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The Truth About Adderall

In many Wisconsin communities, we are seeing a rise in stimulant use (Adderall, Vyvance, Ritalin) among youth in middle and high school. According to Alex Graf from the College Post, Doctors often prescribe stimulants such as Adderall to patients diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), but high school and college students, often without a prescription, are using stimulants as a performance enhancer and study aid. ADHD is a brain disorder that affects concentration and focus among individuals who suffer from it. According to data from the Center for Disease Control, nearly one out of every ten children in the U.S., or 6.1 million, are diagnosed with ADHD. The U.S. also has the highest rates of diagnosed ADHD in the world. Adderall comes from the same family of drugs (amphetamines) as meth but is also one of the main drugs used to treat ADHD, and studies have shown the drug to be an effective treatment that increases focus and reduces impulsive behaviors among students with the disorder. Adderall can also be highly addictive because it causes dopamine levels to increase among users, especially if they're taking higher than prescribed doses. Abusing the drug regularly can lead users to become dependent on it and unable to function normally without it. – Alex Graf, The College Post

Due to its addiction potential, a person can rapidly move from Adderall recreational use to abuse to addiction. While teens and young adults are most affected, anyone can develop an Adderall abuse problem. The physical, psychological, and behavioral symptoms can include:

- Sociability, talkativeness, and fast thoughts
- A sense of grandiosity, invincibility, and intense wellbeing
- Dry mouth, nausea, and vomiting
- Nervousness, anxiety, and panic
- Doctor shopping
- Manipulating Adderall's format (e.g., crushing and snorting it)
- Being fearful of the prospect of not having Adderall
- Spending a significant amount of time finding the drug, using it, or recovering from Adderall use

Adderall abuse will cause a person to build a tolerance to the drug. In order to experience the desired Adderall high, over time, a person will have to consume more of this drug. When the abuse stops, withdrawal symptoms will emerge. Such symptoms can include fatigue, irritability, anxiety, depression, confusion, and/or sleep troubles.

Adderall is a potent stimulant, and it can be hard to recognize when someone is abusing the drug. People often abuse Adderall to enhance alertness and productivity. They are often motivated individuals that don't look like a stereotypical drug user. Stimulants will help anyone focus better. And a lot of young people like or value that feeling, especially those who are driven and have ambitions. We have to realize that these are potential addicts — drug addicts don't look like they used to. - Clinical neuropsychologist Dr. DeAns Parker, New York Times, 2013

Additional signs of Adderall abuse may include:

- Loss of appetite
- Unusual excitability
- Social withdrawal
- Financial troubles
- Aggression
- Sleeping for long periods of time
- Secretive behavior
- Exhaustion
- Loss of appetite and/or Excessive weight loss
- Memory loss
- Incomplete thoughts
- Relationship problems
- Decline in personal hygiene
- Frequently taking pills
- Financial difficulties
- Overworking or overconcentrating
- Running out of prescriptions early
- Disorientation
- Mania
- Impulsive behaviors

Dangers and Side Effects of Adderall

Many people who abuse Adderall wrongly assume the drug is safe because it comes from a doctor. Adderall is prescribed to people, including children, with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). This leads some people to think the drug is safe because children take it.

In reality, Adderall is a strong stimulant that can lead to serious — and potentially deadly — side effects. Overdose is one of the worst side effects of Adderall abuse, which can lead to heart attack, stroke and liver failure. Taking Adderall with other substances, such as alcohol, heighten the risk of a fatal overdose.

(continued)

In 2005, the Canadian government banned sales of Adderall XR (the time-released version of the drug) due to 20 deaths associated with the drug.

Adderall can also cause physical changes in the brain's neurocircuitry. This can lead to altered behaviors and the development of mental disorders like depression. Some Adderall addicts become suicidal after taking the drug for a prolonged period of time.

In addition, a person may experience mental health side effects. Some of these symptoms are hallucinations and believing things that aren't true. Serious side effects may be less common, but they can happen and it's best to know what's possible. The following are some of the most severe side effects associated with Adderall abuse:

- Pounding heartbeat or fast heart rate
- Chest pain
- Feeling faint, dizziness, or changes in vision
- Numbness in the arms or legs
- Slowed speech
- Exhaustion, fever, rash, or itching
- Shortness of breath, difficulty swallowing or breathing, or hoarseness
- Verbal or muscular tics
- Seizures
- Blistering or peeling skin, swelling of the throat, face, tongue, or eyes

Some drug users have even injected Adderall in an attempt to achieve a better "high" by delivering the drug directly into the bloodstream. Injecting the drug may provide a more intense high, but it is also a fast track to a fatal overdose. Athletes taking Adderall have died because their increased blood pressure leads to heat stroke and cardiac arrest. Amphetamines, including Adderall, have been banned by the International Olympic Committee since 1968, due in part to the dangers of these drugs.

Snorting Adderall is common among users looking for immediate effects. They crush up their pills into a fine powder, sniffing Adderall into their sinus cavity. This often leads to a more intense high, but snorting Adderall comes with its own side effects. Snorting pills cause destruction of the nasal and sinus cavities. The longer someone continues taking Adderall in this way, the more damage that can be done. Snorting also amplifies other Adderall side effects such as irregular heartbeat. Those snorting Adderall also have a heightened risk of overdose

Adderall abuse is also associated with long-term side effects. As MD Junction discusses, Adderall is exceptionally addictive, which means abuse runs the risk of developing into a stimulant use disorder. It has also been noted that when an individual stops using Adderall (i.e., goes into withdrawal), they may experience suicidal thoughts, mania, panic, or nightmares.

Disposable Fruit- and Candy-Flavored Vape Devices Raise Concerns

By City of Milwaukee Tobacco-Free Alliance



On February 6, 2020, a new FDA regulation went into effect banning certain types of e-cigarettes thought to be most attractive to youth -- reusable pod-based devices in all flavors except tobacco and menthol. New types of disposable e-cigarettes, however, seem to have no trouble blasting through the many loopholes in the new federal regulation.

Take Puff Bars, for example, which seem to be replacing JUULs as the go-to vape device that appeals to youth. Puff Bars, like JUUL, look like USB drives and offer tasty flavors, like O.M.G. (orange, mango, and guava), Café Latte, watermelon, Banana Ice, and lemonade. But JUUL isn't able to sell fruit- and candy-flavored vape pods under the new regulations. Puff Bars, in contrast, sell a limitless number of flavors because they're disposable, and single-use devices in all flavors are allowable under the new regulations, assuming they received FDA market authorization if introduced after August 8, 2016. Puff Bars and similar devices have not received market authorization, according to research from Rutgers University.

Another difference? The price point. JUULs cost up to \$34.99, while the single-use Puff Bars are priced as low as \$4.60 and deliver more nicotine than JUULs, according to research from the Truth Initiative.

Puff Bars contain nicotine salts, "a formula that allows for much higher levels and efficient delivery of nicotine with less irritation compared to earlier generations of e-cigarettes," Truth Initiative states.

Although Puff Bars slipped through the cracks in the new regulations, there's one bright spot. The maker of Puff Bars said it will no longer distribute or license these devices, although Puff Bars still can be purchased online. Look for more devices on the market that exploit the loopholes in the flavor ban, and expect more youth to grab onto the latest e-cigarette that is tailored to their tastes.

Maryland recently took action to prevent a new generation of youth addicted to nicotine by extending the federal ban on flavored e-cigarette cartridges to disposable devices.