

Overview

One way to discourage students from experimenting with alcohol and other drugs is to provide accurate information about how the substances affect the brain and body. Belief that specific substances can cause them harm can help protect adolescents from abusing or even trying the substances.

**Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- Identify basic facts about how their brains and bodies are affected by substance abuse
- Identify how substance abuse can negatively affect their lives
- Distinguish myths from facts about substances and substance abuse

Lesson at a Glance**Part 1**

Group activity: Myth or Fact? Determining whether statements about substance abuse are myths or facts.

Video: Videos about addiction and individual substances are interwoven throughout the group activity.

Part 2

Group activity: Continuation of the Myth or Fact? activity.

Video: Videos about addiction and individual substances are interwoven throughout the group activity.

Partner activity: Identifying which facts most affect students' decisions not to use.

Supplies and Equipment

- DVD player and monitor or computer with projector and screen
- Clipboard and Observational Assessment Form if doing the observational assessment

Lesson Materials

- Grade 7 DVD, Lesson 11 segment
- Handout 11A: Myth or Fact?, page 387
- Handout 11B: Facts About Alcohol and Other Drugs, pages 389–392
- Handout 11C: Personal Reasons, page 393
- Teacher Information About the Medical Use of Marijuana, page 395
- Grade 7, Lesson 11 Family Letter, page 397
- Optional: “Myth or Fact?” homework, page 399

Lesson Preparation

- Copy Handout 11A: Myth or Fact? (page 387), one per group.
- Read Handout 11B: Facts About Alcohol and Other Drugs (pages 389–392) to familiarize yourself with the topic. Make one copy per student. **Note:** This handout is two-sided.
- Copy Handout 11C: Personal Reasons (page 393), one per pair of students.
- Read the Teacher Information About the Medical Use of Marijuana (page 395).
- Copy the Grade 7, Lesson 11 Family Letter (page 397), one per student.
- Prepare one or two stories to tell the students about negative consequences resulting from alcohol or other drug use that you have heard about or witnessed. Make sure the stories are not too extreme or likely to provoke a lot of questions about the details and so derail the lesson. As an alternative, use a local news article. Tell the stories anytime during the lesson you think it is appropriate to do so.
- Optional: Copy the “Myth or Fact?” homework (page 399), one per student.

Teaching Notes

Questions about substances: This subject matter provokes a multitude of questions from students. Have a plan for how to respond to questions beyond the scope of the lesson. Go to www.cfchildren.org/issues/resource-links for links to Web sites that contain well-researched and youth-friendly information about alcohol and other drugs.

Prevention resources: You may want to consider inviting another adult who is knowledgeable about alcohol and other drugs to help you teach the sequence of substance-abuse prevention lessons. References for the drug and alcohol facts and medical marijuana information can be found in the Teacher's Guide, pages 91–95.

Personal history: Your students may be curious about your personal history with drug and/or alcohol use. We do not recommend that you discuss this with your students unless you have a very strong non-use message. Redirect students by responding, “We are not talking about me today. We are talking about how to make good decisions for your future.”

Medical marijuana: Some students may question the dangers of marijuana based on their awareness of medical marijuana. See the summary about medical marijuana (page 395) for information that will help you handle a discussion about this controversial topic.

Inhalants: It is possible that many of your students will be unfamiliar with the term “inhalants” or even the practice of inhaling chemicals to achieve a high. We recommend the following tips for discussing inhalants with middle school students:

- Define inhalants as “breathing in poisonous chemicals.”
- Do not name the specific items that people inhale to get high.
- Stress the danger of inhaling chemicals. Even one time can cause severe, permanent damage or even be fatal.

Chemicals in the classroom: Protect your students from inhaling chemicals in the classroom. Regular dry-erase markers contain the toxic, volatile organic compounds methyl isobutyl ketone and butyl acetate. Request low-odor markers that do not contain these chemicals. Avoid rubber cement and other glue products that contain strong chemicals. White glue and glue sticks are fine.

Disclosure: Be aware that students may disclose that family members are abusing or are addicted to alcohol or other drugs. Refer to the Teacher's Guide section about disclosure, page 61.

