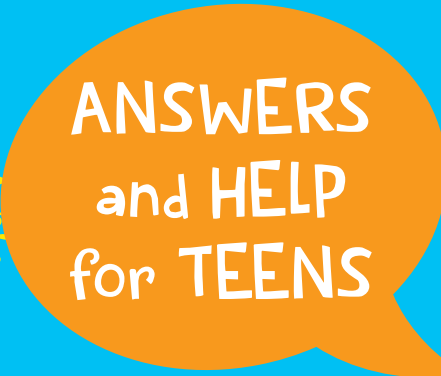



What's the *Big Deal* ABOUT ADDICTIONS?



ANSWERS
and HELP
for TEENS



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JAMES J. CRIST, PH.D., C.S.A.C.

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Note to readers: This book contains information and advice about addictions. The concepts, ideas, and suggestions contained here should not replace professional medical and psychiatric treatment.

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Dedication

I'd like to dedicate this book to all the teens I've worked with who have struggled with addictions of various sorts. I admire their courage and persistence in working toward beating their addictions and living happier, healthier lives.

.....

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Introduction



Anthony looks forward to hanging out with his lacrosse team buddies after games. Sometimes his teammates bring a six-pack of beer or some Jack Daniels to celebrate their wins. While laughing and joking with his friends seems harmless, Anthony can't help but think about what their coach told the team at the beginning of the season: they can get kicked off the team permanently if they drink or use drugs.

Adrian spends a lot of time gaming. Most of their weekends are spent in front of a screen. Adrian's parents complain about how much time Adrian spends online, but Adrian says it's okay because that's where their friends are.

Julian enjoys smoking weed with his friends. He does it mostly on the weekends, and since he doesn't do it every weekend, he figures he doesn't have a problem. Lately, though, he has started using more during the week because it helps him relax and get to sleep.

Keiko started using by experimenting with prescription drugs she found in her parents' medicine cabinet. Vicodin seemed interesting, and she tried it with her friends. They found that they liked the high they got from it, especially when they took more pills than recommended on the bottle. Keiko and her friends liked the feeling so much that they started raiding the medicine cabinets of their other friends and family members.

You may know teens like Anthony, Adrian, Julian, and Keiko. Maybe you can relate to their stories. Seems like their behavior is pretty harmless, right? What's so bad about having alcohol at a party, staying up late gaming, smoking a joint with friends, or sneaking a few prescription pills from your parents' medicine cabinet? While some teens might never get caught and it seems like they're not having problems as a result, many find their lives turned upside down by activities like these. Fighting with parents or friends, missing class because you're too tired to get up, losing privileges, earning lower grades, and even being expelled from school or getting arrested are just a few of the problems that can happen when alcohol, drugs, or other activities become addictive.

Why I Wrote This Book

I thought about writing this book for a long time before I actually sat down to write it. I started out as a substance abuse counselor for a city agency, where I worked with adults addicted to heroin, alcohol, cocaine, and PCP. Throughout my career, I've continued to work with people who have addictions, and many of my current clients are teens. What I've found is that while some teens are able to use drugs or alcohol on occasion, others can't control their use, even after their parents find out, they get kicked out of school, or they end up on probation or in juvenile detention. I've also learned that just telling people to stop, or yelling at them

about consequences (which is what many adults do), doesn't really help. Listening respectfully, appreciating the reasons why people use drugs and alcohol, and having a conversation about the pros and cons is much more helpful.

Since finding out about the many similarities between substance addictions (drugs and alcohol) and other addictions (such as tech, gaming, social media, self-injury, gambling, and so on), I have been able to use the same strategies that help people addicted to drugs and alcohol to help people who have problems with a variety of activities. And now I'm sharing this knowledge with you.

How This Book Can Help

This book will give you reliable and factual information about alcohol, drugs, and other addictions, without the lecturing you might hear elsewhere. You'll also learn how many teens actually use drugs and alcohol. There's a lot of misinformation out there, and you need to know about the risks involved so you can make informed decisions about activities that affect your relationships, health, and wellness.

