

What is a dependency?

A dependency is a substance (eg. a drug) or activity (eg. video games) that you *need* or *depend on* to feel good.

What is a drug?

Drugs are substances other than food that you put in your body by

- eating,
- drinking,
- breathing,
- or injecting

to achieve an effect.

Drugs administered by doctors are generally safe. Drugs obtained from illegal sources are very dangerous.

About Nicotine and Smoking (Quinn Feb. 26, Borgh Feb. 28)

1. Tobacco is a plant whose leaves are dried and used for smoking.
2. When tobacco is smoked, smoke enters through the mouth and nose. From there it passes through the throat and to the lungs. The smoke contains **nicotine** and other harmful substances.
3. These substances are passed from the lungs to the bloodstream, affecting most of the body's organs.
4. Smoking can cause **many cancers, including lung, throat, mouth, pancreas and bladder cancer**. Smoking can also cause **heart attacks, strokes** and emphysema.
5. Smoking can cause asthma attacks, yellow teeth, skin wrinkles, smelly breath and hair, and coughing.
6. Smoking can reduce lung function and decrease athletic ability and energy.
7. Smoking is so addictive that it is usually **not considered safe, even in moderation**.
8. If you breathe in smoke from a person smoking near you, you get the same effects as if you were smoking yourself. This is called "**second hand smoke**". It is illegal to smoke in a car when a child is present.
9. **Nicotine** is the main drug in tobacco and is a **stimulant**. This means it speeds up body functions, including the heart and breathing.
10. Nicotine is a **highly addictive substance**. The body quickly develops a craving for nicotine and people who want to stop using tobacco find it very hard to do so.
11. Nicotine patches or Nicotine chewing gum can help people quit.
12. Nicotine makes people feel **jittery and nervous**. This is true even though some people say they smoke because it calms them down.
13. Nicotine **shrinks the arteries**, which cuts down on the amount of blood that goes to the brain, and makes the heart work harder to pump blood throughout the body.
14. **Tiny hairs, called cilia**, usually clean the lungs of dirt and germs but they are **paralyzed by nicotine** so the smoker is more vulnerable to **colds, flu, bronchitis** and other diseases.

About Alcohol (Quinn Mar. 5, Borgh Mar. 7)

1. Alcohol is a depressant. This means it slows body functions.
2. Alcohol also changes the mood of the person drinking it.
3. Alcohol is a liquid made by fermenting* various natural, sugary substances such as grapes and grains. (* introducing bacteria or yeast)

Effects of too much alcohol:

4. The liver and kidneys filter out some of the poisons in the alcohol. Alcohol eventually kills liver cells if abused.
5. The flow of oxygen to the brain is decreased by alcohol.
6. Other effects include poor coordination and balance.
7. This causes problems with walking, talking, driving a car and operating machinery.
8. Alcohol can dull the drinker's senses and heavy drinking can permanently destroy brain cells.
9. Alcohol can produce dangerous changes in the rhythm of the heartbeat.
10. Alcohol irritates the entire lining of the digestive system. It can cause problems ranging from vomiting to ulcers and cancer.
11. Alcohol leads to muscle weakness and breakdown.
12. Alcohol goes directly from the mother's bloodstream to the unborn fetus or baby. Drinking while pregnant can cause a number of birth defects.
13. It is also not advised to drink alcohol when breastfeeding.
14. Some people are more likely to get addicted and to have serious side effects such as aggression, poor judgement. Due to poor judgement caused by alcohol abuse, some deny that they have a problem.

About cannabis: (Quinn Mar. 19, Borgh Mar. 21)

1. Cannabis is also called marijuana, or weed.
2. Cannabis is a plant that changes your mood if you smoke or eat it.
3. Some use cannabis as a medicine, under the supervision of a doctor.
4. Cannabis is illegal for minors under the age of 19 years, unless prescribed by a doctor (which is rare for minors, according to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario).
5. There are many short-term and long-term health effects to using cannabis. These include:

Short-term effects:

- confusion
- sleepiness (fatigue)
- forgetfulness, lack of concentration
- difficulty in making decisions and judging distances
- anxiety, fear or panic
- increased heart rate
- reduced ability to react quickly (slow reflexes)
- paranoia, delusions, or hallucinations

Long-term effects:

- damaged blood vessels caused by the smoke
 - decreased blood pressure, which can cause people to faint
 - loss of memory
 - decreased I.Q. (Intelligence Quotient)
 - bronchitis, lung infections, chronic (long-term) cough, increased mucus buildup in the throat
6. Long-term effects are increased when a person starts using it at a young age, for example as a teenager.

Information gathered from: “Health Effects of Cannabis” (Fact Sheet), Government of Canada, 2017

About Energy Drinks (Quinn Mar. 19, Borgh Mar. 21)

1. What are energy drinks?
2. Energy drinks have energy boosting ingredients like **caffeine, sugar, taurine, vitamins and herbs**.
3. Energy drinks can be found anywhere you buy beverages, right beside the pop, juices and sports drinks.
4. They should not be used by children, or pregnant or breastfeeding women.
5. 2 to 3 cans of energy drinks per day is considered safe for adults.
6. 4 to 5 cans of energy drinks can be safe for some adults for a limited time, if the energy drink is not a strong drink with a high amount of caffeine.

