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12-1-2006

SP681-H-Methamphetamine Awareness

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Recommended Citation
"SP681-H-Methamphetamine Awareness," The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service, SP681-H-12/06 E12-5315 07-0001, http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_agexfami/65

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UT Extension
SP681-H

Spotlighting Teen Issues for Teens

Methamphetamine Awareness

Kelli R. Moore, Extension Agent - Cumberland County

Would YOU walk through a store, pick up a bottle of drain cleaner and guzzle it? No way!! That is just one of the main ingredients in meth!!

How about drinking

- Rubbing alcohol
- Acetone (found in fingernail polish remover)
- Gasoline antifreeze
- Battery acid
- Engine starter fluid

Sound nasty? It is; but if you try meth even one time, you have just put a number of these chemicals in your body.

What Meth Does to Your Body and Your Brain

Meth is a substance that has a more devastating impact on a person than any other drug because of how it attacks both your mind and body. Meth causes anxiety, paranoia, increased aggression, irritability, dizziness and, frequently, violent behavior. Meth can cause a person to have hallucinations and memory loss. It can also increase the risk for seizures.

Meth is a neurotoxin that has a negative affect on both dopamine- and serotonin-containing neurons in the brain. These neurons are what give us the sensation of pleasure and help us regulate our moods. Nerve damage after prolonged use is very common, along with heart problems. Over a period of time, users' gums will turn black and their teeth will begin to decay. Skin becomes dry and gray.

Users may even develop the sensation of having bugs under their skin. This causes many meth users to scratch themselves until they develop sores on their bodies. Malnourishment and weight loss are common effects. Users also suffer from bone deterioration. Eventually continuing users will pay the ultimate price, which is death.

The addiction rate for first-time meth users is above 90 percent. Is it really worth the risk?

It Can't Happen to Me!

The most important thing to know about meth is how quickly you can become addicted – sometimes a single use is all it takes!

To see what other teenagers who have tried meth have to say about it, visit http://www.methfreetn.org/share_story/archive.php. You may think you can beat the odds, but so did they!!

Like so many other teenagers in the United States, Chris Mulliniks got hooked on meth to stay awake to succeed at school and work. One of the first signs of addiction came after the drug enabled him to play the guitar until late at night, literally until his fingers bled.

"I played many times until I looked down and I saw some blood there. I thought that was a pretty good sign that I needed to put it up for the night," said Mulliniks. He also added, "I looked at myself, how skinny I was, how pathetic I looked, all I could think about was crystal meth."

Like so many others, this teenager wanted something to help him succeed. Instead it almost destroyed his life.[1]

Stress Management

Stress can cause even the most responsible person to make a poor decision.

Here are some ways to keep from feeling overwhelmed when you have too much to do:

- Try not to plan too much for a day. Think ahead about what you have going on tomorrow.
- Do you need to study for a test? If so, when will you do it?

[1]Permission to use story granted by WSMV News Channel 4 in Nashville, Tennessee.
Meth makeover photo courtesy of Greg LaPlant, MMA Creative, Cookeville, Tennessee.

More than 12.3 million Americans age 12 and older have tried methamphetamine, and 1.4 million used it in 2004

National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2005

- If you are involved in extra curricular activities, plan ahead. Do not wait until the night before a project is due to start working on it.
- Designate specific times to do certain things like homework and chores.
- Have a plan. If you have a calendar, use it to make notes to help remember what you need to do and when.
- Try to find a few extracurricular activities and be active in them. Try not to be involved in too many.

Turning to drugs can only take you down a road you don't want to be on and a place you don't want to go. If you are using meth, you need to talk to someone who can help.

- Trusted adult (parent, relative)
- Aunt or uncle
- Anyone who has your best interest at heart.

For More Information, Visit These Websites

Governor's Task Force to fight meth abuse
www.MethFreeTn.org

The Dangers of Cooking Meth
http://www.tennessean.com/local archives/05/03/68050122.shtml

http://www.methfreetn.org/meth101/meth_destroys_community.php

To Get Help for Someone on Meth or Any Drug
Tennessee Association of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (TAADAS)
1-800-889-9789

Tennessee Access to Recovery (TN-ATR)
Toll Free (866)3584287

SP681-H-12/06 E12-5315 07-0001

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