AOD Update

Winter 2011

Bringing you the latest information on alcohol and other drugs. . .

Coordinator—Clarence Jones, Student Safety and Wellness Office

Special Points of Interest

- Herb mixtures added to the list of Schedule I Substances by the DEA
- Prescription drugs, new drug of choice for America's youth
- DEA sponsored National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day
- Gummy Bears and alcohol

Winter

Not for Human Consumption

Their labels clearly state "Not for Human Consumption," but that's not stopping young people from using Spice, K 2, Hayze, Ivory Wave, and Purple Wave to get high. These substances are getting a lot of attention and most of it surrounds the negative effects that users experience including racing heart rate, elevated blood pressure, confusion, paranoia, anxiety, and agitation.

"Spice" is used to describe an herbal mixture marketed under many names, including K 2, Yucatan Fire, Hayze, and many others. These products list their ingredients as dried herbs and are marketed as incense to mask the intended purpose. Most users aren't filling the room with aromas; they are smoking it to produce a marijuana-like high. These herb mixtures are being laced with chemicals, such as JWH-018, JWH-073, JWH-200, CP-47,497, and cannabicyclohexanol, which are synthetic cannabanoids. Effective March 1, 2011, a final temporary order by the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), designated the substances as Schedule I substances. This scheduling is the most restrictive category under the Controlled Substances Act and is reserved for substances with a high potential for abuse, no accepted medical use in the United States, and a lack of accepted safety. This scheduling enables the DEA to act quickly without having to comply with the Congressional Review Act because of the potential danger of these drugs.

Over the past years, these products have been gaining popularity, particularly with teens and young adults who are looking for an alternative to marijuana. These chemicals have not been approved by the FDA to be ingested by humans and there is no oversight as to what other ingredients have been added to the mix. The products are usually made in Korea or China and the potency and ingredients varies widely from brand

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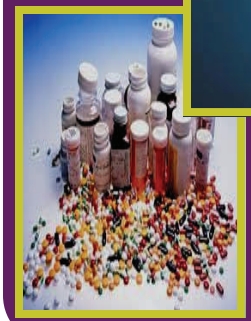
Prescription Drugs

Prescription drugs are the new drug of choice for America's youth. According to the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, kids aged 12 and older are abusing prescription drugs at greater rates than cocaine, methamphetamines, hallucinogens, and heroin combined. Only marijuana and alcohol abuse are more common. The same survey indicates that approximately 7,000 young people abuse a prescription narcotic for the first time...every day! There are some misconceptions surrounding prescription drugs that have fueled this trend.

"Parents need to know what drugs are in their medicine cabinets, take inventory and monitor those drugs carefully."

Many young people believe that because it's prescribed by a doctor, it is safe to take under any circumstances. The truth is that these drugs act directly or indirectly on the same parts of the brain that are affected by illicit drugs. For example, prescription pain killers act on the same brain receptors as heroin and opium; prescription stimulants act on the same brain receptors as cocaine and crystal meth. Young people are also abusing these drugs by snorting, smoking, or injecting them. Often, these drugs are taken with alcohol or other drugs which can intensify the properties of each individual drug and lead to overdose.



According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), between 1991 and 2010, there has been a 9-fold increase in prescriptions for stimulant drugs and a 6-fold increase in prescriptions for opiate pain killers. This makes these drugs easier to get than street drugs. According to NIDA, 59 percent of 12th graders obtained recreational prescription drugs from a friend or a relative.

There are many reasons why young people abuse prescription drugs. Some use them to get high, to counter anxiety, pain, and sleep problems, or to enhance cognition (although, according to NIDA, they may impair cognitive performance.)

The risks of abusing prescription pain killers such as OxyContin, Percocet, Vicodin and Tylenol with codeine are many. NIDA warns that non-medical use of pain killers can lead to an increase in tolerance (needing more of the drug to get the desired effect.) Often, the user changes the way the drug is taken – snorting, smoking, or injecting it to get a quicker or more intense high. Many users report moving from pain killers to heroin when the pills are no longer available or their tolerance has increased. Injecting can increase the risk of infectious diseases such as Hepatitis C and HIV. Overdose from pain killers alone, or in combination with alcohol or other drugs, can depress the central nervous system and lead to death.

Since prescription stimulants act on the same brain receptors as cocaine and meth, the risks of abusing ADHD medications such as Adderall, Ritalin, Concerta, and Vivance are similar to that of using the illicit stimulants such as crack and cocaine. These include an increase in tolerance, withdrawal, psychosis, seizures, and cardiovascular complications.

Central nervous system depressants and anti-anxiety medications such as Xanax, Valium, and Ambien are another classification of prescription drugs that are commonly abused. These are highly addictive and can lead to serious complications, including depressed respiration and seizures. Combining these medications with alcohol increases the risk of overdose.

