

THE TRUTH ABOUT

# CRACK

Cocaine

Base      Ball  
Jelly beans  
Nuggets      Rock

[drugfreeworld.org](http://drugfreeworld.org)

## WHY THIS BOOKLET WAS PRODUCED

There is a lot of talk about drugs in the world—on the streets, at school, on the Internet and TV. Some of it is true, some not.

Much of what you hear about drugs actually comes from those selling them. Reformed drug dealers have confessed they would have said anything to get others to buy drugs.

Don't be fooled. You need facts to avoid becoming hooked on drugs and to help your friends stay off them. That is why we have prepared this booklet—for you.

Your feedback is important to us, so we look forward to hearing from you. You can visit us on the web at [drugfreeworld.org](http://drugfreeworld.org) and e-mail us at [info@drugfreeworld.org](mailto:info@drugfreeworld.org).

# What is Crack Cocaine?

**C**rack cocaine is the crystal form of cocaine, which normally comes in a powder form.\* It comes in solid blocks or crystals varying in color from yellow to pale rose or white.

Crack is heated and smoked. It is so named because it makes a cracking or popping sound when heated.

Crack, the most potent form in which cocaine appears, is also the riskiest. It is between 75% and 100% pure, far stronger and more potent than regular cocaine.

Smoking crack allows it to reach the brain more quickly and thus brings an intense and immediate—but very short-lived—high that lasts about 15 minutes. And because addiction can develop even more rapidly if the substance

is smoked rather than snorted (taken in through the nose), an abuser can become addicted after his or her first time trying crack.

Because of cocaine's high cost, it has long been considered a "rich man's drug." Crack, on the other hand, is sold at prices so low that even teens can afford to buy it—at first. The truth is that once a person is addicted, the expense skyrockets in direct ratio to the increasing amount needed to support the habit.



\* For more information about cocaine in its powdered form, see *The Truth About Cocaine* booklet in this series.

