

5



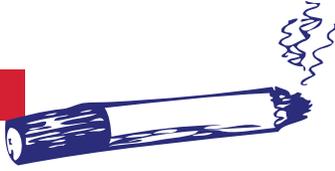
DRUGS and DRINKING

- Research has shown that ADHD during childhood may be a risk factor for drug and alcohol abuse in later life.
- A recent survey found that more than 15 percent of adults with the ADHD had abused alcohol or drugs during the previous year. Alcohol and marijuana were the substances most commonly abused.
- The impulsivity, poor judgement and risk taking behaviour can lead to the abuse of substances.
- Some research has found that those with ADHD who were medically treated as a child were less likely than their untreated peers to abuse drugs or alcohol in their teenage years or in young adulthood.
- However there are also fears that the medication prescribed by doctors for ADHD are being abused and it is very important that if you are on medication, you do not take more than what your doctor has told you to.
- It is very important that you do not share your medication with anyone else.
- Being aware of the risks should hopefully make you think harder before even experimenting with drugs or alcohol. If you are approached by anyone, even friends, speak to a trusted and responsible adult about it.



6

SMOKING



- Once you start its hard to stop. Smoking is a hard habit to break because it contains nicotine which is highly addictive.
- People start smoking for a variety of different reasons, some think its cool others start because their family members or friends smoke. Statistics show **9 out of 10** smokers start before they are 18 years old.
- Due to some of the ADHD symptoms you may be more likely than your friends to initiate and continue to smoke.
- Teen smokers can experience many problems like bad skin; bad breath; bad smelling clothes and hair; reduced athletic performance and greater risk of injury with slower healing. Over the long term, smoking leads to people developing health problems like heart disease stroke and many cancers.
- Each time someone lights up and smokes **a single cigarette it takes between 5 to 20 minutes off the person's life.**
- The only thing that can help avoid all these problems is to stay smoke free. This isn't always easy especially if everyone around you is smoking and offering you cigarettes.
- Smoking marijuana can have negative effects on memory, judgement and perception-all of which are already a difficulty when you have ADHD.
- Remember stop and think if you are around people who are smoking and try and get you to join them.





SCHOOL and COLLEGE

It has been well researched that children/young people with ADHD underachieve more often in school than their peers. They are also more likely to receive detentions, suspensions and exclusions. Young people may stop attending school altogether, get involved in anti-social activities resulting in poor employment prospects in the future in addition to an overall poor quality of life.

Therefore it is important to have good compliance with medication if required in order to enhance the outcome of the school experience and future life prospects.

Learning to multitask on your own and organise self learning at college can be one of the hardest things to do that is different from being at school, but even more so when you have ADHD. Some ways to help this include:

- Find a safe quiet place to study
- Use an alarm clock to set specified start and finish times for an assignment
- Take frequent breaks
- Divide projects into smaller sections
- Try to sit at the front of the class to minimise distractions and maximise attention
- Discuss any difficulties with your tutor or parent/carer

Taking your medication regularly will improve your concentration and help you to be more organised and stay focussed on school/classroom related tasks.





WORK

- Looking for a job can be difficult for anyone but when staying organised and finishing tasks are real problems as part of your ADHD this can be even more daunting
- However there is almost no job that you cannot do if you choose to do so just because of your ADHD
- Challenges at work you might face are:
 - Distractibility – there are often lots of distractions within and outside the workplace and it may be helpful to find a way to block out the noise around you while you work.
 - Impulsivity – acting before thinking can lead to you taking on projects you are unable to complete or quitting a job after a bad day without thinking of solutions to the problems you are dealing with.
 - Hyperactivity – constantly fidgeting at work can be misconstrued as boredom or poor motivation.
 - Forgetfulness is a common problem faced by those with ADHD and it might help to write down reminders for you and check them throughout the day. Remember to stay safe if working with dangerous equipment.
 - Time management problems – this can result in attending meetings late and not meeting deadlines.
 - Interpersonal difficulties – this can result from being too blunt and speaking your mind without thought for your colleague's feelings and interrupting others whilst speaking.

Taking your medication regularly if needed can help reduce the above difficulties and enhance productivity at work.