Using Lesson Content Every Day

Reinforce the non-use message whenever it feels natural. Examples include:

- When there is a local or national event where substance use had unfortunate consequences, especially if the event involved teenagers
- When local high school students make non-use commitments or hold drug-free social events
- When new research is announced documenting harmful effects of substances on teens
- When reading literature or history about a time when substance abuse resulted in negative consequences of any kind

Reinforce the understanding that teenagers' brains are in a critical phase of development and are more vulnerable to the harmful effects of substances than adult brains.

Why This Lesson Is Important

The primary goal of the substance abuse lessons is to prevent early onset of alcohol and other drug use, as early initiation is a risk factor for later problems. Research shows that the likelihood that students will use alcohol and other drugs is related to their perception of the dangers involved (Hawkins, Graham, Maugin, Abbott, Hill, & Catalano, 1997). When adolescents' concern about the harm caused by drugs goes down, substance abuse goes up.

This lesson is designed to increase student knowledge about the risks associated with using drugs and alcohol. They learn about addiction, negative effects of drugs and alcohol on their bodies and brains, and some of the negative social consequences of substance abuse. Increased awareness should result in a more negative attitude toward substance use and less subsequent experimentation with and use of alcohol and other drugs.



Total Time **25 minutes**

You will need:

- Grade 7 DVD, Lesson 11 segment
- Handout 11A: Myth or Fact? (page 387), one per group

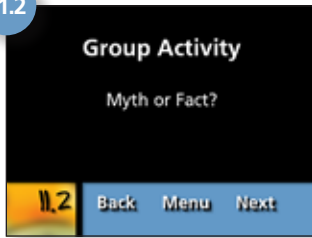
Outline	Script and Instructions
<p>Select the Lesson 11 menu, then select "Begin."</p>	<p>Before class starts, display the introductory screen.</p>
<p>11.1</p>  <p>Have students watch the video.</p> <p>Video length: 00:20 minutes</p>	<p>Play the video. 3 minutes</p>
<p>Discuss student responses as a class.</p>	<p>Let's start today by getting your reaction to what the host says in this video.</p> <p>Call on students for reactions.</p> <p>What he is saying is that sometimes it may <i>seem</i> like everyone has tried drugs or alcohol. But really, this is a myth. A <i>myth</i> is something that people believe to be true, but is actually not true. <i>Most</i> middle school students make healthy choices for themselves and their futures. They <i>don't</i> try drugs or alcohol at this time in their lives.</p>

Outline

Script and Instructions

22 minutes

11.2



Introduce the group activity and give instructions.

Handout 11A: Myth or Fact?

Have groups work together to fill in their answers.

There are a lot of myths about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Today, we'll challenge some of the myths, and we'll learn how using these substances affects our brains, our bodies, and our personal lives. We'll do this in an activity called Myth or Fact.

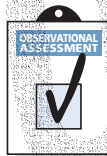


Distribute Handout 11A, one per group.

With your group members:

1. Read the statements on the handout.
2. Discuss and decide whether each item on your handout is a myth or a fact. If necessary, remind students verbally or write on the board that a fact is something that is true, but a myth is something that people might believe is true, but in fact is false.
3. Choose a recorder to mark down the group's answer.


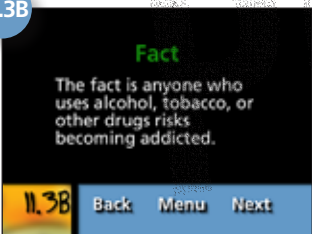
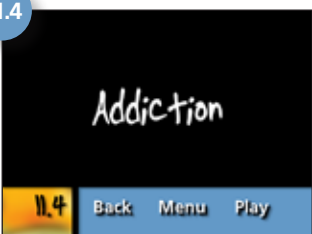
Then we will go over each answer together as a class. You will have five minutes.





Give the students five minutes to discuss and decide on each answer. Observe and coach as necessary.

Note: After all groups have finished, you will go through the answers on the DVD with the whole class. Each "Myth or Fact" question will come up on the DVD in turn, with an option for you to toggle between and select either "myth" or "fact." Have students vote on which you should select, or allow individual students to come up and select the answer their group selected.