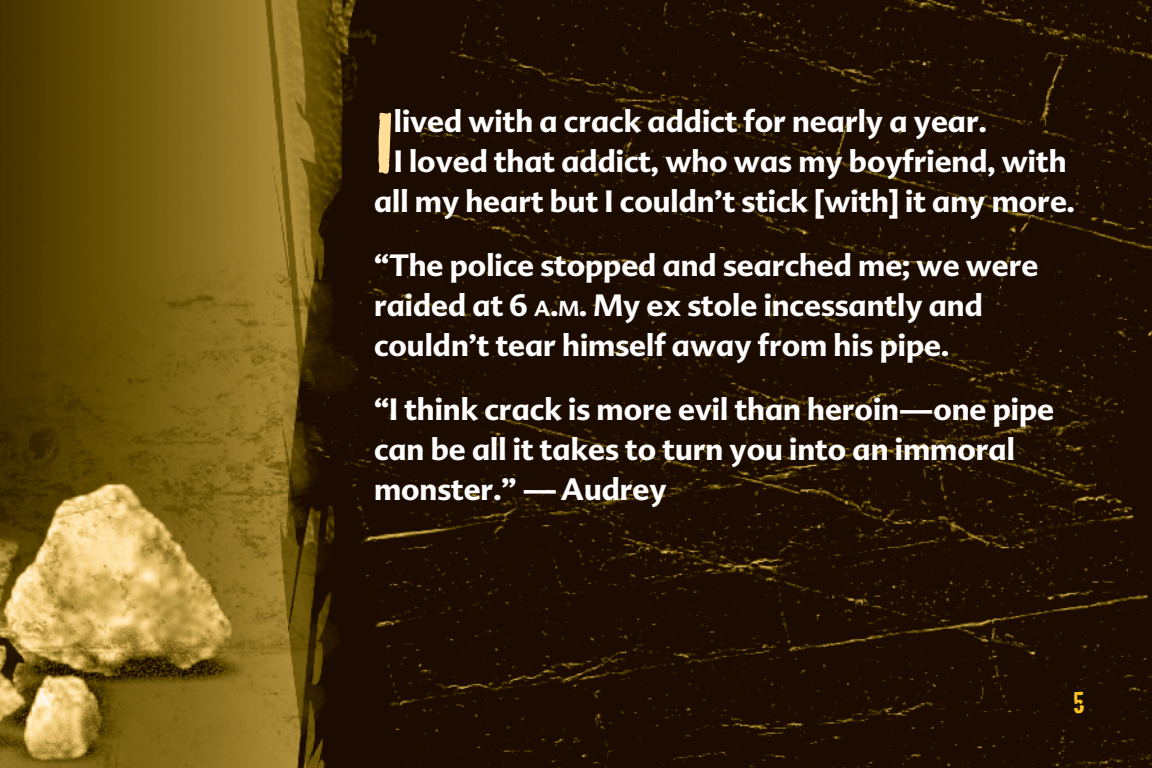


# Street Names

**O**f the dozens of street terms for crack cocaine in use today, the most common are:

- 24-7
  - Apple jacks
  - Badrock
  - Ball
  - Base
  - Beat
  - Candy
  - Chemical
  - Cloud
  - Cookies
  - Crack
  - Crumbs
  - Crunch & munch
  - Devil drug
  - Dice
  - Electric kool-aid
  - Fat bags
  - French fries
  - Glo
  - Gravel
  - Grit
  - Hail
  - Hard ball
  - Hard rock
  - Hotcakes
  - Ice cube
  - Jelly beans
  - Kryptonite
  - Nuggets
  - Paste
  - Piece
  - Prime time
  - Product
  - Raw
  - Rock(s)
  - Rock star
  - Rox/Roxanne
  - Scrabble
  - Sleet
  - Snow coke
  - Sugar block
  - Topo (Spanish)
  - Tornado
  - Troop
- 





**I lived with a crack addict for nearly a year.  
I loved that addict, who was my boyfriend, with  
all my heart but I couldn't stick [with] it any more.**

**“The police stopped and searched me; we were  
raided at 6 A.M. My ex stole incessantly and  
couldn't tear himself away from his pipe.**

**“I think crack is more evil than heroin—one pipe  
can be all it takes to turn you into an immoral  
monster.” — Audrey**

# International Statistics

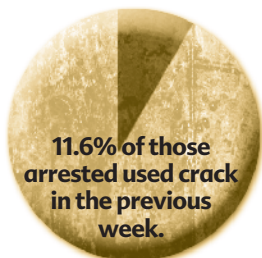
In US Federal courts in 2007, 5,477 individuals were found guilty of crack cocaine-related crimes. More than 95% of these offenders had been involved in crack cocaine trafficking.

The situation is different in Europe. The European Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Drug Addiction reports abuse of crack cocaine is commonly restricted to minority communities in large cities with high levels of unemployment and poor living conditions. In 2006, 20 European countries reported that crack cocaine abusers represented only 2% of all drug users entering substance abuse treatment, and most of them were reported by the United Kingdom.

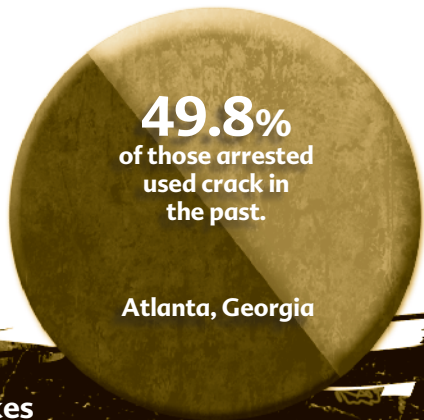
The 2007 US National Survey on Drug Use and Health shows that 8.6 million Americans aged 12 and older reported having used crack. Among those 18 to 25, 6.9% of those surveyed said they had used crack within the last year. The 2007 US Government's Monitoring the Future survey found that among high school students, 3.2% of 12th graders had used crack cocaine at some point in their lives.

In the United States, crack cocaine was the primary drug of abuse in 178,475 admissions to treatment in 2006. This represented 71% of all primary cocaine admissions to treatment that year.

