Dental Health in Teens
DRUG AWARENESS

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San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency
Why Focus on Oral Health?

• Dental problems are the #2 reason for missing school

• 65% of adolescents aged 16-19 have tooth decay or fillings in their permanent teeth
Oral Effects of Drugs

- Infection
- Dry mouth
- Cavities
- Gum disease
- Bad breath
- Teeth grinding
- Gum sores
- Black stains
Tobacco

- 28,000 people diagnosed in 2007 with oral cancer
- 9,000 people die every year from oral cancer
- Effects on mouth:
  - Staining and blackened teeth
  - Bad breath
  - Gum disease
  - Cavities
  - Tooth Loss
  - Loss of jaw bone/tongue
Smokeless Tobacco

- Also known as spit tobacco, chewing tobacco, chew, chaw, dip, and plug

- Types:
  - **Snuff**: Fine-grain tobacco that often comes in teabag-like pouches. Users "pinch" or "dip" between their lower lip and gum.
  - **Chewing tobacco**: Shredded, twisted, or "bricked" tobacco leaves that users put between their cheek and gum.
Smokeless Tobacco

- The tobacco stays in the mouth so users can suck or chew on the tobacco.
- Users spit often to get rid of the saliva that builds up.
- The sucking and chewing allow nicotine (an addictive drug) to be absorbed into the bloodstream through the tissues.

Smokeless does not mean harmless! Smokeless tobacco is every bit as dangerous as smoking!
Smoking and Drinking are risk factors for a higher incidence of tooth decay, gum disease and oral cancer.
Alcohol Statistics

- More than 100,000 U.S. deaths are caused by excessive alcohol consumption each year.
- Direct and indirect causes of death include drunk driving, cirrhosis of the liver, falls, cancer, and stroke.
- Alcohol is the most commonly used drug among young people.
- Underage drinking costs the United States more than $58 billion every year — enough to buy every public school student a state-of-the-art computer!
Alcohol Statistics

- Alcohol kills $6\frac{1}{2}$ times more youth than all other illicit drugs combined
- In surveys done recalling the prior 30 days, 50% of high school seniors report drinking, with 32% reporting having been drunk at least once
- Youth who drink alcohol are 50 times more likely to use cocaine than those who never drink alcohol
- Traffic crashes are the greatest single cause of death for persons aged 6-33
- About 45% of these fatalities are in alcohol-related crashes
Drinking Alcohol and Dental Problems

- Heavy drinking can cause:
  - **Irritation** of the gum, tongue, and oral tissues
  - **Poor healing** after dental surgery
  - **Poor dental health habits**
  - **Increase in tooth decay** from the increased exposure to sugars and acids in the alcoholic beverage itself
ILLEGAL RECREATIONAL DRUGS
Dental Problems with Crack Cocaine

- Higher risk for HIV infection and other medical concerns, such as: stroke, heart failure, or bleeding from the lungs

- Dental Problems include:
  - Perforation (hole) in the separation between the 2 nostrils or nasal septum
  - Gum sores
  - Damage to tooth surfaces
What is Meth?

• Short for Methamphetamine
• A powerful and addictive stimulant that:
  o Affects central nervous system
  o Has a high potential for abuse
• To prevent “crash”, user takes more meth
• Tolerance develops rapidly, leading to an addiction in a relatively short time
What is Meth?

“Double Whammy” Drug

First Stage
energetic & powerful

Second Stage
downfall / “crash”
Meth Street Names

- Crank
- Tina
- Speed
- Ice
- Zip
- Crystal
- Fire
- Chalk
- Tweak
- Glass
Who Uses Meth?

• A meth user could be ANYONE!
  o Teens, parents, college students, men, women, and professionals
  o Meth is used in a variety of age groups, lifestyles, and neighborhoods
Students & Meth

- Students are attracted by the drug’s reputation for increasing energy
- Others use it to stay alert for extended periods of time
- Women and girls view it as a way to lose weight

Student Profile:
- 4.5% of High School Seniors
- 4.1% of 10th Graders
- 3.1% of 8th Graders
MY FRIENDS AND I
SHARE EVERYTHING.
NOW WE SHARE HEPATITIS AND HIV.
What is Meth Mouth?

- Caused by acidic nature of the drug and its tendency to cause dry mouth
  - Saliva acts as buffer against cavities.
  - To relieve thirst or dry mouth, meth users crave high-sugar foods, drinks, and gum
- This contributes to widespread tooth decay
What is Meth Mouth?

- If left untreated, tooth decay leads to severe pain and infection
  - Infection can spread to gums, causing tooth loss and lifelong damage
- Anxiety leads to clenching and grinding of teeth → cracked teeth
Signs of Meth Mouth

- Dry mouth
- Bad breath
- Cavities
- Breaking or crumbling teeth
- Bleeding gums
- Swollen gums
- Loose teeth
- Mouth and gum sores
- Pain
This is Meth Mouth
Other Signs of Meth Use

- Excessively happy
- Loss of appetite
- Nervousness
- Increased acne
- Constant talking

- Rapid eye movements
- Dilated pupils
- Sweating
- Rapid weight loss
- Sleeplessness
- Excessive itching & sensation of “bugs” under skin
**Long Term Use**

- **Can lead to:**
  Dependence (resulting in inability to do daily activities)

- **Can cause:**
  - Hallucinations, paranoia, mood disturbances, memory loss, damage to skin and severe anorexia
  - Ultimately stroke, liver or heart failure, or even death
10 YEARS OF METH USE
WHERE WILL YOU BE IN 10 YEARS?
Drugs will kill! Is it worth it?
For Further Questions, Ask Your NURSE or HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

Q? A!
Dental Health Initiative

Share the Care

San Diego Health and Human Services Agency

SHARE THE CARE

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