

FAST FACTS: ADDICTIONS - 2008

Alcohol

(Main source: Alcohol & other Drugs - Students in Manitoba 2007, Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, 2008)

- Alcohol use is common among students. 69% of high school students consumed alcohol last year.
- Almost one half of student drinkers have had 5 or more drinks at a sitting and about a quarter have had 8 or more drinks.
- 21% of grade 12 students with a driver's licence have driven a vehicle after drinking.
- About half of grade 12 students and nearly 40% of all students reported being a passenger in a car with someone who has been drinking.
- 30% of all students agreed with the statement in the survey, "*alcohol is an acceptable way to relax.*"
- Over 40% of Manitoba drivers killed in motor vehicle collisions had been drinking (*The Alcohol-Crash Problem in Canada: 2004, Traffic Injury Research Foundation.*)

Marijuana (Cannabis)

- Almost 1 in 5 students in Manitoba agreed with the statement in the survey, "*there's nothing wrong with smoking cannabis and driving.*"
- Student cannabis use is common in grades 7 - 12, with 22% using it last year, increasing to 35% for students in grades 11 and 12.
- Of student cannabis users, about 67% first used the drug before the age of 15.
- Over 10% of student smokers are using cannabis daily or more than once a day.
- Nearly 10% of student cannabis users have tried to cut down or quit but failed.
- Marijuana produces more tar than a strong tobacco cigarette. The concentration of some cancer-producing agents is higher in marijuana tar than in the same weight of tobacco tar.
- Long-term marijuana use may result in a person becoming psychologically dependent. Users believe that they can't function effectively without the drug. Withdrawal symptoms can include anxiety and nervousness and can result in sleeping problems and loss of appetite.
- The drug interferes with skills essential for safe driving such as motor coordination, depth perception, judgment and concentration.

Methamphetamines

- Referred to as speed, meth or chalk in powder form and crystal meth, ice or glass in crystal form.
- Risks include hostility and paranoia which may result in violence.
- High doses can cause seizures, heart attacks and strokes. The drug is highly addictive. Withdrawal symptoms may include fatigue, irritability, hunger, depression and intense cravings.

Smoking

- Approximately 20% of all Manitoba students in grades 7 - 12 have smoked in the past year.
- Tobacco contains about 4,000 harmful substances.
- Over 35,000 people die each year from smoking-related diseases.
- At least 1,100 non-smokers exposed to second-hand smoke will die this year in Canada.
- Smoking is the main cause of lung cancer and can cause cancer in many other places.
- Bar and restaurant workers are twice as likely to get lung cancer from second-hand smoke.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

- FAS is now recognized as the number one known cause of mental handicap and birth disorders in North America.
- As many as 240 children are born in Manitoba each year with FAS.
- Drinking alcohol at any time during pregnancy may damage fetal brain tissue.
- FAS is permanent and irreversible, and raises challenges at each developmental stage of the affected child, continuing beyond puberty.

Cocaine/Crack

- Approximately 3% of Manitoba students in grades 7 - 12 have used cocaine and 1.5% have used crack in the past year
- Cocaine is a highly addictive drug. Withdrawal symptoms may include excessive sleep, depression, hunger, anxiety, irritability and intense cravings.
- Single high doses of cocaine have been known to result in death due to stroke, cardiac arrest or respiratory failure. Seizures can also be caused by high doses.

Ecstasy

- Nearly 7% of students in grades 11 and 12 have used ecstasy in the past year.
- Increases heart rate, blood pressure, breathing and body temperature.
- Confusion, anxiety, depression, paranoia or panic attacks lasting for several weeks have been reported after taking a single dose
- Regular users have reported increased physical discomfort, or 'hangovers', as well as weight loss, exhaustion, flashbacks, irritability, paranoia, depression, psychosis and loss of desired drug effects. Tolerance develops quickly.

Drugs and Sport

- Heavy use of anabolic steroids over a long period of time may cause liver damage that cannot be cured, stroke or heart attack, and psychological dependency.
- A Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) survey of 16,000 students (11 to 18 years old) reported that 461 or 2.8% reported having used steroids. In the same study, 3.2% of Manitoba youth, aged 16 to 18, indicated anabolic steroid use.

Gambling and Problem Gambling

- 4.7% of Manitobans are at moderate risk of gambling problems, twice as many as 2001.
- 1.4% of Manitobans are problem gamblers. 79% of problem gamblers played VLTs in the past year and were more likely to play frequently than other groups.

Inhalants

- Most inhalants are products made from crude oil (petroleum) including gasoline, automotive fluids and various consumer products called solvents.
- Inhalant abuse occurs when people inhale substances to get high, instead of using them for their manufactured purpose.
- Inhalant abuse is very dangerous because inhalants can damage internal organs including nerve cells and brain cells.

