

THE TRUTH ABOUT
**ALCOHOL &
DRUG USE**

**FOR 13 - 15
YEAR OLDS**



WHAT DO WE DO?

The National Authority for the Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) is a government body established to coordinate the prevention, treatment and management of alcohol and drug abuse in Kenya. We work towards a Kenya free from alcohol and drug abuse by conducting research that helps in formulating policies and laws, conducting public education and facilitating development of rehabilitation facilities.

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FACT

ALCOHOL

Alcohol is a drug contained in beverages/drinks such as wine, beer, and spirits. These include traditional drinks like chang'aa, busaa, mnazi, muratina, karubu, etc. After you drink alcohol, it is absorbed through the walls of the stomach and intestines, directly into the blood stream. It then travels through the blood to the brain. Once it reaches the brain, it depresses or slows down the brain's activity.

What does alcohol do. It...

- Slows down the ability to think clearly and can cause people to make poor decisions;
- Slows down other areas of the brain and nervous system;
- Causes dizziness;
- Decreases coordination;
- Decreases reaction time;
- Makes it harder to speak, walk, and stay awake;
- Causes some people to become unconscious or temporarily lose their memory.



MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT ALCOHOL

MYTH

FACT

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. The best way to get 'high' is to drink alcohol or take drugs. | <p>Alcohol and drugs produce a temporary 'high'. The 'high' or good feeling produced goes away after the alcohol wears off and you feel tired, ill, depressed and anxious.</p> <p>The best way to get 'high' is the natural way. This includes sports, exercise, prayer, dance, music, art, friendship and love, achievement etc.</p> |
| 2. Drinking alcohol helps people sleep better. | <p>Drinking alcohol can make you sleepy. However, it does not give you a restful and relaxing state of sleep. After drinking, people wake up feeling tired, nervous and irritable.</p> |
| 3. My friends will not want to hang out with me if I do not drink. | <p>There are many ways to hang out or have fun without drinking alcohol like sports, singing and dancing. It is great to have friends who believe in the same things that you do.</p> |
| 4. Alcohol is not a drug. | <p>Alcohol is a drug which slows down the working of the central nervous system. It belongs to a class of drugs called depressants.</p> |
| 5. Alcohol gives you energy. You will be able to party all night long. | <p>Alcohol is a depressant that hinders your ability to think, speak or move. It gradually affects perception, coordination and judgement well before there are signs of impairment.</p> |
| 6. Taking a small amount of alcohol is ok. | <p>Even a small amount of alcohol will slow down your ability to think clearly and may cause you to make poor decisions.</p> |

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT ALCOHOL

MYTH

FACT

- | | |
|--|---|
| 7. Drinking coffee or an energy drink / taking a cold shower/exercising helps you to sober up. | Only time can sober you up. Coffee/ energy drinks contain caffeine which makes you more alert but will not sober you up. All they do is mask the effects of alcohol. Showering and exercising also give the impression of being more alert and awake. Being alert does not mean that you are sober. |
| 8. Alcohol is food. | All alcoholic drinks are depressants. Some alcoholic drinks may contain food substances such as maize, banana, millet and malt. These food substances when fermented changes their form into intoxicating drinks; that does not make them food or nutritious. |
| 9. There is good and bad alcohol. Beer and wine is less harmful than spirits. | All types of alcoholic drinks are harmful to your health. |
| 10. Alcohol can be used to treat ailments. | Alcohol is not a medicine. |
| 11. Drinking alcohol makes you look grown-up. | Use of alcohol interferes with the development of the brain. Being grown up involves developing physically, mentally and emotionally. |

FACT

CANNABIS

Cannabis (also known as bhang) is a dried mixture of leaves, vines, seeds and stems of a plant called *Cannabis sativa*.

What does cannabis do?

It affects the person smoking it within minutes. It produces a 'high' and affects the body in several ways:

- Makes it harder to pay attention;
- Causes the heart to beat faster and work harder;
- Raises someone's blood pressure;
- Makes one's hand shaky;
- Causes one to feel sleepy;
- Makes it harder to learn new things;
- Makes it harder to remember things;
- Makes some people feel nervous and confused;
- Makes some people feel depressed.



MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT CANNABIS

MYTH

FACT

1. Cannabis makes you smart in Math and Science.

Cannabis does not make you smarter. Children who smoke cannabis tend to get lower grades and are more likely to drop out of school than those who do not use. Cannabis like other drugs will affect your attention, memory, and learning. The best way to be smart in Math and Science is to study the subjects.

2. Cannabis makes you stronger and energetic.

Smoking cannabis makes a person feel like they have excess energy to do many things but in the process you are unable to focus on any task. In the end no task is done to completion.

3. It is medicinal.

Cannabis plant has not been approved as a medicine. It is important to remember that it has side effects for example, it can harm the lungs, weaken judgment, and affect memory. Until a substance is proved safe and effective to treat a given disease, it cannot be considered a medicine.

4. Cannabis is not as harmful as cigarettes, it is natural and comes from a plant.

Cigarettes are made from tobacco which is also a plant. That hardly makes it safe. Both contain cancer-causing chemicals. Smoking anything is not good for the lungs.

