

DANGEROUS NEW TRENDS

Mothball Abuse

Some teenagers are using mothballs to get high, a trend that may be underreported and that may be more widespread than what's known.

Users place mothballs, which contain paradichlorobenzene, in a bag and inhale from it for about 10 minutes. Some users are also chewing mothballs. The term "bagging" has been used to describe the habit.

Mental impairment, loss of coordination, and scaly skin may be symptoms of mothball abuse. Paradichlorobenzene, also found in air fresheners and insect repellents, can cause anemia and liver and kidney failure.



One French teen found sniffing mothball fumes took six months to recover; a twin sister took three months.

(Source: www.jointogether.org; 7-28-06)

Online How-To's for Drug Use

Do you want to learn how to smoke the fentanyl found in a pain patch, or get high using cough syrup containing dextromethorphan (DXM)? Some people do, and they're finding the information on the Internet...step by step instructions they need.

A drug user named Shiva recently detailed online how she tapped six used fentanyl patches she found in the garbage after her grandmother died, pricking them with a needle, pressing out the gel and smoking it. "When I follow these simple steps, I feel warm and nice and forget my problems and worries," she wrote. "But if I take too much, I'll feel itching all over my body and will be unable to go to the toilet. It is very addictive."

Other users spoke of chewing, sucking, eating, or snorting the patches or gel. A simple Google search yields advice on "crushing, separating, purifying and chemically altering specific formulations to allow changes in dosage, route of administration, and time course of effects," according to a researcher for the pharmaceutical industry.

(Source: www.jointogether.org; 7-27-06)

"Starter Heroin"

"Cheese" is a mix of ground-up cold medicine and a small amount of heroin that has authorities in Texas concerned that drug dealers are cultivating the next generation of addicts.

USA Today reported in April that the mix, which DEA agents have called "starter heroin", has been seized in middle and high schools in Dallas, which is why a nationwide advisory has been made.

The tan powder, meant for snorting, is primarily acetaminophen and diphenhydramine HCL (the active ingredients of cold medicines and Tylenol PM) mixed with up to 8% heroin. A hit sells for about \$2, with a quarter-gram going for about \$5, according to Dallas school officials. It was also reported that students keep it in folded school lined paper. The signs to look for in students are euphoria, disorientation, lethargy, hunger and sleepiness.

(Source: www.jointogether.org; 4-28-06)



A Dallas newspaper recently reported that the online communities like My Space, MiGente, and Bebo are being used by web-savvy youth gangs to recruit new members.

Dallas area school officials say that they have found online sites depicting students in gang-associated clothing, flashing hand signs, and using drugs. Some sites are believed to be the work of gangster wannabes, but others may be from serious gang members.

Gang-related graffiti has shown up on home pages established for a Texas high school on Bebo.com. Users sometimes arrange fights online. The vice president of Bebo said offensive content will be removed from the site if the company receives complaints, and said Bebo is also hiring a safety officer.

Schools can block access to social-networking sites, but it doesn't prevent students from working around the filters on other computers.

(Source: www.jointogether.org; 7-28-06)

Nicotine Drink



Nic Lite, a lemon-flavored drink containing nicotine, is being marketed as a way for smokers to get their fix of the drug in places where they can't smoke. An 8-oz bottle of Nic Lite contains about the same amount of nicotine as two cigarettes.

Nic Lite is not regulated like nicotine patches or gums because it is considered a dietary supplement. This label angers some critics who feel that it is just outing a drug in a soda can. Some health experts worry that Nic Lite will get youths hooked on nicotine, but a Yale Medical School Professor says the risk of addiction is not too high. David Katz states, "When we ingest something, most chemicals that get into the bloodstream go through the liver and that sort of filters those chemicals out. So there tends to be less of an effect when you ingest something than when you smoke it or absorb it through the skin." He also states, "So it's going to be less intense and less addictive by mouth than if you smoke it or wear the patch. But don't let that fool you...you still get the nicotine hit. That's why gum, which in essence is ingested, works."

The upside of Nic Lite is that it does not cause cancer, according to the ABC News report.

(Source: www.jointogether.org; June 26, 2006)

Secondhand Smoke

What is a safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke? You may assume limited exposure does little harm. But a new Surgeon General report finds that any exposure poses a risk. Smokers inhale toxins when they puff on a cigarette, but evidence shows that breathing secondary smoke does even more damage. Non-smokers exposed to secondhand smoke face a 20%-30% increased risk of heart disease and lung cancer. The report, which many may find controversial, recommends banning smoking indoors, not segregating smokers and installing ventilation systems.

(Source: www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke)



Parents Underestimate Use by Youth

The most recent national Pride surveys of parents and students show that parents dramatically underestimate alcohol and illicit drug use by youth. One-fifth (21%) of students in grade 6 reported that they had drunk alcohol at least once in the past year. Yet only 5% of parents said that their 6th grader had tried or is using alcohol. More than two-thirds of 12th graders reported past year alcohol use, while only 41% of parents thought that their 12th grade student had used alcohol. Similar results are found for illicit drug use. Thirty-six percent of 12th graders reported using illicit drugs at least once in the past year, while 15% of parents reported that their 12th grade child used drugs.

(Source: Cesar FAX; 8-7-06)



Most Misused Substance in Rural Areas

A new report from the Carsey Institute for Families and Communities at the University of New Hampshire found alcohol to be the substance misused most in the nation's rural regions. The report, "Substance Abuse in Rural and Small Town America," claims that efforts and funding should be focused on alcohol treatment, despite rising rates of methamphetamine use.

While methamphetamine and other stimulant use was reported by less than 1% of those surveyed, alcohol misuse or dependence was reported by 17% of 18-25 year olds, 7% of 12-17 year olds, and 5.6% of adults over 25.

(Source: www.jointogether.org; 7-21-06)

TEEN MOVEMENT



In a recent study from the American College of Sports Medicine, 75% of teenage girls said they didn't have enough time for exercise. But a review revealed that their commitments were no different than teens who did exercise. Both groups had the same amount of homework and the same job commitments. Parents need to take the lead and see that their kids get up and move! Lack of exercise in the teen years is a risk for obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure later in life.

(Source: Top Health Newsletter, August 2006)