You'll learn the difference between casual use and addictive use and how to figure out if you (or a family member or a friend) really have a problem. You'll find out about the possible consequences of risky behavior, ways to help yourself feel good without drugs and alcohol, and things you can do to overcome your addictions. Straightforward information about the various treatment options is provided, as well as proven tips to keep you from slipping back into old habits and help you avoid relapse.

Maybe you've never had a problem with addictive substances or behaviors. This book can help you too. In it you'll find answers to your questions about alcohol, drugs, and other activities as well as tips to help you avoid developing an addiction in the future.

Of course, reading this book doesn't replace getting professional help if you have a chemical or behavioral addiction. Talk to your parents or guardians, or another trusted adult such as a doctor, school counselor, teacher, or coach, if you think you need help. If you are already getting help for an addiction, talking with your doctor or therapist about the information you learn in this book might help you get better faster.

How to Use This Book

You can read this book cover-to-cover or skip around to find the parts most relevant to you.

Chapter 1 gives you an overview of drug and alcohol addictions in teens, including how common they are and how to tell the difference between casual use and addictive use. You'll learn what a substance use disorder is and how to tell if you have it. Examples of benefits of using drugs and alcohol, as well as negative consequences of using them, are provided.

Chapter 2 explains more about alcohol use. You'll learn what a blood alcohol concentration is and how the amount you drink affects your behavior and your health. Information on drinking alcohol responsibly, should you choose to drink, is provided.

Chapter 3 reviews similar information regarding drug use. Various drugs people abuse are reviewed, as well as some of the risks involved with each. Information about how drug use can lead to legal consequences is included.

Chapter 4 covers addiction to tech (electronics), such as gaming, phone use, and social media, and how to tell if you might have a problem. Suggestions on how to monitor your use and avoid a tech addiction are provided, along with a brief overview of cyberbullying and how to handle it.

Chapter 5 focuses on activity addictions, such as addiction to food, sex, self-injury, shopping, and gambling. You'll learn how to tell if these are just bad habits or if they're addictions that cause problems for you.

Chapter 6 shares ways to get help with addictive behaviors, including figuring out if you are ready to quit. You'll learn about the stages of recovery, symptoms of withdrawal, the different types of treatment for addictions, how support groups can help, and how the presence of other disorders (such as ADHD or depression) can make treatment more challenging.

Chapter 7 gives you strategies that can help you keep from slipping back into addictions and shares ways to help you feel good without using drugs, alcohol, or other addictive activities. These include learning to identify your triggers and warning signs for relapse, learning to manage your emotions, and finding healthier substitutes for addictive behaviors. Information regarding drug testing and how to cope if you do relapse is provided.

Finally, the **glossary** includes a variety of terms used in this book, and the **resources** point you toward places you can go for help and more information.

As you read, try to keep an open mind. You're probably used to adults telling you that should never use alcohol or drugs, that you have a problem, or that you should give up your gaming or social media habit completely. No one likes being nagged about their behavior and it would be easy to just tune these people out and assume that they're overreacting. But what if they're not? Wouldn't it be a good idea to find out for yourself? Even if you're not sure about yourself, you may recognize some of your family members or friends in this book. By sharing what you learn with them, you might be able to help them too. Either way, you'll have more information that you can use to make important decisions about yourself and your life.



CHAPTER 1

What's the Big Deal About Addictions?



Bethany likes using marijuana. It helps her relax and makes many of her activities more fun, even just watching TV or playing video games. At first, she made money for weed by selling it to kids at school. But after getting caught and being suspended, she figured it was time to stop. After a few weeks, though, she started craving it and thought it wouldn't hurt to use every once in a while. She thought she could limit her use, but now she has started smoking more often, even though she knows her grandparents are drug testing her.