5. Cannabis increases spirituality.

While cannabis may cause one to feel more spiritual there are healthier ways of increasing spiritual well - being. For example meditation and scripture reading.

FACT

KHAT

Khat is a stimulating drug made up of twigs and leaves obtained from a plant known as *Catha edulis*. The active ingredients in Khat are cathine and cathinone. It is found in two varieties: “*miraa*” and “*muguka*”

In the body, khat:

- Increases blood pressure and heart rate, and causes heart problems;
- Causes tooth decay and gum disease;
- Causes problems with the stomach and digestive tract, such as constipation, ulcers, pain, and tumors.



MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT KHAT

MYTH

1. Chewing khat helps you to stay awake to study for exams.
2. Khat is medicinal and a gift from God.
3. Khat chewing is a fun way of passing time and socializing.
4. Chewing Khat is cool.

FACT

Khat may help one to stay awake longer. However, users may feel depressed and irritable, and have trouble eating and sleeping once the effect wears off.

There is no proven medicinal use of khat. Not all natural products/ plants are healthy for human consumption.

There are healthy ways of having fun and socializing without using khat, such as engaging in sports, dancing and other hobbies.

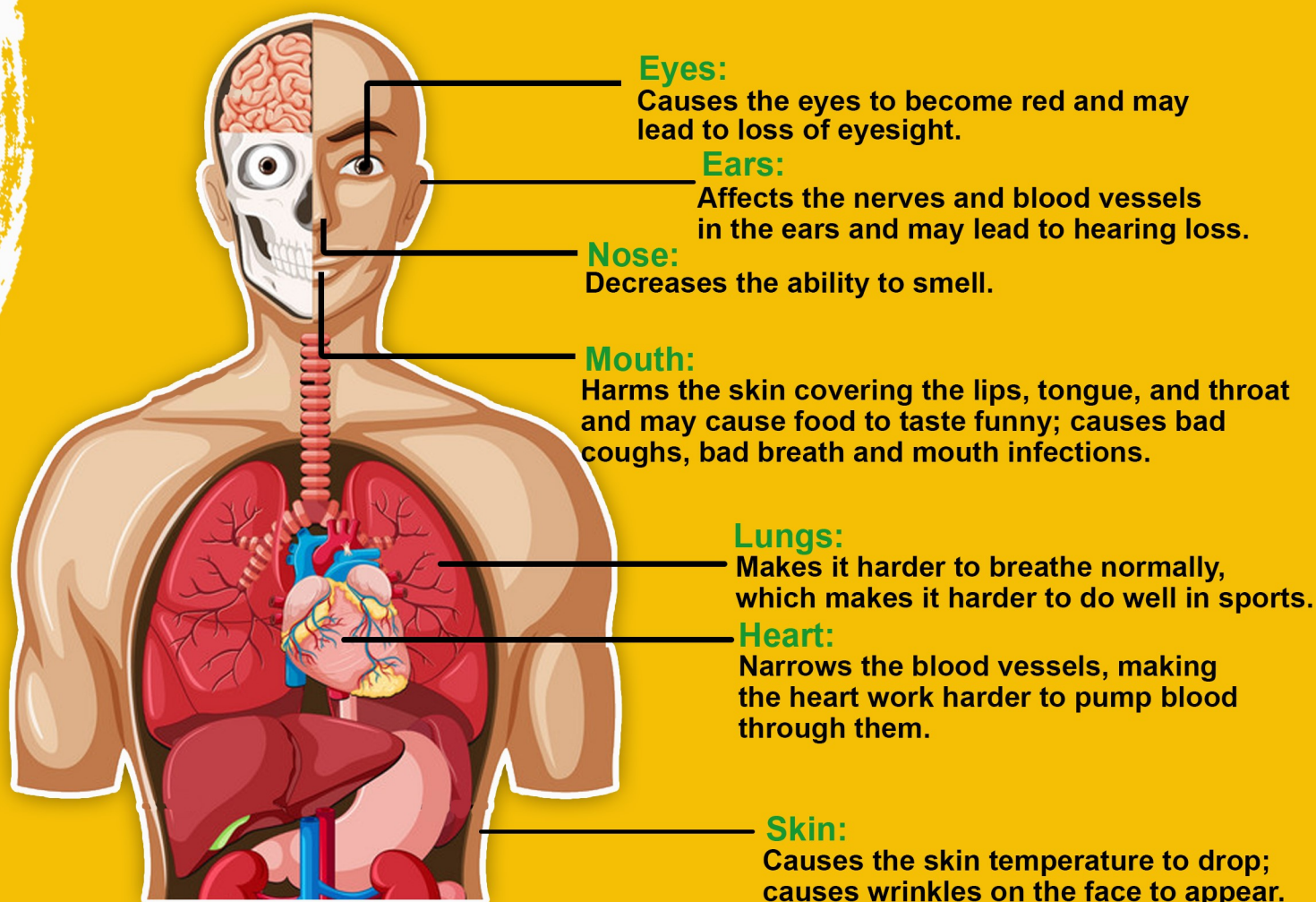
Healthy is the new cool! Khat causes cracked lips, stains teeth and causes bad breath.