Caffeine:

7. Caffeine is the main ingredient in energy drinks that gives you the feeling of more energy.
8. Too much caffeine can **cause irritability, nervousness and sleeping problems**.
9. Caffeine is also mildly addictive, and some find it hard to quit.

Sugar:

10. Sugar, another ingredient in energy drinks, also provides you with energy, but it can cause **hyperactivity** and **energy lows**. It also causes weight gain, diabetes, and cavities.
11. Other substances are added to energy drinks such as **Taurine**, which little is known about, and medicinal herbs such as **gingko biloba**, which can have unwanted side effects.
12. Side effects that have been reported are **nausea, vomiting and irregular heartbeats**.

About Illegal Street Drugs (Quinn Mar. 26, Borgh Mar. 28)

1. Illegal street drugs **change the way a person thinks, acts or feels.**

2. Examples of Illegal Street Drugs

- Ecstasy
- Crystal Meth
- Cocaine
- Heroin
- And many others

Drugs can affect the body:

3. They can either **speed up or slow down** how the body works.

4. A drug that speeds up body functions (stimulant) can increase the breathing rate and cause heart problems, including a heart attack.

5. A drug that slows down body functions (depressant) can lead to unconsciousness and death.

6. Drugs that affect the brain can **change the user's feelings, thoughts and coordination.** Some can have hallucinations, where they see things that are not there. Some can lose sense of reality and think they can jump off a cliff and be safe.

7. Some street drugs can damage the reproductive organs of either males or females and cause children to be born with **birth defects** and other problems.

8. Illegal street drugs also kill brain cells.

9. Illegal street drugs are never considered safe because

- they have strong effects,
- it is easy to overdose on them,
- we don't know the long term effects of them and
- you don't know what's in them.

10. You can also get a **criminal record and go to jail** if you are found in possession of illegal street drugs.

About Prescription Drugs (Quinn Mar. 26, Borgh Mar. 28)

1. Prescription Drugs are medications that **only a doctor can order** (e.g., inhalers, insulin, antibiotics).
2. Examples of Prescription Drugs
 - Insulin
 - Amoxicillin
 - Epi pens
3. Prescription medicines/drugs are those taken only in the following ways:
 - When a doctor, dentist or nurse practitioner prescribes them.
 - For a **specific reason**.
 - For a **specific person**.
 - When a specially trained person, called a **pharmacist**, prepares them.
4. Some **side effects** include:
 - rashes
 - sore stomach
 - dizziness
5. Rules for Prescription drugs:
 - **Never share your medicine with another person.**
 - **Never take someone else's medicine.**
 - **Never get medicine from anyone except a pharmacist or doctor.**
6. Some people get prescription drugs from the street and take them to feel good. This is very dangerous because
 - **Prescription drugs can be very addictive**, and should only be taken under the care of a doctor.
 - You don't know the proper dose or side effects of the drug if you get it from illegal sources.

About Non-Prescription Drugs (Quinn Apr. 2, Borgh Apr. 4)

1. Non-prescription drugs are drugs **available without prescription**.
2. Examples of Non-Prescription Drugs
 - **Cough syrup** (eg. Robitussin, Benylin)
 - **Pain relievers** (e.g., Tylenol, Advil)
 - Medicines that reduce swelling or infection (eg. **Polysporin**)
 - **Allergy** drugs (eg. Benadryl, Claritin)
3. They are available at a supermarkets, department stores, and drug stores.
4. Anyone can buy most non-prescription medications.
5. You do not have to see a doctor first.
6. They are also called “**over-the-counter**” medicines because you can take them off the shelf and pay at the check-out counter.
7. What you should know:
 - **Take medication only from an adult you trust**.
 - Take **only the amount of medicine** your doctor or a grown-up you trust says to take.
 - **If you do not feel well after taking a medication**, tell a grown-up you trust right away.
8. Some **side effects** of non-prescription drugs are
 - feeling drowsy
 - headache
 - nausea
 - liver / kidney damage (this is true of Tylenol when taken with alcohol)
 - difficulty sleeping
9. You should consult your family doctor if you are taking non-prescription drugs for a long period of time (more than 2 weeks).

About Screen Time (Quinn Apr. 2, Borgh Apr. 4)

1. Too much screen time can be detrimental for the following reasons:

- It can interfere with exercising and create lazy habits.
- It can interfere with reading.
- It can interfere with doing homework.
- It can interfere with playing with friends.
- It can interfere with family time.

2. Of course, screen time, in moderation, can be a good thing:

- It can be used for entertainment.
- It can be used for new learning.
- It can be used for receiving updates on news and current events.

BUT ...

3. Screen time can be addictive.

4. Too much screen time is thought to hurt the growth of the brain in children and teens. (as per “Gray Matters – Too much screen time damages the brain” by Victoria L. Dunckley, M.D., Psychology Today, Feb. 2014)

5. Too much screen time has been known to cause eye disorders such as blurred vision, sensitivity to light, “dry eye syndrome” and near-sightedness. (as per “WhatIsDryEye.com”)

Unless otherwise stated,

The information in this document was gathered from:

Student Resource 1: Commonly Misused Substances and Behaviours, from the Healthy Living - Making Healthy Choices unit of OPHEA’s grade 3 teaching resource. (Ontario Physical and Health Education Association), 2015