Nico likes using his e-cigarette in the school bathroom with his friends. It's fun trying to sneak around school officials, and it gives him a boost for the day. Besides, he's been able to meet a whole new group of friends just by vaping. Nico also has a part-time job, so he uses some of that money to buy the pods from an older coworker and sell them to his friends.

Are these teens just having fun? Are their behaviors harmless, or are they starting to cause trouble? How much is too much? Where do you draw the line?

You've probably heard people tell you that *any* drug or alcohol use as a teenager is bad, that it can cause lifelong problems. But is this true? In this chapter, you'll learn how to tell the difference between casual use and addictive use of substances, how many teens actually use drugs and alcohol, and some of the effects drug and alcohol use can have, both negative and positive. You'll learn more about other addictions, such as gaming, porn, and social media, and how to spot problems with them in chapters 4 and 5.

A NOTE ON TERMS

Abuse and addiction are similar terms. Both cause problems in your life. But generally, abuse is less severe and may only cause temporary consequences physically, socially, and psychologically. Addiction is more serious. People with an addiction use more often, in greater amounts, and have lasting physical consequences, including changes to their brains. Most people with addiction experience withdrawal symptoms, such as irritability, sleep disturbance, or even physical pain.

Casual Use or Addictive Use?

"I don't do it all the time, so I can't be addicted."

• • • •

"Smoking weed is the only way I can fall asleep. I can still get up in the morning."



For many teens, occasional use of a substance may never cause a problem. They don't lose sleep, get in trouble, get lower grades, or feel worse after using. It may not be a wise choice to use, since using is illegal for teens, but they know when to stop. You must be 21 to purchase cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and alcohol in the United States. In states where marijuana is legal, you also have to be at least 21 to purchase it for recreational use and 18 for medical

use.* However, this doesn't stop some teens from using. Here's an example:

Maria drinks alcohol with her friends on the weekends. Not every weekend, just when she hangs out with friends. Her parents don't know about her use, and she only has a couple beers or malt beverages at a time, just enough to catch a buzz. She doesn't get drunk and she has never done anything dangerous while drinking, such as driving, and hasn't done anything she later regretted.

Maria's use doesn't seem to be causing problems, at least not yet. She doesn't think her use is a big deal. But for other people, once they start using, they want to do it more and more often, and in greater and greater amounts. These are the people who are most likely to get addicted. Once this happens, continuing to use drugs or alcohol can cause serious problems. It can affect your physical health, your mental health, your grades, your relationships, and your work. It can also get you in trouble with the law.

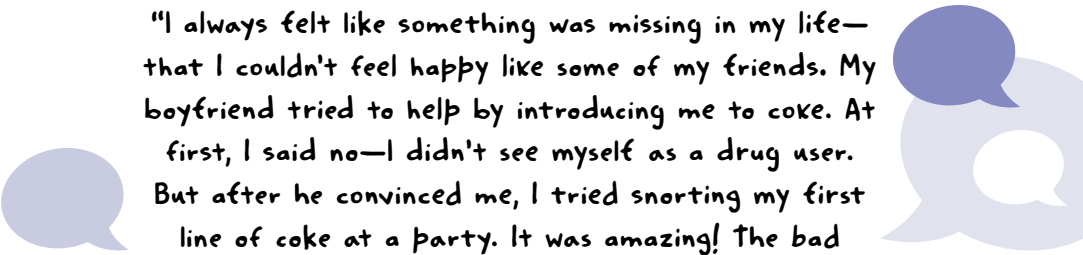
Even Occasional Use Can Lead to Addiction



"I was always really anxious as a kid. I'd worry about everything. Once I started drinking, it seemed like my fears disappeared and I could talk to people at a party or even go up to a girl I liked. But while my friends were able to stop after a while, I always wanted more. Two beers turned into 10 beers. It wasn't until I started driving home drunk after parties that I realized I had a problem."



* If you don't live in the United States, you'll need to see what age restrictions are in your area.



