

COCAINE: THE PRICE OF FITTING IN

Written by Loree Taylor Jordan

Cocaine. This is the drug often glamorized in movies and written about in dozens of songs. What the movies and songs don't usually talk about is just how dangerous this drug really is.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) reports that 8 in 100 high school seniors have used cocaine. They also report that cocaine is affecting students as young as 12. Their 2007 Monitoring the Future study reports that 2.0% of eight-graders, 3.4% of tenth graders and 5.2% of twelfth graders had abused cocaine in some form.

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:

- a white crystalline powder which can be snorted or dissolved in water and injected.
- a rock-like substance known as crack 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.

The appeal of cocaine for teenagers has to do with the way cocaine affects brain chemicals that create pleasure. Users experience higher appreciation of sights, sounds and sense of touch. Many claim that physical and mental tasks are easier to perform under its influence.

The problem is the sense of well-being and energy passes quickly, and the user craves more and more to get the same feeling. They end up addicted. The nature of addiction is that the user will give up anything that gets in the way of their addiction. This includes family, friends, school, and anything and everything else that has to be given up to give in to the compulsion.

Some signs of cocaine addiction in teenagers are:

- Increased energy
- Loss of appetite
- Dilated pupils or red eyes
- Runny nose or frequent sniffing
- Change in sleeping habits; may be up all night and sleep all day
- Loss of interest in school or extra-curricular activities
- Neglects personal appearance
- Frequently needing money, may steal from others

Even in teenagers, cocaine is a very dangerous drug. The use of this substance can result in very serious side-effects, even if used only short term. These side effects include:

- Increase in blood pressure or body temperature
- heart attacks
- respiratory failure
- stroke
- seizures
- headaches
- abdominal pain and nausea
- confusion, anxiety, depression

To experiment with cocaine is to take chances with your life, because 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.

When you think of movies that make cocaine appear glamorous, ask yourself this:

Is there anything 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, and 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!*