# CRACK & CRIME



Honolulu, Hawaii



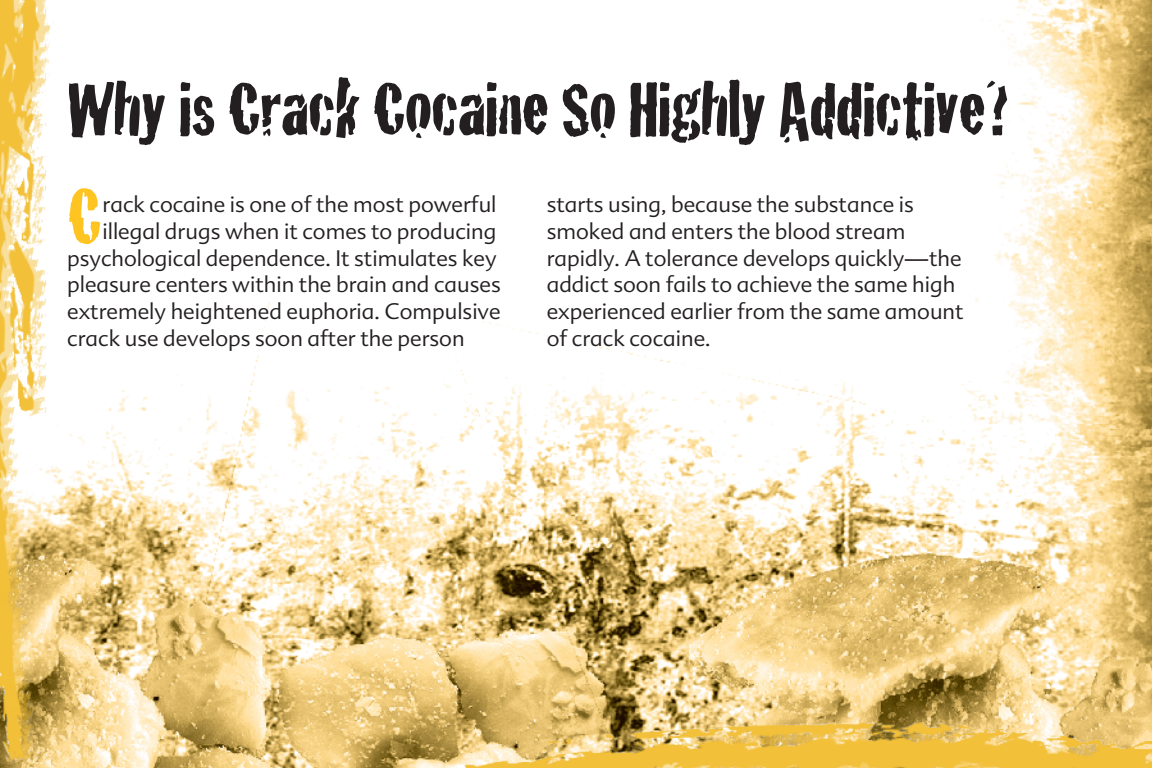
Atlanta, Georgia

**I**t's a totally selfish drug, this crack. It takes over your life. Crack grabs ahold quickly. It doesn't take long at all. The cravings it produces are massive. And you end up using it more frequently because the high is short-lasting." — Peter

# Why is Crack Cocaine So Highly Addictive?

**C**rack cocaine is one of the most powerful illegal drugs when it comes to producing psychological dependence. It stimulates key pleasure centers within the brain and causes extremely heightened euphoria. Compulsive crack use develops soon after the person

starts using, because the substance is smoked and enters the blood stream rapidly. A tolerance develops quickly—the addict soon fails to achieve the same high experienced earlier from the same amount of crack cocaine.