"I always felt like something was missing in my life—that I couldn't feel happy like some of my friends. My boyfriend tried to help by introducing me to coke. At first, I said no—I didn't see myself as a drug user. But after he convinced me, I tried snorting my first line of coke at a party. It was amazing! The bad feelings disappeared, and I felt on top of the world! At first, I only did it once in a while, but after a few months, I found myself using daily. I couldn't handle the comedown when it wore off. I spent most of my summer earnings on drugs and had nothing to show for it."

Addiction is a compulsive need for a habit-forming substance or activity. This need can be physical, psychological, or both. Not everyone who uses alcohol or drugs goes on to become addicted. Most adults, for example, can have a few drinks and know when to stop, and their use doesn't cause problems for them in their lives. However, most people who smoke cigarettes do get addicted. It is one of the hardest habits to break.

The first few times someone uses alcohol or drugs, it's generally a choice. Maybe someone at a party offered you a cigarette, a blunt, a pill, or a beer and you decided to give it a try. No one is forcing you to do it, and you can decide to stop whenever you want. But when you use a substance repeatedly, your brain changes and you may want to use more often and in greater amounts.

Brain chemistry plays a large part in addictions. Most people seek out addictive activities for three basic reasons: wanting to relax or reduce anxiety, looking for excitement and stimulation, and wanting to alter their perceptions to have an interesting experience. (For ways feel good without resorting to drugs and alcohol, see the sidebar on page 17. Chapter 7 also shares ideas to help you stay away from drugs, alcohol, and other addictive activities.) People can also be motivated by more than



How to Interpret Percentages

If a statistic says that 20 percent of teens use alcohol, this means that out of every 100 teens, 20 of them use alcohol and 80 do not. A statistic of 50 percent means half of all teens use alcohol.

one reason at a time. Most addictions (including activity addictions) increase the production of the brain chemical dopamine. Increasing dopamine makes activities more enjoyable and can make people want to do more of the ones they like, even to excess. However, the human body eventually gets used to whatever new stimulation it's provided, making the activity less rewarding. As a result, a

person needs to have more and more of the substance (or to spend more and more time on the activity) to feel good. This is called increasing tolerance, which is a warning sign of addiction.

Since addiction often runs in families, some of a person's potential for addiction is genetic, meaning that if you have family members with addiction problems, the chances are greater that you'll have problems too.

Substance Use Disorder

Mental health counselors call addiction to substances, including alcohol and drugs, substance use disorders. Essentially, substance use becomes a disorder when a person keeps using drugs or alcohol even after it starts to cause them problems. Symptoms fall into one of four categories:

1. Loss of control over your use
2. Problems getting along with others as a result of your use
3. Using when it is risky or dangerous to do so (for example, driving a car or bike or performing other activities, such as skateboarding, after using alcohol or drugs)
4. Physical changes in your body (needing more to get the same effect—called tolerance) or symptoms of withdrawal (such as being grouchy, having trouble sleeping, or being more anxious) when you stop using the substance

Frequency of Teen Use of Alcohol and Other Drugs

Just how many teens are using alcohol and drugs? You might think that everybody uses alcohol or drugs, especially if most of your friends use, but this is not true. Here are some recent nationwide statistics from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), based on surveys of teenage students.

Alcohol

- 58.5% of 12th graders had had at least one drink of alcohol during their life
- 29.2% of students had had at least one drink of alcohol in the last 30 days

Nicotine

- 24.1% of students had ever tried smoking cigarettes
- 6% of students had smoked cigarettes at least once during the last 30 days
- 50.1% of students had ever used an electronic vapor product (including e-cigarettes, vaping pipes or pens, e-hookahs, and hookah pens)
- 32.7% of students had used an electronic vapor product at least once during the last 30 days

Marijuana

- 36.8% of students had used marijuana (grass, pot, or weed) one or more times during their life
- 21.7% of students had used marijuana one or more times during the last 30 days
- 14% of 12th graders had vaped marijuana in the past month