After "myth" or "fact" is selected, a drumroll will sound, and then the correct screen will appear. If you are teaching the lesson in two parts, complete as many items as you can and finish in Part 2.

Outline	Script and Instructions
<p>11.3</p>  <p>Ask about statement 1.</p>	<p>You've had a chance to look over the statements and make a group decision about whether the statements are myths or facts. Let's take a look at the screen and find out how much you know.</p> <p>The first statement is, "Anyone who uses alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs risks becoming addicted."</p> <p>Ask representatives from a couple of groups to tell what the group's decision was—myth or fact.</p> <p>Click on the students' answer on the screen.</p>
<p>11.3B</p>  <p>Answer statement 1.</p>	<p>The answer is: Fact. Read the statement on the screen.</p>
<p>11.4</p>  <p>Introduce the video.</p> <p>Have students watch the video.</p> <p>Video length: 00:30 minutes</p>	<p>Let's take a look at more information about addiction.</p> <p>Play the video.</p>

Outline	Script and Instructions
<p>11.5</p>  <p>Debrief students about the video.</p>	<p>Why is addiction a problem? (It can ruin people’s lives, their jobs, their families, and their health and happiness.)</p> <p>Give a thumbs up if you have seen or heard about addiction being a problem for someone.</p>
<p>11.6</p>  <p>Ask about statement 2.</p>	<p>The next statement is, “You have to smoke for a long time before you become addicted.”</p> <p>Ask representatives from a couple of groups to tell what the group’s decision was—myth or fact.</p> <p>Click on the students’ answer on the screen.</p>
<p>11.6B</p>  <p>Answer statement 2.</p>	<p>The answer is: Myth. Read the statement on the screen.</p> <p>Is that a surprise to anyone? Ask for thumbs up or thumbs down from the class.</p>
<p>11.7</p>  <p>Ask about statement 3.</p>	<p>Here’s another statement about tobacco: Smoking cigarettes makes you look older.</p> <p>Ask representatives from a couple of groups to tell what the group’s decision was—myth or fact.</p> <p>Click on the students’ answer on the screen.</p>

Outline	Script and Instructions
<p>11.7B</p>  <p>Answer statement 3.</p>	<p>The answer is: Fact. Read the statement on the screen.</p>
<p>11.8</p>  <p>Introduce the video.</p> <p>Have students watch the video.</p> <p>Video length: 1:52 minutes</p>	<p>Let's take a look at more information about tobacco.</p> <p>Play the video.</p>
<p>11.9</p>  <p>Debrief students about the video.</p>	<p>What other negative effects does smoking have? (Various answers.)</p>

Outline	Script and Instructions
<p>11.10</p>  <p>Ask about statement 4.</p>	<p>The next statement is about marijuana. “Marijuana is not harmful because it is natural.”</p> <p>Ask representatives from a couple of groups to tell what the group’s decision was—myth or fact.</p> <p>Click on the students’ answer on the screen.</p>
<p>11.10B</p>  <p>Answer statement 4.</p>	<p>The answer is: Myth. Read the statement on the screen.</p> <p>In addition, smoking marijuana can give people a heavy cough, frequent chest illnesses, and a greater risk of lung infections. Adults who smoke marijuana often have more health problems than those who don’t.</p>
<p>11.11</p>  <p>Introduce the video.</p> <p>Have students watch the video.</p> <p>Video length: 1:43 minutes</p>	<p>Let’s take a look at more information about marijuana.</p> <p>Play the video.</p>

Outline	Script and Instructions
<p>11.12</p>  <p>Debrief students about the video.</p>	<p>What are some other reasons <i>not</i> to use marijuana? (Affects your motivation. Waste of money. Against the law. Get into trouble at home/school.)</p>
<p>Reminder</p>	<p>If you are doing this lesson in two parts, tell students to save Handout 11A for Part 2.</p>
<p>End of Part 1. Conclude here, or continue on to Part 2.</p>	<p>Today we looked at common myths and facts about addiction, tobacco, and marijuana. You had a chance to discuss your opinions about these myths and facts and learn more facts from a video presentation.</p> <p>Next time, we will continue looking at myths and facts about alcohol and inhalant use.</p>