**I had acquired a  
\$2,000 per week  
crack cocaine habit  
and desperately  
wanted to be free  
from the chains.”  
—Jennifer**





# Effects of Crack Cocaine

## WHAT ARE THE SHORT-TERM EFFECTS OF CRACK COCAINE?

**C**rack causes a short-lived, intense high that is immediately followed by the opposite—intense depression, edginess and a craving for more of the drug. People who use it often don't eat or sleep properly. They can experience greatly increased heart rate, muscle spasms and convulsions. The drug can make people feel paranoid,\* angry, hostile and anxious—even when they aren't high.

Regardless of how much of the drug is used or how frequently, crack cocaine increases the risk that the user will experience a heart attack, stroke, seizure or respiratory (breathing) failure, any of which can result in sudden death.

\* paranoid: suspicious, distrustful or afraid of other people.

Smoking crack further presents a series of health risks. Crack is often mixed with other substances that create toxic fumes when burned. As crack smoke does not remain potent for long, crack pipes are generally very short. This often causes cracked and blistered lips, known as “crack lip,” from users having a very hot pipe pressed against their lips.

**T**he only thing on my mind was crack cocaine. And if somebody offers you any of it, you'll jump at it and take it. It's like offering a starving man a loaf of bread if he walks for miles....

**“Things came to a head for me when I'd been smoking constantly for a couple of weeks. One day I just decided I'd had enough—I couldn't live like this any more. And I tried to commit suicide.**

**“I'm going to have to try and fight.... I hope my survival instincts kick in.” — John**

**Retired as a successful corporate exec who had put two daughters through college and had earned my retirement. My retirement party was, however, the beginning of five years of hell. That was when I was introduced to crack cocaine for the first time. Over the next five years, I would lose my home, my wife, all my financial resources, my health and almost my life. I also spent two years in prison.” — William**

## **WHAT ARE THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF CRACK COCAINE?**

**In addition to the usual risks associated with cocaine use, crack users may experience severe respiratory problems, including coughing, shortness of breath, lung damage and bleeding.**

**Long-term effects from use of crack cocaine include severe damage to the heart, liver and kidneys. Users are more likely to have infectious diseases.**

**Continued daily use causes sleep deprivation and loss of appetite, resulting in malnutrition. Smoking crack cocaine also can cause aggressive and paranoid behavior.**

**As crack cocaine interferes with the way the brain processes chemicals, one needs more and more of the drug just to feel “normal.” Those who become addicted to crack cocaine (as with most other drugs) lose interest in other areas of life.**

**Coming down from the drug causes severe depression, which becomes deeper and deeper after each use. This can get so severe that a person will do almost anything to get the drug—even commit murder. And if he or she can’t get crack cocaine, the depression can get so intense it can drive the addict to suicide.**

# Physical & Mental Effects

## SHORT-TERM EFFECTS

Because it is smoked, the effects of crack cocaine are more immediate and more intense than that of powdered cocaine.

- Loss of appetite
- Increased heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature
- Contracted blood vessels
- Increased rate of breathing
- Dilated pupils
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Nausea
- Hyper-stimulation
- Bizarre, erratic, sometimes violent behavior
- Hallucinations, hyper-excitability, irritability
- Tactile hallucination that creates the illusion of bugs burrowing under the skin

- Intense euphoria
- Anxiety and paranoia
- Depression
- Intense drug craving
- Panic and psychosis
- Convulsions, seizures and sudden death from high doses (even one time)

## LONG-TERM EFFECTS

- Permanent damage to blood vessels of ear and brain, high blood pressure, leading to heart attacks, strokes and death
- Liver, kidney and lung damage
- Severe chest pains
- Respiratory failure
- Infectious diseases and abscesses if injected
- Malnutrition, weight loss

- Severe tooth decay
- Auditory and tactile hallucinations
- Sexual problems, reproductive damage and infertility (for both men and women)
- Disorientation, apathy, confused exhaustion
- Irritability and mood disturbances
- Increased frequency of risky behavior
- Delirium or psychosis
- Severe depression
- Tolerance and addiction (even after just one use)



# Children: The Most Innocent Victims of Crack Cocaine

**T**he most innocent victims of crack cocaine are babies born to mothers who use the drug during pregnancy. The March of Dimes, a nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health, reports that use of cocaine in either powdered or crack form during pregnancy can affect a woman and her unborn baby in many ways. During the early months of pregnancy, it may

increase the risk of miscarriage. It also may cause an unborn baby to have a stroke, permanent brain damage or heart attack.

