drug awareness

A Hollister Kids Newspaper Supplement from:

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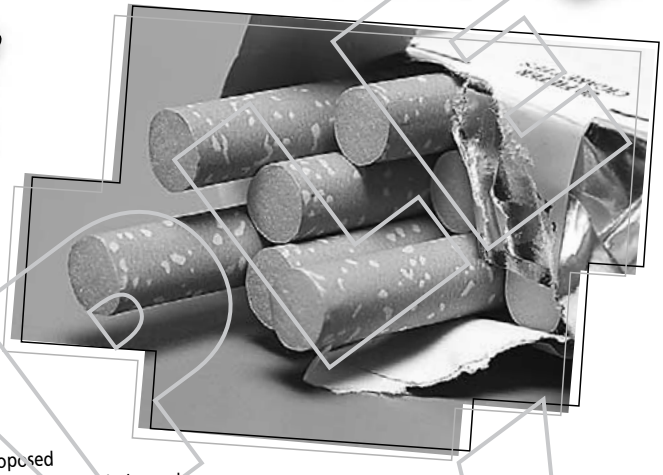
stamping out smoking & drinking



Political leaders and the Food and Drug Administration of the federal government are both pushing tougher controls on tobacco on the ground that cigarette makers use nicotine like a drug.

Nicotine is an important — and addictive — ingredient in cigarettes. The FDA sought to more closely regulate tobacco, so it could be able to decide, for example, how much tobacco is allowed in cigarettes and how those cigarettes may be sold.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in March 2000 that the FDA does not have the authority to regulate tobacco. The U.S. Congress is now being asked to give the FDA that power through new laws.

In the last few years there has been a lot of debate about who should pay for health care of people harmed by smoking.

In a landmark 1998 settlement, cigarette companies were ordered to pay $206 billion to 46 states that had filed suit to recover health costs paid by the states for smoking illnesses.

Under the settlement with the states, cigarette companies agreed to pay for a $1.7 billion anti-smoking and research campaign designed to reduce smoking by teens and pre-teens.

It seemed that the agreement would limit future lawsuits against cigarette companies. But in 2003 the Justice Department demanded that the nation's biggest cigarette makers hand over $289 billion for lying to their customers about the dangers of tobacco.

Smoking among youths has declined over the last several years, according to the Monitoring the Future survey – yet there is concern that the decline has leveled off. Among 8th graders, daily smoking rates fell from 4.4 percent in 2004 to 4 percent in 2006, for 10th graders, from 8.3 percent to 7.5 percent and for 12th graders, from 15.6 percent to 12.2 percent.

During the month prior to the survey, 8th grade rates declined from 9.3 to 8.7 percent, while 10th grade rates dropped from 14.9 percent to 14.5 percent and 12th grade rates dropped from 23.2 percent to 21.6.

EYE ON ADS

Even before the proposed cigarette settlements, the FDA had planned restrictions in cigarette advertising that appeals to teenagers and children. Those ad restrictions include:

- restricting tobacco advertisements on billboards;
- keeping billboards 1,000 feet away from schools and playgrounds;
- preventing tobacco companies from giving away items like T-shirts to young people;
- banning use of cartoon logos like Joe Camel;
- blocking brand name cigarette sponsorship of sports events.

The FDA started tougher enforcement of laws against sales to people under 18 by requiring photo IDs for purchase of cigarettes by anyone under age 27. It also wants to ban sales of cigarettes from vending machines.

Why all the attention to cigarette advertising? One recent study says that teenagers are three times as likely as adults to respond to cigarette advertisements.

THE ART OF SELLING

Many people think there are certain images used in cigarette ads that appeal to young people. What kind of images catch your eye? Look through magazines and newspapers and cut out the ads you like most. What products are these ads selling? Are they for items appropriate for young people? Using collage and drawing, design an ad about the effects of smoking or drinking that you think will catch the attention of other students.

LIQUOR CONTROLS

Tobacco is not the only industry under attack for trying to appeal to young people.

Companies that sell liquor like vodka, gin and tequila recently decided to start advertising on television and radio again after years of agreeing not to.

That decision has upset anti-alcohol groups and some politicians, who fear the new advertising will encourage young people to drink.

But these liquor companies argue that their voluntary ban on advertising was out of date, especially since beer and wine companies can advertise on television and radio.

NEWS CAPSULE

A The battle over the effect of cigarette and liquor advertising on teens has forced people to weigh public health against the important American right of free speech. As a class, break into teams and stage a debate. Have one side argue that public health should be the most important issue and the other that free speech shouldn't be limited. Finish by brainstorming a solution you think would be fairest to all.

B Laws that regulate health issues are sometimes controversial because they affect companies that employ a lot of people. Look through the newspaper for other stories about health laws or rules that affect the way businesses operate. Write a summary of one law and the problem it is trying to fix.

TALK ABOUT IT...

Describe a recent television ad that appealed to you. What made this ad effective? How would you advertise tobacco or liquor on TV to appeal to young people? How would you advertise the dangers of tobacco or liquor to young people?