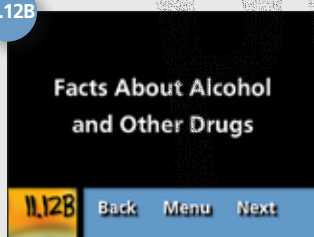
Total Time **25 minutes****You will need:**

- Grade 7 DVD, Lesson 11 segment
- Students' copies of Handout 11A: Myth or Fact? (page 387), one per group
- Handout 11B: Facts About Alcohol and Other Drugs (pages 389–392), one per student
- Handout 11C: Personal Reasons (page 393), one per pair of students
- Optional: "Myth or Fact?" homework (page 399), one per student

Outline**Script and Instructions**

If presenting the lesson in two parts, select the Lesson 11 menu on the Grade 7 DVD, then select "Part 2."

11.12B



Recap Part 1 of the lesson.

Last time you were challenged to uncover myths and facts about addiction, tobacco, and marijuana.

Now we will continue looking at myths and facts about alcohol and inhalant abuse.

11.13



Ask about statement 5.

Continue using
Handout 11A

The next two statements are about alcohol. "Drinking alcohol is more harmful to a teenager than it is to an adult."

Ask representatives from a couple of groups to tell what the group's decision was—myth or fact.

Click on the students' answer on the screen.

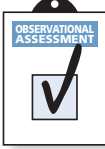
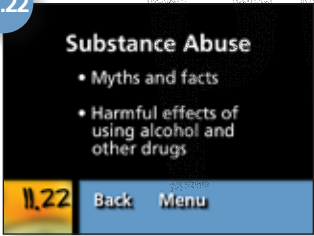

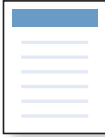
14 minutes

Outline	Script and Instructions
<p>11.13B</p>  <p>Answer statement 5.</p>	<p>The answer is: Fact. Read the statement on the screen.</p>
<p>11.14</p>  <p>Ask about statement 6. Video length: 00:05 minutes</p>	<p>The next statement is, "Drinking alcohol doesn't do as much harm to people as doing drugs."</p> <p>Ask representatives from a couple of groups to tell what the group's decision was—myth or fact.</p> <p>Click on the students' answer on the screen.</p>
<p>11.14B</p>  <p>Answer statement 6.</p>	<p>The answer is: Myth. Read the statement on the screen.</p> <p>Of course, we all know that many <i>adults</i> drink alcohol in moderation and do not suffer dire consequences. The point is that alcohol is a drug that is so commonly abused that it causes many problems, such as alcoholism, accidents due to drunkenness, and violence that happens when people drink too much.</p> <p>Furthermore, teens tend to binge-drink (drink lots of alcohol in a short period of time), making them more susceptible to alcohol poisoning (which can be lethal), accidents, or violence.</p>

Outline	Script and Instructions
<p>11.15</p>  <p>Introduce the video.</p> <p>Have students watch the video.</p> <p>Video length: 1:15 minutes</p>	<p>Let's take a look at a video with more information about alcohol abuse.</p> <p>Play the video.</p>
<p>11.16</p>  <p>Debrief students about the video.</p>	<p>Why is it dangerous to begin drinking alcohol at a young age? (Teens' brains and bodies are still developing. Alcohol use can cause learning problems or lead to adult alcoholism. People who begin drinking by age 15 are five times more likely to abuse or become dependent on alcohol than those who begin drinking after age 20.)</p> <p>How does drinking alcohol affect the brain? (Damages the hippocampus, the thought and memory center. Can change personality and behavior by damaging the pre-frontal cortex, the decision-making center.)</p>
<p>11.17</p>  <p>Ask about statement 7.</p>	<p>The next statement is about inhalants.</p> <p>Do a quick check to assess your students' understanding of what inhalants are. Do not engage in a long discussion about the types of products people inhale. Emphasize that inhalants are <i>not</i> doctor-prescribed asthma inhalers.</p> <p>The statement is: "Inhaling chemicals to get high is safe because the chemicals are legal."</p> <p>Ask representatives from a couple of groups to tell what the group's decision was—myth or fact.</p> <p>Click on the students' answer on the screen.</p>