The National Institute for Drug Abuse reports that exposure to crack cocaine during pregnancy may lead to significant later problems in some children.

I was introduced to smoking crack cocaine, and that is when everything stopped functioning. I was out with some people who at that time I considered real close friends. You know, it is true what they say about crack: when you take that first hit, that high you will never get again.... It ruined me completely. It took total control over me.

“Crack cocaine has ruined my reputation, my self-worth and my self-respect.” — Diane



# Crack Cocaine: A Short History

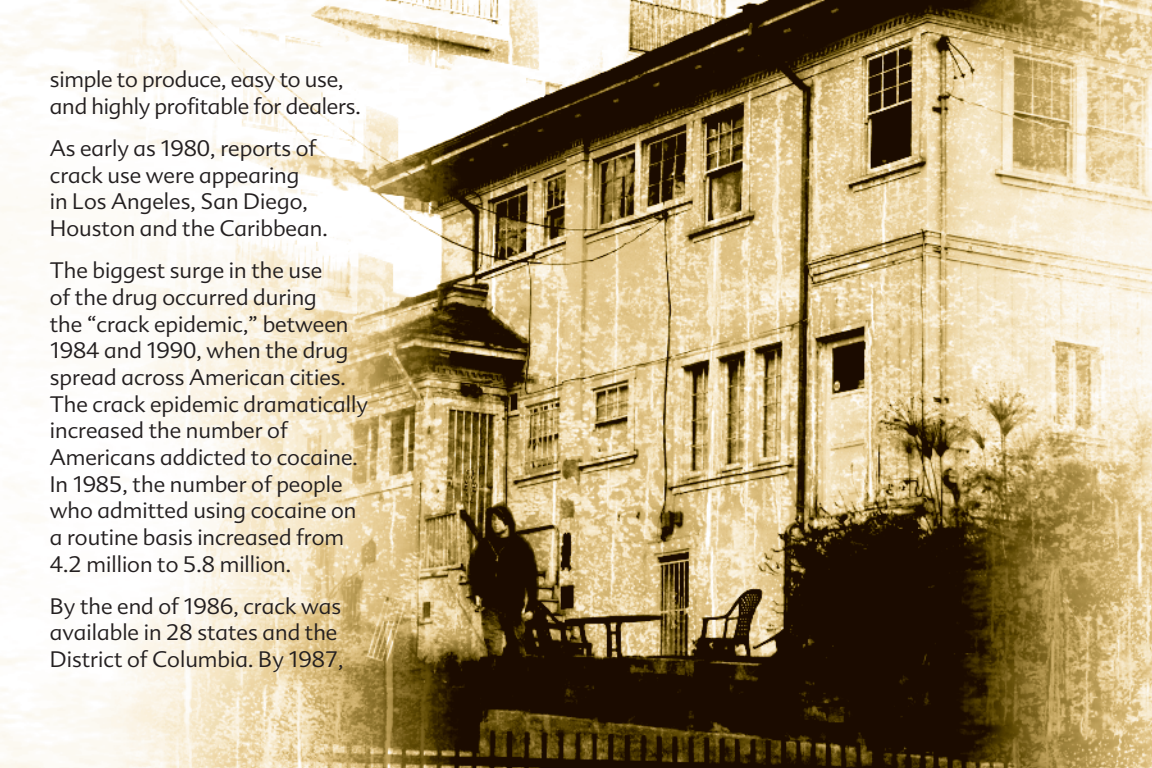
**W**hile the use of coca leaves as an intoxicant dates back three thousand years, crack cocaine, a crystallized form of cocaine, was developed during the cocaine boom of the 1970s and its use spread in the mid-1980s.