Other drugs

- 7.3% of students had ever used synthetic marijuana (also called K2, Spice, Fake Weed, King Kong, Yucatan Fire, Skunk, or Moon Rocks)
- 3.9% of students had ever used any form of cocaine (powder, crack, or freebase)
- 6.2% of students had ever sniffed glue, breathed the contents of aerosol spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays
- 1.8% of students had ever used heroin
- 2.1% of students had ever used methamphetamines (also called Speed, Crystal, Crank, or Ice)
- 4% of students had ever used ecstasy (MDMA, also called Molly)
- 6.6% of students had ever used hallucinogenic drugs (LSD, acid, PCP, mescaline, or mushrooms)
- 14.3% of students had ever taken prescription pain medicine (including drugs such as codeine, Vicodin, OxyContin, hydrocodone, and Percocet) without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to use it
- 7.7% of 12th graders had misused Adderall and 2% had abused the stimulant Ritalin

So, not every teen uses drugs or alcohol. But if are you around people who use frequently, it sure can seem that way! One reason for this is that people who drink alcohol or use drugs (even just smoking cigarettes) tend to hang together, and people who don't use tend to hang together. That makes it harder to figure out how many other teens are actually using.

IS ADDICTION A DISEASE?

In a sense, yes. Addiction changes how the brain works and affects your ability to function at your best. It also has the potential to kill you if you use too much or use in situations that are dangerous, such as driving when under the influence. The changes to your brain and your ability to function can be permanent. For example, you can suffer a stroke if you abuse cocaine, which damages the brain.

Read through the following symptoms of a substance use disorder. While not all of these symptoms occur with all substances, this list will give you an idea of what signs to look for in figuring out whether your use (or someone else's) is a problem.

- Using larger amounts, or over a longer time, than you planned. Maybe you intended to have two beers, but once you started, you drank a lot more. It's hard to stop once you start.
- Wanting to stop or being unsuccessful in using less or stopping your use. You might have good intentions or make promises to yourself or others to control your use, but you can't keep those promises.
- Spending a lot of time getting, using, or recovering from a substance. For example, blowing off your homework or chores to find ways to get and use drugs, or using so much that you can't get up for school or work the next day.
- Having strong cravings to keep using. You might want to stop, but cravings make you want to use anyway. This is one of the changes in your brain that happens with repeated use of a drug or alcohol.
- Failing to meet your responsibilities (at school, home, or work) as a result of your use. Skipping school or calling in sick to work because you are hungover are examples of this. So is being unable to study for a test because you were high or drunk.

ADDICTION STARTS EARLY

- Continuing to use drugs or alcohol while knowing that you have problems that are caused or made worse by your use. For example, fighting with your parents over your use or seeing your grades drop doesn't make you want to stop.
- Repeated use in situations that are dangerous, such as driving after drinking or using drugs. (This is also illegal.)
- Continuing to use while knowing you have physical or psychological problems that are caused or made worse by your use. Even though you don't get enough sleep or get more depressed after you use a drug, you still keep using.
- Increased tolerance (needing more to get the same effect). This happens because your body gets better at breaking down alcohol or drugs. Maybe two beers were enough to get you buzzed when you first started drinking, but now it takes four or more to get the same effect.
- Withdrawal (having symptoms such as irritability, depression, or sleep disturbance) when you suddenly stop using. For example, although some people believe

The earlier in your life you start using drugs or alcohol, the greater your chances are of having problems later.* Why is this? The teen brain is growing and developing rapidly, and this growth doesn't start to slow down until about age 25. If your brain develops expecting to get a drug on a regular basis, the need for it gets "hardwired" into your brain. This makes it harder to stop later, since you may not feel normal without the drug. Life may seem dull (even the things you used to think were fun) if you aren't using drugs or alcohol.

For example, NIDA reports that about 30 percent of people who use marijuana will become addicted to it. That's about three out of every 10 people. But people who start using marijuana before age 18 are four to seven times more likely to develop a marijuana use disorder compared to those who used only as an adult.