Outline	Script and Instructions
<p>11.17B</p>  <p>Answer statement 7.</p>	<p>The answer is: Myth. Read the statement on the screen.</p>
<p>11.18</p>  <p>Introduce the video.</p> <p>Have students watch the video.</p> <p>Video length: 00:55 minutes</p>	<p>Now we'll hear more about the dangers of inhaling poisonous chemicals.</p> <p>Play the video.</p>
<p>11.19</p>  <p>Debrief students about the video.</p>	<p>Review the ways that inhalants can cause damage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inhalants affect your brain with much greater speed and force than many other substances, so they can cause irreversible or permanent physical and mental damage before you know it has happened. • Inhalants can cause irregular heart rhythm, leading to death from heart failure. • Kids have also died from suffocating on the bags the inhalants are in or in their own vomit. <p>Is it important to share this information with people you know who might be interested in trying inhalants? What could you say?</p> <p>Have students discuss one thing they could say with a partner.</p>

Outline	Script and Instructions
<p>11.20</p>  <p>Ask about statement 8.</p>	<p>The last statement is: You have to use drugs and alcohol for a long time before they really hurt you.</p> <p>Ask representatives from a couple of groups to tell what the group's decision was—myth or fact.</p> <p>Click on the students' answer on the screen.</p>
<p>11.20B</p>  <p>Answer statement 8.</p>	<p>The answer is: Myth. Read the statement on the screen.</p> <p>Being able to tell the difference between myths and facts about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs will help you avoid making choices based on wrong information. Using alcohol and other drugs has many harmful consequences, especially when your brain and body are still growing.</p>
<p>11.21</p>  <p>Introduce the partner activity.</p> <p>Handout 11B: Facts About Alcohol and Other Drugs</p> <p>Handout 11C: Personal Reasons</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">10 minutes</p>  <p>Distribute Handouts 11B and 11C.</p> <p>Handout 11B summarizes many of the harmful effects of using alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and inhalants. You may use it as a reference for our next activity. Keep it in your folder for future reference.</p> <p>Together with your partner, name three facts that we've talked about today that stand out as the best reasons not to use alcohol or other drugs.</p> <p>Write your ideas on Handout 11C.</p> <p>You will have five minutes.</p>

Outline	Script and Instructions
<p>Have students do the partner activity.</p>	 <p>Give students five minutes to complete the activity. Observe and coach as necessary.</p>
<p>Call on students to tell the class their responses.</p>	<p>Call on students to tell the class the facts they found most interesting, affecting, and memorable. You may summarize students' ideas by repeating them back or writing them on the board. Try to reinforce the main ideas from the video.</p>
<p>11.22</p>  <p>Summarize the lesson.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">1 minute</p> <p>In this lesson we sorted out myths from facts about alcohol and other drugs.</p> <p>We found out that your brains and bodies are growing, and substances affect you more intensely than they would an adult and they can do more lasting damage.</p> <p>We also learned about the personal, health, and social consequences of using alcohol and other drugs.</p>
<p>Optional: "Myth or Fact?" homework</p>	 <p>Distribute and explain the "Myth or Fact?" homework.</p>
<p>Grade 7, Lesson 11 Family Letter</p>	 <p>Send the Family Letter home via student mail, email, newsletter, or standard mail.</p>
<p>Using Lesson Content Every Day</p>	<p>Remember to incorporate the Using Lesson Content Every Day suggestions into daily academic tasks.</p>



Instructions

Read each statement. Decide as a group if the statement is a “Myth” (false) or a “Fact” (true). Circle one choice.