According to the US Drug Enforcement Agency, by the late 1970s there was a huge glut of cocaine powder being shipped into the United States. This caused the price of the drug to drop by as much as 80%. Faced with dropping prices for their illegal product, drug dealers converted the powder to “crack,” a solid form of cocaine that could be smoked.

Broken into small chunks, or “rocks,” this form of cocaine could be sold in smaller quantities, to more people at bigger profit. It was cheap,

**Crack was a dealer's dream: it produced an instant high, and its users became addicted in a very short time.**



A sepia-toned photograph of a multi-story residential building, likely a tenement or apartment complex. The building has several windows and a prominent entrance on the left side. A person is visible on a balcony or porch in the foreground. The overall tone is historical and somber.

simple to produce, easy to use,  
and highly profitable for dealers.

As early as 1980, reports of  
crack use were appearing  
in Los Angeles, San Diego,  
Houston and the Caribbean.

The biggest surge in the use  
of the drug occurred during  
the “crack epidemic,” between  
1984 and 1990, when the drug  
spread across American cities.  
The crack epidemic dramatically  
increased the number of  
Americans addicted to cocaine.  
In 1985, the number of people  
who admitted using cocaine on  
a routine basis increased from  
4.2 million to 5.8 million.

By the end of 1986, crack was  
available in 28 states and the  
District of Columbia. By 1987,



crack was reported to be available in all but four states in the United States. Since then, use of the drug has continued to spread throughout North and South America and into Europe and the rest of the world.

By 2002, the United Kingdom was experiencing their own “crack epidemic,” with the number of crack addicts seeking help climbing nearly 50% that year. The UK reported an increase of 74% in seizures of crack cocaine in drug raids between 2000 and 2006.

The majority of European crack cocaine users are located in three cities—Hamburg, London and Paris. But crack cocaine use has also been reported as a significant problem in three French overseas territories—Guadeloupe, French Guiana and Martinique—and in some communities in the Netherlands.





# What Dealers Will Tell You

**W**hen teens were surveyed to find out why they started using drugs in the first place, 55% replied that it was due to pressure from their friends. They wanted to be cool and popular. Dealers know this.

They will approach you as a friend and offer to “help you out” with “something to bring you up.” The drug will “help you fit in” or “make you cool.”

Drug dealers, motivated by the profits they make, will say anything to get you to buy their drugs. They will tell you “just try crack once and everything’s gonna be okay; it will make everything go away.”

They don’t care if the drugs ruin your life as long as they are getting paid. All they care about is money. Former dealers have admitted they saw their buyers as “pawns in a chess game.”

Get the facts about drugs. Make your own decisions.



