumed via vaping—nicotine, marijuana, or “just flavoring.” “Just flavoring” was most commonly noted by 8th graders (reported by 15.1 percent), followed by nicotine (10.9 percent) and marijuana (4.4 percent). Tenth graders reported identical rates of “just flavoring” and nicotine vaping (24.7 percent), and 12.4 percent of 10th graders reported vaping marijuana. A higher percentage of 12th graders reported vaping

nicotine (29.7 percent) than flavoring alone (25.7 percent), and 13.1 percent reported vaping marijuana.

By the 8th grade, 28% of adolescents have consumed alcohol, 15% have smoked cigarettes, and 16.5% have used marijuana.

60% of seniors don't see regular marijuana use as harmful, but THC (the active ingredient in the drug that causes addiction) is nearly 5 times stronger than it was 20 years ago.

(In 2016), only 31 percent of 12th graders reported that regular marijuana use is harmful, compared to 58 percent in 2000. This is a worrying statistic, as regular marijuana drug use in teens can lead to short- and long-term effects:

Going into 2018, teenagers face challenges that did not exist a generation or two ago.

Vaping—the inhaling of aerosol through devices—is intended to solve old problems but is creating new ones.

There are, however, growing problems including toxic ingredients linked to cancer, respiratory and heart disease, dry mouth and dizziness. The lack of cigarette or marijuana smoke gives the false impression of being healthier. Evidence shows that this lack encourages minors to vape and smoke. In fact, among youth, e-cigarettes are more popular than smoking. The US Surgeon General reported that e-cigarette use among high school students increased 900 percent, and 40 percent of young e-cigarette users had never smoked regular tobacco. Vaping is used for nicotine instead of cigarettes and for THC instead of marijuana. Nicotine is addictive, raises blood pressure and spikes adrenaline, thus increasing heart rate and likelihood of a heart attack. Many e-cigarettes contain higher nicotine and higher THC than their smoked counterparts. THC is what gives marijuana most of its mind-altering effects. Vaping THC also brings the inhalation of residual solvents in the cannabis oil and the increase of use due to the ease of vaping, with virtually no smell.

Nicotine is the primary agent in both regular cigarettes and e-cigarettes, and it is highly addictive. It causes you to crave a smoke and suffer withdrawal symptoms if you ignore the craving. Nicotine is also a toxic substance. It raises your blood pressure and spikes your adrenaline, which increases your heart rate and the likelihood of having a heart attack.

E-cigarette users get even more nicotine than they would from a tobacco product — you can buy extra-strength cartridges, which have a higher concentration of nicotine, or you can increase the e-cigarette's voltage to get a greater hit of the substance.

Although they've been marketed as an aid to help you quit smoking, e-cigarettes have not received Food and Drug Administration approval as smoking cessation devices. A recent study found that most people who intended to use e-cigarettes to kick the nicotine habit ended up continuing to smoke both traditional and e-cigarettes.

Traditional tobacco product. In 2015, the U.S. surgeon general reported that e-cigarette use among high school students had increased by 900 percent, and 40 percent of young e-cigarette users had never smoked regular tobacco.

According to Blaha, there are three reasons e-cigarettes may be particularly enticing to young people. First, many teens believe that vaping is less harmful than smoking. Second, e-cigarettes have a lower per-use cost than traditional cigarettes. Finally, vape cartridges are often formulated with flavorings such as apple pie and watermelon that appeal to younger users.

Vaping weakens your immune system.

The “water vapor” that is emitted from these devices is not as harmless as you think. In reality, the “water vapor” is actually an aerosol (like hair spray) that contains chemicals like formaldehyde (used to preserve dead specimens) and acrolein (a nasal irritant).

There are also other potentially harmful ingredients, including ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs, formaldehyde, heavy metals (lead, tin, nickel) and flavorants such as diacetyl, a chemical associated with serious lung disease.

Youth frequently favor an e-cigarette is called "JUUL" (pronounced "jewel"). It is popular because it has sleek, small packaging that resembles a flash drive, all the better to easily carry and use. Easy to hide in a pocket, easy to use even in a school classroom. It is appealing due to its kid-friendly flavors such as mango and mint. JUUL is very addictive as it contains twice the concentration of nicotine of other 'e-cigs'. Each JUUL pod contains the same amount of nicotine as an entire pack of cigarettes.

How E-Liquids Affect the Body:

- Lead to nicotine addiction
- Gateway to other addictive substances
- Depress immune system
- Prevent lungs from detoxing
- Increase risk of frequent infections

BIBLE VERSES TO CONSIDER

1 Peter 1:13 “Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.”

1 Peter 4:7 “The end of all things is near. Therefore, be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray.”

1 Peter 5:8 “Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”

Romans 12:2 “Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Titus 3:1 “Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good.”

1 Corinthians 15:33 "Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character.""

Matthew 6:24 (Jesus) "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other."

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So, glorify God in your body."

1 Thessalonians 5:6 "So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober."

Ephesians 5:18 "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit."

1 Timothy 4:8 "For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come."

3 John 1:2 "Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well."

Romans 14:21 "It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble."