1. Anyone who uses alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs risks becoming addicted. **Myth Fact**
2. You have to smoke for a long time before you become addicted. **Myth Fact**
3. Smoking cigarettes makes you look older. **Myth Fact**
4. Marijuana is not harmful because it's natural. **Myth Fact**
5. Drinking alcohol is more harmful to a teenager than it is to an adult. **Myth Fact**
6. Drinking alcohol doesn't do as much harm to people as doing drugs. **Myth Fact**
7. Inhaling chemicals to get high is safe because the chemicals are legal. **Myth Fact**
8. You have to use drugs and alcohol for a long time before they really hurt you. **Myth Fact**



Tobacco

Tobacco and Addiction

- Tobacco is as addictive as heroin or cocaine.³⁰
- You can start feeling addicted after smoking only a few cigarettes or after smoking for only a few days.¹⁴
- Most adult smokers want to cut back or quit, but they can't because they're addicted. Thirty-five million people in the U.S. try to quit smoking every year.³⁸
- Tobacco is so addictive that hardly anyone succeeds in quitting. Only about one out of every twenty who tries to quit is able to make it tobacco-free for a year.³²
- People who start smoking when they're young have the hardest time quitting.³⁰

Tobacco and the Lungs

- There are four thousand toxic substances in cigarette smoke.⁵
- The lungs of teenagers who smoke aren't able to grow as well.³
- Teens who smoke have many more colds, coughs, throat and nose problems, and more phlegm.⁴
- Lung cancer kills more people than any other kind of cancer.²⁴

Tobacco and the Heart

- Smoking tobacco is bad for your heart and is a major cause of heart attacks.⁶
- People who smoke are between two and six times more likely to have a heart attack.¹⁹
- Smoking is the number one cause of heart attacks in younger adults.²²

Tobacco and the Skin

- Smoking gives you wrinkles and makes your skin look older.¹⁸

Tobacco and the Mouth

- Smoking causes bad breath, stains the teeth and tongue, and helps ugly tartar build up on teeth.²

Tobacco and Depression

- Teens who smoke are more likely to have panic attacks, anxiety problems, and depression.²⁵



Marijuana

Marijuana and Addiction

- People can become addicted to marijuana.^{10, 12, 9}
- More than 120,000 people in the U.S. seek treatment for marijuana addiction every year.⁹

Marijuana and the Lungs

- Marijuana has more cancer-causing chemicals than tobacco and four times as much cancer-causing tar.³³
- Marijuana smokers can develop the same kinds of breathing problems as cigarette smokers and are at greater risk for lung infections, such as pneumonia.³³

Marijuana and the Brain

- Marijuana can harm memory and learning.³³
- Long-term marijuana users perform worse on memory and learning-ability tests.²³
- Marijuana can cause anxiety and panic attacks.²⁹
- Twelfth-grade marijuana smokers get lower scores on verbal and math tests than nonsmokers, even compared to students who scored the same as they did in fourth grade.³³
- Marijuana's damage to short-term memory seems to occur because it has negative effects on the hippocampus, a brain area responsible for memory formation.³³

Marijuana and Accidents

- Marijuana affects self-control, sense of time, coordination, and ability to pay attention, making marijuana users more likely to get hurt or have accidents.¹⁷
- People who have smoked marijuana are almost twice as likely to get in a fatal car crash.²¹
- One in five teens treated for injuries in an emergency room tested positive for marijuana.¹⁶



Alcohol

Alcohol, Addiction, and Depression

- People who begin drinking by age 15 are five times more likely to abuse or become dependent on alcohol than those who begin drinking after age 20.³⁹
- Teens who drink are more likely to suffer from depression, suicidal thoughts, and violence.⁷

Alcohol and the Brain

- Alcohol does more damage to teens' brains than to adults' brains.³⁶
- Even drinking a small amount can harm learning and memory far more in youth than in adults.³⁵
- Teen drinkers can damage their hippocampus, a part of the brain responsible for memory and learning.^{37, 13, 36}
- Teen drinkers can permanently change their personality and behavior by damaging their prefrontal cortex, a part of the brain needed for decision making and reasoning.^{11, 36}
- Drinking alcohol leads to a loss of coordination, poor judgment, slowed reflexes, distorted vision, memory lapses, and even blackouts.³⁹
- Adolescent drinkers score worse than non-users on vocabulary, general information, attention, and memory tests.^{37, 18}
- Alcohol use causes feelings of sickness, dizziness, and clumsiness; slows reaction times; causes bad breath; and makes skin break out.²⁸
- Alcohol use can cause risky or dangerous behavior.²⁷