SAMPLE

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'FACTS' ABOUT ALCOHOL ARE OFTEN FICTION

Alcohol not only is the most widely used of all drugs — it may also be the most misunderstood. There are numerous "facts" that "everybody knows" about alcohol. Actually, these so-called facts are fiction. Here are some of the more common myths about alcohol:

YOU'RE NOT AN ALCOHOLIC UNLESS YOU DRINK A PINT A DAY.

There's no simple rule of thumb. Experts have concluded that how much people drink may be far less important than when they drink, how they drink, why they drink, and what happens to them when they drink.

MOST ALCOHOLICS ARE MIDDLE-AGED OR OLDER.

A University of California research team has found that the highest proportion of drinking problems is among men in their early 20s. The second highest incidence occurs among men in their 40s and 50s.

ALCOHOLICS ARE MORALLY WEAK.

Although there are still people who disagree, alcoholism has been medically and legally classified as an illness. Alcoholics are no more responsible for their drinking than tuberculosis patients are for their coughing.

YOU CAN'T BECOME AN ALCOHOLIC BY ONLY DRINKING BEER.

Even though the alcohol percentage is relatively low (2-5 percent), beer still contains the potentially addicting ingredient, ethyl alcohol. People who drink beer merely have to drink more liquid to get drunk than they would with wine or whiskey.

WOMEN DON'T BECOME ALCOHOLICS.

Women do become alcoholics, but are not as likely to be diagnosed as such, since they are more easily camouflaged by the protective setting of the home. During recent years, the estimated ratio of men to women alcoholics has dropped from 6:1 to 3:1.

THE REALLY SERIOUS PROBLEM IN OUR SOCIETY IS DRUG ABUSE.

Right. And the No. 1 drug problem is alcohol abuse. About 450,000 Americans are addicted to heroin, but about 15 million are addicted to alcohol.

"THANK GOODNESS THE KIDS AREN'T ON DRUGS!"

If you're hooked on drinking, you're on drugs. With 15 million Americans dependent upon alcohol, it's time we stopped pretending it isn't a drug. The kids' favorite drug is the same as the parents' favorite: alcohol.

ALCOHOL IS A STIMULANT.

Alcohol is about as good a stimulant as ether. Although in small quantities, it may be initially stimulating or irritating, it is primarily a depressant. The first area of the brain alcohol affects is the area that regulates inhibitions, judgment and self-control. It is the lack of such restraints that causes the "stimulated" behavior, and people may do things they might not otherwise do.

MIXING DRINKS CAUSES GREATER INTOXICATION.

Only the consumption of ethyl alcohol, the ingredient common to all alcoholic beverages, causes intoxication, not the mixing of drinks. A person may tend to consume more when there is a variety of drinks, but it is still only the total amount of ethyl alcohol that counts.

COFFEE AND A COLD SHOWER WILL SOBER YOU UP.

Alleged methods for sobering up range from hot coffee to cold showers, from fresh air to food. The only effect any of these treatments can have is to produce a wide-awake drunk. An awakened drunk, feeling sobered up, may attempt to perform such tasks as driving, of which he/she is no more capable than the sleepy drunk. Time is the only method for sobering up. There is no way to increase the oxidation rate — the rate at which the body eliminates alcohol.

"WHAT A MAN! STILL ON HIS FEET AFTER A WHOLE FIFTH."

When we stop thinking it's manly to drink too much, we have begun to grow up. It's no more manly to over-drink than it is to over-eat. Often people who seem to be able to out-drink others are developing a tolerance and become dependent upon it.

Drew Barrymore

Appearing in the movie "ET," Drew Barrymore began living the life of a movie star at the age of seven. Barrymore came from a family of talented and famous actors, who, in some cases, had drug and psychological issues. Overwhelmed with her fame, she began drinking when she was nine, smoking pot when she was 10 and doing cocaine when she was 12. Her mother sometimes went with her when Barrymore was club-hopping. After several tries at rehab, Barrymore slashed her wrists in a desperate plea for attention and sympathy. It took many years of rehab, self-discovery and hard work for her to get back on track. As a woman, Barrymore has starred in a number of hit movies, including "Ever After," "The Wedding Singer" and "Charlie's Angels." She also runs her own production company, Flower Films.

ALCOHOL TEST FOR TEENS

Alcohol remains the most popular drink among teens. How do you know when it is becoming a problem. Answer "Yes" or "No" to the following questions:

1. *Do you miss school days or class periods because of drinking?*
2. *Do you drink to overcome shyness and build up self-confidence?*
3. *Is drinking affecting your reputation at school or elsewhere?*
4. *Do you drink to get away from study or home worries?*
5. *Does it bother you if someone says you drink too much?*
6. *Do you have to take a drink to go on a date?*
7. *Do you ever get into money troubles because of buying alcoholic beverages?*
8. *Have you lost any friends since you began drinking?*
9. *Have you ever had a loss of memory from drinking?*
10. *Have you ever been stopped by police, arrested, or put into a hospital or jail because of drunken driving?*

"Yes" to one question is a warning. A "yes" to as few as three questions means that alcohol has almost certainly become — or is becoming — a problem.

This questionnaire is based on a test developed by Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

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