# The Truth About Drugs

**D**rugs are essentially poisons. The amount taken determines the effect.

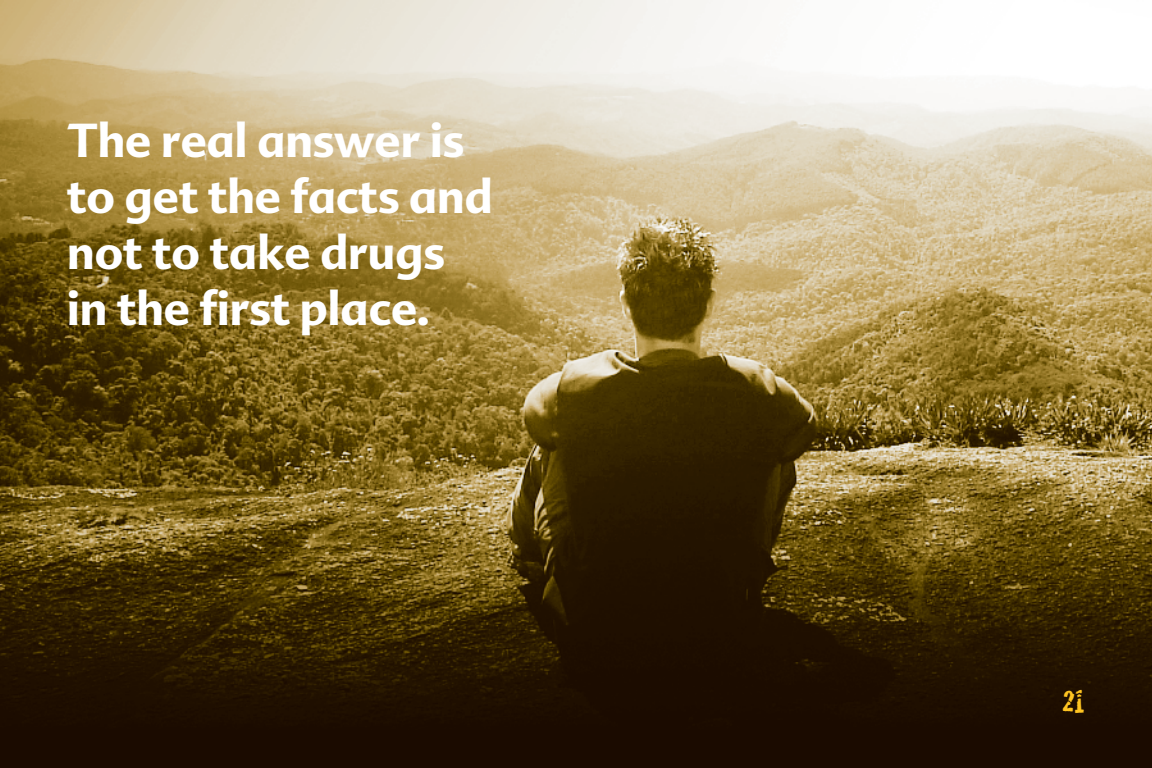
A small amount acts as a stimulant (speeds you up). A greater amount acts as a sedative (slows you down). An even larger amount poisons and can kill.

This is true of any drug. Only the amount needed to achieve the effect differs.

But many drugs have another liability: they directly affect the mind. They can distort the user's perception of what is happening around him or her. As a result, the person's actions may be odd, irrational, inappropriate and even destructive.

Drugs block off all sensations, the desirable ones with the unwanted. So, while providing short-term help in the relief of pain, they also wipe out ability and alertness and muddy one's thinking.

Medicines are drugs that are intended to speed up or slow down or change something about the way your body is working, to try to make it work better. Sometimes they are necessary. But they are still drugs: they act as stimulants or sedatives, and too much can kill you. So if you do not use medicines as they are supposed to be used, they can be as dangerous as illegal drugs.

A person is seen from behind, sitting on a grassy hillside. They are looking out over a vast, hazy landscape of rolling hills and mountains. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light, suggesting either sunrise or sunset. The person is wearing a dark, long-sleeved shirt. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

**The real answer is  
to get the facts and  
not to take drugs  
in the first place.**

## WHY DO PEOPLE TAKE DRUGS?

People take drugs because they want to change something in their lives.

Here are some of the reasons young people have given for taking drugs:

- To fit in
- To escape or relax
- To relieve boredom
- To seem grown up
- To rebel
- To experiment

They think drugs are a solution. But eventually, the drugs become the problem.

Difficult as it may be to face one's problems, the consequences of drug use are always worse than the problem one is trying to solve with them. The real answer is to get the facts and not to take drugs in the first place.



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Millions of copies of booklets such as this have been distributed to people around the world in 22 languages. As new drugs appear on the streets and more information about their effects becomes known, existing booklets are updated and new ones created.

The booklets are published by the Foundation for a Drug-Free World, a nonprofit public benefit organization headquartered in Los Angeles, California.

The Foundation provides educational materials, advice and coordination for its international drug prevention network. It works with youth, parents, educators, volunteer organizations and government agencies—anyone with an interest in helping people lead lives free from drug abuse.



# FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

This booklet is one in a series of publications that cover the facts about marijuana, alcohol, Ecstasy, cocaine, crack cocaine, crystal meth and methamphetamine, inhalants, heroin, LSD and prescription drug abuse. Armed with this information, the reader can make the decision to live a drug-free life.



**For more information or to obtain more copies of this or other booklets in this series, contact:**

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