* If you want to read more about this, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) publishes information about the science behind addiction on their website: [drugabuse.gov/publications/drugs-brains-behavior-science-addiction](https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugs-brains-behavior-science-addiction).

that marijuana is not addictive, many have trouble sleeping when they stop using it, especially if they used it to help them sleep. Getting irritable or angry is another withdrawal symptom of regular marijuana use.

Risk Factors for Addiction

One thing you should think about in deciding whether to use drugs or alcohol is how likely it is that you will develop a problem. While you can't know for sure if you are at greater risk for developing an addiction, there are certain things that increase your risk. These include:

- having a family member who is abusing or has abused drugs or alcohol
- having mental health problems such as anxiety or depression
- hanging with friends who use drugs or alcohol
- doing poorly in school
- having family conflict
- having been physically or sexually abused

The type of drug you use and how you use it also affects your risk. Injecting (shooting up) or smoking a drug such as heroin or cocaine is more addictive than sniffing it. These ways of using allow the drug to travel to the brain faster, which increases the risk for addiction. Nicotine products (cigarettes, e-cigarettes, or vaping) are especially addictive because nicotine doesn't stay in your system that long and using multiple times a day increases your risk.

While vaping marijuana can be less irritating on your throat than smoking a joint or blunt, it also delivers higher doses of THC (tetrahydrocannabinol, the active compound in marijuana that gets you high). This increases your exposure and makes the effects of the THC more intense, such as slowing your reaction times, impairing your memory, and even causing you to hallucinate.

Simply being a teenager is a risk factor as well, because the younger you start using drugs or alcohol, the more likely you are to become addicted. Also, the more often you use, and the greater the amount you use, the greater your chances are of becoming addicted. The safest approach is to wait until you are older, if you choose to use alcohol or drugs at all.

IS MARIJUANA A GATEWAY DRUG?

In a sense, yes. Most people who use marijuana do not go on to use other drugs. But almost all users of other drugs start with marijuana. That's why the safest approach is not to use at all, especially if you have other family members with addiction problems.

Benefits of Using Drugs and Alcohol

Clearly, use of alcohol or drugs has some benefits—otherwise, why use at all? People use drugs or alcohol for many reasons, including to:

- relax
- feel less depressed
- forget about problems
- feel less angry
- lower anxiety
- have new experiences
- sleep better
- boost creativity
- be more social
- be accepted by the crowd
- have more fun or celebrate
- relieve boredom

Some people self-medicate with alcohol or drugs. This means that they are treating a psychological or physical problem, such as depression, anxiety, or chronic pain, by using. However, the effects don't last. While drugs and alcohol might help at first, they often lead to problems the longer a person uses. This is also true of tech addictions and other activity addictions. It starts out helping, but then becomes part of the problem.

Also, if a person is taking medication to help with a psychological or physical problem, drug or alcohol use can keep

the medicine from working. And some drugs are dangerous when combined with psychiatric medications. For example, if you take Ritalin or Adderall for ADHD and drink a lot of alcohol with it, your risk for having a seizure, stroke, or heart attack increases. Taking the antidepressant Wellbutrin increases your risk for a seizure if you drink heavily. These are just two examples. If you are taking any kind of medication, be honest with your doctor about any other drugs you are using, including alcohol and nicotine.

Consequences of Using Drugs and Alcohol

Let's face it—you probably aren't thinking about years down the road. Just figuring out how you'll get that research paper done and turned in by tomorrow may seem overwhelming! However, you may want to give the future some thought, since the choices you make now can affect how well you will function years from now.

For example, long-term use of alcohol and other drugs can result in memory problems, lower grades, difficulty getting and keeping jobs, and greater health problems. Depression is often made worse by using drugs or alcohol. Some people who use become paranoid, thinking others are out to get them. Damage can occur to the heart, liver, and kidneys that causes problems later in life, or even leads to death. Cirrhosis of the liver occurs when the liver stops working after years of alcohol use. Again, you might not be thinking of what will happen years from now, but the damage builds up over time.

