

DO SOMETHING!

Things You Can Do Instead of Doing Alcohol and Drugs

Most young adults end up experimenting with drugs and alcohol because they feel they don't have anything better to do. Here's a list of safe, fun and legal things you can do instead of getting drunk or high:

- Get involved in a sport
- Take a dance class
- Volunteer for a community organization
- Sign up for a College Club
- Learn to play the guitar
- Draw, paint, or sketch
- Play video games
- Read a book
- Write poetry
- Play an instrument
- Go for a walk
- Get a part-time job
- See a movie



TALK TO ME

How Friends and Family Can Help

It's a good idea to have people to talk to when you're feeling pressured to try drugs or alcohol. The next time you need to talk, find a good, trusting listener like:

- A parent or another trusted relative
- Your teacher
- The counselor at your College
- Someone from your church
- A good friend

Everyone needs people that they can rely on in tough times. Make a list of people you can call in tough times.

TEST YOURSELF!

What do you know about saying "no"? Take this quiz to find out!

1. What can happen when you use drugs and alcohol?
a. You can go to jail b. You can make poor decisions
c. You can get hooked d. All of the above
2. Tobacco and alcohol are legal drugs, so that means they're not dangerous.
a. True b. False
3. If someone offers you drugs or alcohol, you should:
a. Say "no" and walk away
b. Suggest another activity instead
c. Change the subject
d. Any of the above
4. Prescription drugs can be just as deadly as drugs like cocaine or heroin.
a. True b. False
5. Drugs and alcohol mess with your brain, making it difficult to think clearly.
a. True b. False



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Answers: 1. d; 2. b; 3. d; 4. a; 5. a

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STAY SAFE SERIES

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STAYING SAFE



REFUSING ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

WHY SAY "NO"?

Three Ways Drugs and Alcohol Can Wreck Your Life

Everyone knows that drugs and alcohol are dangerous . . . but that doesn't mean that young adults always have an easy time walking away when someone offers them a joint or a beer. Some young adults feel like they have to drink or do drugs to fit in. Others hear about the dangers of drugs and alcohol and think, "That stuff will never happen to me."

There are a lot of very good reasons to walk away from drugs and alcohol. The next time someone offers you drugs or alcohol, think about some of the short and long-term consequences:

1. You might get hooked . . . or worse. Drugs and alcohol can do serious damage to your brain and body. Long-term effects of usage include damage to organs like your liver, lungs and brain, and increased risk of cancer and mental health issues. Even worse, drug and alcohol use can kill you.

2. You might go to jail. If you get caught with drugs or alcohol, you might get arrested. A drug arrest looks bad on your record and may hurt your chances of going to college or finding a job. The same goes for drugs like tobacco and alcohol. If you get caught with alcohol or other drugs, you can still face harsh penalties. You might lose your driver's license or pay fines.

3. You might do something stupid. Like having unprotected sex, or getting behind the wheel of a car when you're buzzed or high. Remember, drugs and alcohol mess with your ability to make good decisions, and you're more likely to do something you'll regret later.



SAYING "NO"

. . . And Sticking to it

Chances are, you've already been in a situation where someone has offered you drugs or alcohol. Remember, you don't have to use drugs or drink just to fit in. Nobody can force you to do anything you don't want to do, but it's not always easy to keep your cool in the face of peer pressure.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Say "no" and walk away. You shouldn't have to worry about what your friends will think. If they're really your friends, they'll respect your decision. Refusing drugs and alcohol can be as easy as telling someone:

- "That's not my thing."
- "I'm good right now. Thanks."

CRACK A JOKE

Humor can often ease the tension of an awkward situation. Need a good one-liner? Try one of these:

- "I'm already addicted to shoe shopping. I don't need another expensive habit."
- "Thanks, but I'm already crazy enough without getting high."
- "That stuff kills brain cells. I don't have enough to spare."

CHANGE THE SUBJECT

You're at a party, and this guy keeps trying to pass you a joint. You're really not interested, so you can say something like, "Hey, did I tell you about the time I . . ." or, "Dude, you'll never believe what happened at lunch yesterday . . ."

SUGGEST AN ALTERNATIVE

Try suggesting something else to do besides drugs or alcohol. Ask your friend if he feels like going to a movie, playing a video game, or going to the mall. There are tons of fun things to do that don't involve drugs.

Of course, sometimes you'll find yourself around a person who just won't stop pressuring you no matter how many times you've said "No". In situations like that, the best thing to do is to just walk away. It's better for you to not hang out with that friend again.



DRUGGED TO DEATH

Heather's Story

Heather was having a tough year. The formerly bubbly and energetic young adult had become depressed and withdrawn after her parents split up. She was sick of being stuck in the middle of her parents' fights. She was having trouble sleeping at night. She was so stressed out that she failed her biology test – even though biology was her favorite subject. Her teacher had yelled at her for dozing off in the middle of class.

Heather didn't use drugs, but when a couple of her friends offered her some prescription drugs, she didn't hesitate to accept them. One bottle was filled with anti-anxiety pills. The other was filled with sleeping pills. Her friends promised her that the pills would help her feel better. Heather figured that, since they came from a pharmacy, the pills must be safe.

Heather was wrong.

The day after her friends gave her the pills, Heather was found dead in her bed. The cause of death was an accidental overdose of prescription drugs.

Everyone who knew Heather said she'd never kill herself. Heather had been depressed, but she wasn't suicidal. Her death was an accident. People die all the time from overdoses of legal and illegal drugs.

Heather will never participate in her College Commencement. She'll never take another biology test. She'll never hang out with her friends or see her family again. She'll never get her driver's license.

If Heather had said "no" to drugs, she'd still be here today. Remember that, the next time someone offers you drugs.