

## **DON'T TAKE A CHANCE ON COCAINE**

**Written by Loree Taylor Jordan**

One of the most dangerous drugs on college campuses is cocaine. According to the 2006 survey on Drug Use and Health, over 35 million Americans age 12 and older have tried cocaine at least once. It is estimated that there are around 2 million cocaine addicts in the United States. Adults 18-25 currently have the highest percentage of cocaine users than any other group. Approximately 7.7% of college students surveyed in 2006 reported lifetime use of cocaine.

Cocaine is a drug extracted from the leaves of the coca plant, and has been around for more than 100 years. It is a brain stimulant and a powerfully addictive drug. Its street names include blow, Big C, nose candy, rock and snow.

On the streets it can be obtained in two forms. The first is a white crystalline powder which can be snorted or dissolved in water and injected. The other is crack cocaine, which is a rock-like substance (freebase or rock cocaine) created by processing with ammonia or baking soda. Crack cocaine can be smoked and is much more fast-acting than powdered cocaine. The faster the absorption, the more intense the high.

No matter how it is ingested, cocaine use results in quick absorption and instantaneous euphoria. During this brief period of euphoria, the user experiences energy, heightened senses, alertness and mental clarity. It can temporarily decrease the need for food or sleep. These are all appealing sensations for the average college student, who may be overwhelmed with academic requirements.

But the brief euphoria passes quickly, in anywhere from five to thirty minutes, leaving the user hungry for more. They experience a "coke crash" and are irritable and fatigued. Frequently the user is compelled to chase for more and more of this experience. They may sell their possessions or steal the possessions of others to meet this compulsion. They are compelled to experience the euphoria again at any price. This is the nature of addiction.

Cocaine is responsible for the most drug-related emergency room visits. The use of this substance can result in very serious side-effects, even if used only short term. These side effects include:

- chest pains
- heart attacks
- respiratory failure
- stroke
- seizures
- headaches
- abdominal pain and nausea.

Depending on how it is ingested, less serious side effects can occur such as nosebleeds and the loss of a sense of smell in users that snort the drug. They may also experience a chronic runny nose, hoarseness or difficulty swallowing.

Cocaine is a dangerous drug and you can't predict which dose is the dose that will leave you physically dependent on it (addicted) or which is the dose that will kill you. One of the things that makes it dangerous is dealers often mix it with other substances. This may be done with items such as sugar or cornstarch to make a supply of cocaine stretch further and to make the user want to come back for more. It may also be mixed with amphetamines.

Cocaine is sometimes glamorized in the movies, but there is nothing glamorous about a substance that would make you steal from family and friends, neglect your health and appearance and possibly experience sudden death. Sudden death has been known to occur even in first-time users.

If you have a problem with addiction, ask for help, whether it is from a doctor, counselor or support group such as Narcotics Anonymous.

If you have never tried cocaine, don't set yourself up to be at risk for addiction and major health problems. Don't take a chance on cocaine.

*For further information visit the following sites:*

- Office of National Drug Control Policy at <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/index.html>
- The Partnership for a Drug-Free America at <http://www.drugfree.org/>
- Narcotics Anonymous at <http://www.na.org>.

### **About Loree Taylor Jordan**



A recovering food addict herself, Loree's mission is clear: to help others recognize, understand and heal from unhealthy addictions as she has in her own life. Loree, was personally sought out by famed self-help guru Tony Robbins to be a guest speaker at his international Life Mastery Program.

She is the author of several books and her new book is entitled *I Never Thought Addiction Could Happen to Me-The 3 Secret Addictions that are Shattering the Lives of College Students-and What to Do About It!*