Reasons why you should choose not to use

Death
Liver disease
Cancer
Emphysema
Brain damage
Prison
Memory loss
Weakened immune system
Kidney failure
Weight fluctuation
High blood pressure
Heart attack and disease
Psychosis
Loss of ambition
Respiratory failure
Expense
Asphyxiation

Think it couldn’t happen to you? People now suffering with terminal health problems or serving prison sentences thought so, too.

Even casual use can lead to the problems listed above and countless others.

If you have or someone you know has a substance-abuse problem, seek help immediately. Inform a trusted adult, such as a parent, teacher, coach, clergy member, counselor or doctor, or call a crisis hotline.

For more information on drug abuse:

Al-Anon/Alateen Family Groups
888-4AL-ANON (425-2666)
www.al-anon.alateen.org
Phoenix House
888-352-1719
www.phoenixhouse.org

The National Institute on Drug Abuse
301-443-1124
t eens.drugabuse.gov
www.drugabuse.gov

Partnership at Drugfree.org
855-378-4373
www.drugfree.org

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
877-696-6775
www.hhs.gov

SAMHSA’s National Clearinghouse for Alcohol & Drug Abuse
1-877-SAMHSA-7 (726-4727)
www.samhsa.gov

Choose not to use.
The American Legion is concerned about young people using drugs and destroying their lives. Alcohol, tobacco, inhalants and marijuana are often readily available and considered the entryway to a life of drug-dependency and delinquency. Using these gateway drugs is dangerous and can lead to drug abuse and addiction, plus more serious drugs, such as heroin, cocaine and LSD.

Drugs ruin the lives of users and often the lives of their friends and families. But peer pressure can be intense.

Remember, you are the one ultimately responsible for your decisions in life. The choices you make today can have far-reaching effects.

Familiarize yourself with the information and choose not to use. Live a healthy and productive lifestyle. After all, you are worth it!

**Gateway drugs**

**Choose not to use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alcohol</th>
<th>Inhalants</th>
<th>Marijuana</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Purchasing or drinking alcohol is illegal for anyone under 21 in all 50 states.</td>
<td>• Inhaling or “huffing” solvents, gases, nitrates and commercial chemicals can cause immediate death or other irreversible damage.</td>
<td>• Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the main mood-altering chemical found in marijuana, impairs intellectual function, memory, judgment and motor skills.</td>
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<td>• About one in five youth drinkers develop alcohol dependency.</td>
<td>• Inhaling can cause permanent damage to the brain and nervous system, and can decrease intellectual function and coordination.</td>
<td>• Marijuana smokers inhale up to five times more carbon monoxide and tar than cigarette smokers.</td>
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<td>• Every year approximately 10,000 young people aged 15 to 24 are killed in alcohol-related incidents, including homicides, suicides and by drowning.</td>
<td>• First-time users account for more than 20 percent of deaths caused by inhaling.</td>
<td>• THC adversely affects the brain, lungs, heart, reproductive and immune systems.</td>
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<td>• Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for those aged 15 to 20. Alcohol is involved in nearly a third of these deaths.</td>
<td>• Sudden Sniffing Death Syndrome causes more than half of inhalation deaths and can occur anytime while inhaling.</td>
<td>• Marijuana can impair growth and development.</td>
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<td>• Loss of inhibition from the use of marijuana can lead to injuries and death.</td>
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<td>• Studies show marijuana users are often lower achievers compared to non-users.</td>
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