Ephesians 5:12 "It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret."

Ephesians 5:15-17 "Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is."

1 Corinthians 10:13 "No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."

Galatians 5:19-21 "The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, *and the like*. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God."

1 Thessalonians 5:8 "But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet."

Matthew 18:8-9 "If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell."

Romans 13:1-2 "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves."

James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."

2 Corinthians 10:5 "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

Proverbs 4:23 "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."

1 Peter 2:13-16 "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves."

1 Peter 2:18 "Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh."

2 Corinthians 4:2 "Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God."

2 Corinthians 6:3 "We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited."

2 Peter 3:14 "Make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him."

Philippians 2:12 "Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling."

1 Corinthians 6:12 "'I have the right to do anything,' you say—but not everything is beneficial. 'I have the right to do anything'—but I will not be mastered by anything."

2 Timothy 1:7 "For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."

Titus 2:11-12 "For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age."

1 Corinthians 10:31 "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

Galatians 5:1 "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."

Philippians 4:13 "I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

1 John 2:16 "For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world."

Proverbs 14:12 "There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end, it leads to death."

1 Corinthians 9:27 "No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."

James 4:7 "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Galatians 5:16 "So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh."

Proverbs 1:10 "My son, if sinful men entice you, do not give in to them."

John 10:10 "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full."

REFERENCES

1. Amy Morin, “The Truth About Troubled Teens”, *Very Well Mind*, October 2018. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-happening-to-our-children-2606269> (accessed April 2019).
2. Caron Treatment Centers, “The Nature and Prevalence of Teen Drug Abuse”, 2019. https://www.caron.org/understanding-addiction/teen-drug-addiction?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIv5_e9MC_4QIVrR6tBh1jZAzPEAAAYAiAAEgKoGvD_BwE&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIv5_e9MC_4QIVrR6tBh1jZAzPEAAAYAiAAEgKoGvD_BwE (accessed April 2019).
3. Drug Abuse.com, “Are Drugs Taking Control of Your Life or of The Life of a Loved One?”, 2019. www.DrugAbuse.com (accessed April 2019).
4. Sam Blanchard, “Smoking Weed Just Once Could Change a Teenager’s Brain: Scientists Discover Even Small Amounts of Cannabis Are Enough to Thicken Tissue”, *Daily Mail*, January 2019. <https://mol.im/a/6590927> (accessed March 2019).
5. The Recovery Village, “Teens Are Using Drugs in High School”, 2019. <https://www.therecoveryvillage.com/teen-addiction/high-school-drug-use/#gref> (accessed April 2019).
6. Project Know, “Teen Drug and Alcohol Statistics and Information”, 2019. <https://www.projectknow.com/teen/abuse-statistics/> (accessed April 2019).
7. National Institute on Drug Abuse, “Monitoring the Future Survey: High School and Youth Trends”, December 2018. <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/monitoring-future-survey-high-school-youth-trends> (accessed April 2019).
8. Do Something, “11 Facts About Teens and Drug Use”, 2014. <https://www.dosomething.org/us/facts/11-facts-about-teens-and-drug-use#fn8> (accessed April 2019).
9. Newport Academy, “10 Facts About Teenage Drug Use”, August 2017. <https://www.newportacademy.com/resources/substance-abuse/10-facts-teen-drug-abuse/> (accessed April 2019).
10. Ashwood Recovery, “Teen Substance Abuse Statistics Coming In 2018”, 2017. <https://www.ashwoodrecovery.com/blog/teen-substance-abuse-statistics-coming-2018/> (accessed April 2019).
11. Foundation for a Drug Free World, “The Truth About Vaping: Vaping is a Popular Alternative To Smoking, But This Doesn’t Make It Any Less Dangerous”, 2006-2019. <https://www.drugfreeworld.org/newsletter/volume3/issue4/the-truth-about-vaping.html> (accessed April 2019).
12. Michael Joseph Blaha, “5 Truths You Need To Know About Vaping”, *Johns Hopkins Medicine*, 2019. <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/5-truths-you-need-to-know-about-vaping> (accessed April 2019).

13. NCBI, “Vaping Weakens Your Immune System”, *The Truth*, 2019. <https://www.thetruth.com/the-facts/fact-401> (accessed April 2019).
14. <https://usmc-mccs.org/articles/vape-myth-busting/> (accessed April 2019).
15. Elise Herman, “The Truth About Vaping”, *Kittitas Valley Healthcare*, September 2018. <https://www.kvhealthcare.org/news/Post/The-truth-about-vaping/> (accessed April 2019).
16. National Jewish Health, “The Scary Truth About Teen Vaping”, 2019. <https://www.nationaljewish.org/health-insights/health-infographics/the-scary-truth-about-teen-vaping> (accessed April 2019).
17. Spirit & Truth Fellowship International, “Truth or Tradition: What Does the Bible Say About Drugs and Drinking Alcohol?”, 2016. <https://www.truthortradition.com/articles/what-does-the-bible-say-about-drugs-and-drinking-alcohol> (accessed April 2019).