TOBACCO

Tobacco products are made entirely or partly from the tobacco leaf as raw material which are manufactured to be used for smoking, sucking, chewing or sniffing. These products include cigarettes, shisha, kuber, pouches and e-cigarettes.

Breathing in smoke from cigarettes that other people are smoking (second hand/passive smoking) can also harm non-users. Once tobacco is in the body it is absorbed into the blood stream and affects the brain. It affects all parts of the body.



MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT TOBACCO

MYTHS

Cigarette smoking is not as dangerous as some people say.

It is easy to quit smoking.

Smoking is cool and sophisticated or classy.

Natural cigarettes or e-cigarettes are healthier than regular ones.

The effect of smoking is not something I will have to worry about until I am old.

FACTS

Cigarette smoking is one of the most serious causes of disease, disability and death.

Most people are not successful at quitting smoking, even though about 50 percent of all smokers have tried to quit at least once.

Relatively few people smoke cigarettes and even fewer are likely to smoke in the future.

Smoking has become socially unacceptable in most places. Indeed smoking in public is unacceptable and illegal.

There are no healthy cigarettes. All cigarettes contain harmful chemicals including nicotine.

Smoking is something that hurts you now. It reduces your ability to perform strenuous activities, stains teeth and fingers, gives you bad breath, affects your sense of taste and causes you to smell like smoke. Second hand smoking is also dangerous and increases a nonsmoker's risk of getting smoking related diseases.

MYTHS

Smoking occasionally is not harmful.

Kuber and shisha are not as harmful as cigarettes.

FACTS

Occasional smoking can lead to one becoming a regular smoker and eventually cause addiction. Nicotine found in tobacco is highly addictive.

All forms of tobacco are harmful. Kuber is a smokeless form of tobacco disguised as a mouth freshener. Shisha smoking has the same health risks as cigarettes.



PRESCRIPTION MEDICINE ABUSE

The use of a medication without a prescription or in a way other than as prescribed, or for the experience or feelings produced is misuse which can lead to abuse.

Examples include cough syrup, pain medicine, sleeping pills, sedatives, antidepressants, tranquilizers, medicines for mental illness and steroids.

WARNING SIGNS OF PRESCRIPTION MEDICINE ABUSE

- Increase of one's dose over time, as a result of growing tolerance to the drug and needing more to get the same effect;
- Changes in energy, mood, and concentration as a result of everyday responsibilities becoming secondary to the need for the drug;
- Withdrawal from family and friends;
- Continued use of painkillers after the medical condition they were meant to relieve has improved;
- Visiting many doctors to obtain the drugs;
- Poor personal hygiene;
- Change in sleeping and eating habits;
- Constant cough, running nose and red, dull eyes;
- Pretending to misplace prescriptions;
- Absenteeism from school while pretending to be sick;
- Forgetting events that have taken place and experiencing blackouts;
- Becoming defensive/angry in response to simple questions in an attempt to hide a drug dependency, if users feel their secret is being discovered.



TIPS FOR PROPER USE OF MEDICATION

- Follow directions as indicated on your medication.
- Never change the dosage without consulting with your doctor.
- Never share your medication with someone or use another person's medication even if you have similar medical conditions.
- Be sure to only take medication prescribed to you.
- Avoid buying medicines without doctor's prescription.



TO DO

Think through these scenarios and talk about them with your parent or teacher

You are in a friend's house and they are drinking beer. Your friends offer you some. You do not want any. How would you handle it? What would you say or do?

1

2

You are at an end year party for your class and find out bhang is being smoked. You do not want to smoke. Someone passes you a joint. How would you handle it? What would you say or do?

Imagine you are being pressured to smoke cigarettes by friends or classmates. Describe the situation and how you would handle it.

3

4

List your own personal reasons for not using bhang.

List your own personal reasons for not using alcohol.

5

6. Read each of the situations and (1) clarify the problem, (2) list and then consider the possible solutions (choices) and their likely consequences, and (3) choose the best solution.

SITUATION 1

Your teacher gave your class a homework assignment that will be handed in the following day and it will form part of your grade. That night there is an important football match involving the team you are supporting and all your friends will be watching. If you go watch the football game, you will not have time to do your homework, but you know someone who might let you copy her homework.

Clarify the problem:

CONSIDER POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES
1.	
2.	
3.	

My Decision:

SITUATION 2

Your friends want to get together at your house after school when no one is home. They want to drink alcohol. You want to be with your friends, but you know your parents will be angry and you will get into trouble if your friends drink at your house.

Clarify the problem:

.....

CONSIDER POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

My Decision:

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This is your decision-making guide. Use it all the time you find yourself in a situation that you think is difficult to handle.



**TRUE FRIENDS LOOK OUT
FOR EACH OTHER.**

**Think you or your friend has an alcohol or drug problem?
Do not wait – get help. Talk to a parent, teacher, or adult you
trust. You can also call our helpline 1192 to speak to a
counsellor free of charge.**

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