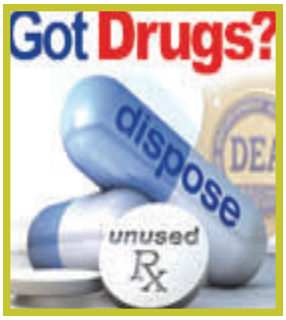
Parents and guardians need to know what drugs are in their medicine cabinets, take inventory, and monitor those drugs carefully. Take time to speak with your children about the dangers of drugs, including prescription drugs. For more information, go to www.dea.gov, www.drugfree.org, or www.nida.nih.gov.—*Liz Honig, ATOD seminar lead teacher*

Safe Disposal of Prescription Medications

What to do with expired and unwanted prescription drugs has long been a concern for many consumers. In the past, consumers had been advised to flush old medications or to put these unwanted and unused prescription drugs in the trash. In response to this problem, and in response to the growing problem of these medications wrongfully ending up in the hands of America's youth, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) conducted a National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day on Saturday, October 29, 2011. This event provided an opportunity for members of the community to safely and securely dispose of unwanted prescription drugs.

The problems associated with the growing abuse of prescription drugs are of such magnitude that President Obama signed the Safe and Secure Drug Disposal Act of 2010 last October. This legislation allowed the DEA to begin developing a plan for proper collection and disposal of these products. The need for this type of service was highlighted by the fact, that according to the DEA, the first two Drug Take-Back Days, which were held on September 25, 2010, and April 25, 2011, yielded 309 tons of drugs. This removed a large quantity of drugs from circulation and provided for proper and safe disposal of these potentially harmful pharmaceuticals.

To help keep our youth drug free and to eliminate the harmful effects of improper disposal of prescription medications on the environment, Americans are encouraged to take the time to clean out their medicine cabinets of expired and no longer needed medications and to take advantage of the National Prescription Drug Take-Back Days. Please visit the DEA website at www.deadiversion. usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/ for more information and announcements regarding future Drug Take-Back Days—Marion Mitchell, office assistant, SSAW



Not for Human Consumption

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vary widely from brand to brand. According to the DEA, emergency room physicians report serious side effects that include convulsions, anxiety attacks, dangerously elevated heart rates, increased blood pressure, vomiting, and disorientation.

Other products labeled as bath salts or plant food are being abused. These products are known as Ivory Wave, White Lightning, Red Dove, Cloud 9, and Purple Wave to name a few. When ingested, smoked, snorted, or injected these products mimic the effects of cocaine, ecstasy, and LSD according to Gil Kerlikowski, White House Drug Czar. Law enforcement agents and poison control centers have stated that the use of these products can cause extreme paranoia, hallucinations, delusions, rapid heart rate, chest pain, and suicidal thoughts.

In October 2011, the DEA enacted its emergency scheduling authority over three stimulants used in the manufacture of these products,Mephedrone, 3,4 methylenedioxypyrovalerone (MDPV) and Methylone. This emergency scheduling will remain in effect while the DEA and the United States Department of Health and Human Services further study the effects of these chemicals to determine whether they should be banned permanently.—Liz Honig, ATOD seminar lead teacher

"These products mimic the effects of cocaine, ecstasy, and LSD"

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The Student Safety and Wellness Office (SSAW) is dedicated to promoting prevention and early intervention for violence and drug use in our community through:

- School-community Coalitions
- Raising public awareness of trends
- Education programs for students and parents or guardians
- Training for school staff, students, and community members
- Support for school-based programs
- Linking local, state, and federal resources
- Prevention curriculum
- Community information meetings
- Communication and/or partnership with law enforcement agencies
- Student drug education intervention seminar
- Peer mediation
- Conflict resolution training

"Drunken Gummies?"

A passing trend, perhaps, but a recent report on WTOP, 103.5 FM, in Washington DC prompted a trip to the Internet to explore the latest method teens are using to consume alcohol. WTOP reported that gummy bear candies were being soaked in vodka to create a fairly undetectable alcoholic treat for teens.

The Internet contained many websites which gave "recipes" for mixing up these dangerous treats, as well as a YouTube video with step- by -step instructions. The candies are then easily carried by teens and consumed at football games or even in class as one school in Westchester County, New York reported.

One of the problems with this method of getting drunk is that the teens have no idea how much alcohol they are actually consuming. The fruity flavors of the candy mask the flavor of the alcohol so it is easy to overdo. The candies are also appealing to an even younger crowd and this causes concern, since research conducted by the National Institute of Health indicates that teens who start drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to meet the criteria for alcohol dependence at some point in their lives.

So, whether this is a passing trend or not, preventing teens from using alcohol in the first place is of utmost importance and requires the vigilance of all parents and guardians. It is a good idea to have a conversation with your teens, to really listen to them, and to be aware of the signs of alcohol use. —Marion Mitchell, office assistant, SSAW