Drug and alcohol use can also cause legal problems. If you are arrested for driving while drunk or under the influence of alcohol or other substances, you can lose your driver's license and may have to pay a large fine. Hiring an attorney likely costs thousands of dollars. If you don't have money for an attorney, you can ask for a court-appointed one. But these lawyers often have a lot of cases and may not be able to spend much time on yours. A



Ways to Feel Good without Drugs and Alcohol

While some people use drugs, alcohol, and other activities like gaming as a way to deal with uncomfortable emotions and avoid boredom, there are lots of ways you can help yourself feel good without these activities. Alex Packer, the author of the book *Wise Highs: How to Thrill, Chill, and Get Away from It All Without Alcohol or Other Drugs*, surveyed 2,000 kids and teens ages 11 to 18 about ways they relieve stress and other emotions without drugs and alcohol. Coping strategies shared include:

- breathing deeply
- watching TV
- exercising
- playing a sport
- talking with friends and family
- sleeping
- singing
- playing music
- getting a hug
- playing board games
- reading
- writing in a journal or diary
- cooking
- going for a drive
- telling jokes
- making a video
- painting
- meditating
- getting outdoors
- listening to soothing sounds

Trying one of these ideas when you're stressed, upset, or bored is a healthier option. Chapters 6 and 7 share even more ways to help you keep busy and relieve stress without drugs and alcohol.

court-appointed attorney might even meet you for the first time on your court date.

You can lose your job if you test positive for drugs. Many companies require you to pass a drug test before being hired too. Bringing drugs can cause you to lose privileges at school, such as participating in sports or after-school clubs, attending dances or other school events, or leaving campus for lunch. It can get you expelled. That won't look good on a college application! If you are convicted of a felony (such as drunk driving or selling drugs), it can stay on your record for your entire life and can disqualify you for student loans and for many jobs, including enlisting in military service or getting a security clearance.

Finally, drug use changes your brain and how it operates, making it harder for you to enjoy the everyday activities that make life worth living. Normal activities can seem boring compared to the excitement you feel when you're drunk or high. This is what makes substances so hard for many people to quit. And the younger you start using, the more likely you are to change your brain permanently because your brain isn't fully developed.

Can Teens Use Drugs and Alcohol Responsibly?

This is a tricky question. Some people don't think it is ever okay for teens to use drugs or alcohol. And since drugs and alcohol are illegal to possess as a teen, you are breaking the law by using, even if you don't think you will get caught. Even keeping drugs for a friend can get you in big trouble. And drug and alcohol use as a teen may hurt your body and brain more severely than if you were using as an adult. Using can also cause a great deal of family conflict. Your parents or guardians may start watching your every move, go through your belongings, check your phone, and make life miserable for you because they are scared that something bad will happen to you.

Many substance abuse counselors follow a harm-reduction model in helping people who use drugs or alcohol. While the safest approach is not to use at all, if you choose to use, the less you use, the safer you'll be. For example, drinking a couple beers with friends at a party where you aren't driving home is less risky than playing beer pong and having 10 or more beers. And some drugs are much riskier than others. People overdose and die using drugs such as cocaine, heroin, crystal meth, and ecstasy. Alcohol can kill you if you drink too much. While people don't overdose on marijuana, they can become paranoid and hallucinate. Cigarettes may not cause significant problems when you first use, but they increase your risk for many health problems such as heart attacks

and lung cancer when you're older. Limiting your use makes it less likely that it will cause problems.

Addictions can cause serious problems for teens. While no one ever plans on getting addicted to substances, tech, or other activities, an addiction can sneak up on you and before you know it, you're in trouble. The more you understand the risks involved with addictive behavior, the better able you will be to make smart choices. The next several chapters share information about specific substance use problems as well as information about electronics and other activity addictions.