Alcohol and Death

- Drinking large amounts of alcohol at one time or very rapidly can kill through alcohol poisoning.⁴⁰
- The number-one cause of death for teens and young adults is car accidents related to alcohol.³⁴
- Half of all drowning deaths among teen males involve alcohol use.¹⁵



Inhalants

Inhalants are poisonous chemicals that can kill you the very first time you use them.²⁶

Inhalants and the Heart

- Breathing in an inhalant can cause the heart to stop suddenly.²⁶
- Inhalants can seriously and permanently damage the heart.²⁶

Inhalants and the Lungs

- Repeated use of inhalants can cause lung damage.²⁶

Inhalants and the Brain

- Inhalants starve your brain and body of oxygen.²⁶
- Inhalants can cause brain damage.²⁶
- Inhalants can change your personality.²⁶
- Inhalants make it harder to think, and they hurt the memory.²⁶
- Inhalants kill cells in the cerebral cortex, causing memory loss and learning problems.³¹
- Inhalants damage the cerebellum, resulting in loss of coordination and slurred speech.³¹
- Inhalants can damage the senses of hearing, smell, and eyesight.³¹

Inhalants and the Skin

- Inhalants can cause a severe rash around the nose and mouth.²⁰



Instructions

Name three facts that we've talked about today, or that are listed on your fact sheets, that stand out as the best reasons not to use alcohol or other drugs.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

PREVIEW
ONLY



Teacher Information About the Medical Use of Marijuana

Not for Students

Students may raise the issue of the medical use of marijuana. Since this topic is complicated and controversial, it may be difficult to discuss effectively with students. There is a great deal of information available that ranges from science to myth. The basic facts are:

- Marijuana is not used to cure disease. There is evidence that marijuana may help with nausea and pain, and so it can be used to relieve severe symptoms of nausea and pain.
- Since nausea and pain are commonly experienced during some forms of cancer treatment, some cancer patients use marijuana. It is also used for other medical problems, such as glaucoma and multiple sclerosis.
- Medical use of marijuana is against federal laws, but approved by some state laws.
- Typically, state laws that support marijuana's medical use require a physician's prescription. There are other drugs available that can treat the problems for which people use marijuana.
- Smoking, including smoking marijuana, can have negative health consequences.

References

For references, see page 93 in the Teacher's Guide.



Dear Family,

Middle school is often a time when students first hear about using alcohol and other drugs, see it happening, or begin to experiment themselves. To keep your student safe and on track at school, we have started the final topic in the Stepping In program: substance abuse prevention. When young people use alcohol or other drugs, it gets in the way of school success, and it is linked to increased involvement in violence and other risky behaviors.

New brain studies also show that during their teenage years and into their twenties, young people's brains are still developing. These studies show that using alcohol or other drugs at this time has a far more damaging effect than it does on an adult's brain.

The good news is that studies also show that families can play a big role in preventing the use of alcohol and other drugs by young people.

Here are five things you can do to make a difference:

1. Give your student a clear message that it is not okay to drink or use other drugs. Discuss personal, family, social, or religious values that give your student reasons to not use.
2. Arrange for supervision for your student between 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Research suggests that these are peak hours for teen drug and alcohol use.
3. Get to know your student's friends and their families. You can help each other keep your students safe.
4. Help your student make a plan for how he or she might avoid or resist both internal and external pressure to use.
5. Make sure an adult is supervising any party your student attends.

Please be aware that students often get alcohol and other drugs, especially inhalants, from their own homes. See our Web site at www.cfchildren.org/issues/resource-links for links to information about what household items are most toxic.

Your student will be bringing home fact sheets about the personal, health, and social consequences of using alcohol and other drugs. Please read through these facts with your student. Together we can help keep your student safe and healthy.

Sincerely,





Name: _____

You now know that anyone who uses alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs risks becoming addicted. But does an adult family member know that? Put him or her to the test! Take the fact sheets home with you for an adult family member to read. Then see how well he or she does on this version of the “Myth or Fact” game. Fold the paper in half along the dotted line to hide the answers until he or she is finished with all the questions.

- | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Teens who smoke are just as healthy as teens who don't. | Myth | Fact |
| 2. Smoking makes you look hip and youthful. | Myth | Fact |
| 3. Some people become addicted after smoking only a few cigarettes. | Myth | Fact |
| 4. Smoking marijuana has no effect on learning ability. | Myth | Fact |
| 5. It is okay to drive after smoking marijuana. | Myth | Fact |
| 6. If you start drinking in your teens, you are more likely to abuse or become dependent on alcohol than if you wait until you are older. | Myth | Fact |
| 7. Teens who drink are happier and have more fun than teens who don't. | Myth | Fact |
| 8. Inhaling chemicals can kill you. | Myth | Fact |

fold

fold

1. Answer: **Myth**
Teens who smoke have many more colds, coughs, throat and nose problems, and more phlegm.¹
2. Answer: **Myth**
Smoking causes skin to age prematurely, wrinkle, and turn gray even after smoking for a short time, so you'll actually look older.⁶
3. Answer: **Fact**
According to research, about one in ten youths who start smoking become addicted within a few days of taking their first puff. Some are even addicted after their first cigarette.⁴
4. Answer: **Myth**
Twelfth-grade marijuana smokers get lower scores on verbal and math tests than nonsmokers, even compared to students who scored the same as they did in fourth grade.²
5. Answer: **Myth**
People who have smoked marijuana are almost twice as likely to get in a fatal car crash.⁷ Marijuana affects self-control, sense of time, coordination, and the ability to pay attention, making marijuana users more likely to get hurt and have accidents.⁵
6. Answer: **Fact**
You are five times more likely to abuse or become dependent on alcohol if you begin drinking by age 15 than if you wait until after age 20.⁹
7. Answer: **Myth**
Teens who drink are more likely to suffer from depression, suicidal thoughts, and violence.³
8. Answer: **Fact**
Breathing in an inhalant can cause the heart to stop suddenly.⁸

This homework assignment was completed on _____ . _____
(date) [adult] signature



Name: _____

Answer each question to explain what you learned. Then write a reflection to show how what you learned connects to your life.

What I Learned

Identify one fact about each of the following substances that stands out as a reason not to use.

Tobacco: _____

Marijuana: _____

Alcohol: _____

Inhalants: _____

Connecting to My Life

Think about the Myth or Fact activity you did in the lesson. How did learning the facts change your thinking about alcohol and other drugs?



Instructions

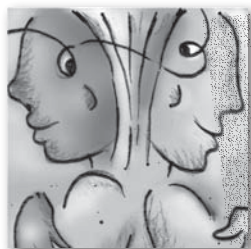
1. Have students anonymously write down any questions or facts they think they know about tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs on 3" x 5" cards.
2. Collect the cards and give them to a prevention specialist or counselor.
3. Invite the specialist or counselor to your class to address the questions or "facts."

PREVIEW
ONLY

**Language Arts and Social Studies**

What are the facts?

Have students work in groups to write an informative news article using at least one of the myths and facts about alcohol and other drugs from the lesson. Remind students that news articles are objective and based on facts. Final articles can be printed in the school newspaper or Web site.

**Health and Science**

How does smoking affect the cardiovascular system?

Have students work in groups to research how tobacco smoke affects the cardiovascular system using preselected Web sites or search engines. What is the connection between smoking and heart disease? What does tobacco smoke contain that stresses the cardiovascular system? How does it stress the cardiovascular system? How does smoking increase the risk of dying from heart disease? Have each group report their findings to the class.

**Media Literacy**

What are the images trying to suggest?

Preselect several print tobacco advertisements that use misleading images (you can find examples of misleading cigarette ads on Web sites by Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids or Tar Wars, or do an image search on “tobacco ads”). Have students work in groups to analyze one or more of the ads. Have each group try to identify misleading images in the ads. What are the images trying to suggest? Is this an accurate suggestion for the product? What would be a more accurate image? Have each group draw an image they think represents the product more accurately. Have groups show their drawings to the class.

