

University Students and Substance Abuse

Office of the Registrar | Uniclinic

Department of Student Services

University is a time for experimentation for many. Experimentation can lead to many of you engaging in risky behaviors. Your University years is a period characterized by transition, intense academic pressures, pressure from your peers as well as independence and increasing freedoms from parental supervision. During this period, opportunities to experiment with psychoactive substances, increases. Binge drinking, cigarette smoking and recreational drug use and abuse are some common problems among university students globally, and can lead to poor academic performance that in turn leads to poor productivity. Drug or alcohol abuse can harm your health, relationships, affect your studies and potentially your future.

Please be aware of the dangers of substance abuse

Cigarettes Smoking causes cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung diseases, diabetes, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis. Life expectancy is also at least 10 years less for smokers compared with nonsmokers.

Marijuana

While cigarettes cause many more deaths each year, smoking marijuana is actually more damaging. Smoking marijuana deposits 4 times as much tar in the lungs as cigarettes, due in part to the inhalation technique. The common method of smoking marijuana includes holding the smoke in the lungs for a much longer duration than other smoked substances

and this allows more of the molecules in the smoke to settle in the respiratory system. Some studies suggest that marijuana addiction may also increase the chances of developing mental disorders such as depression, anxiety, motivational disorder and schizophrenia.

Alcohol

Alcohol intoxication and binge drinking may lead to ill-considered decisions about consuming other illicit drugs. Over time, excessive alcohol use can lead to the development of chronic diseases and other serious problems including: High blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, liver disease, digestive problems. You will also be at increased risk of developing certain cancers. Drinking can also increase your risk of depression and anxiety, pancreatitis, suicide, violence, and accidental injury.

Inhalants

Abuse of Poppers, benzene, hair sprays and aerosols, paint, paint thinners and removers, glues. Inhalants are one of the most detrimental substances of abuse to a person's health. They can cause permanent brain damage in a short period of time. Inhalants also are highly toxic to other organs. Chronic exposure can produce hearing and vision loss, significant damage to the heart, lungs and also liver, and kidney damage. Inhalants can also result in heart failure and death within minutes in a single session of use by an otherwise healthy young person (called Sudden Death Syndrome)

Meth or Ice

In addition to behavioral changes, meth use can also cause irreversible damage to bodily systems and blood vessels in the brain, which can result in a stroke.

Long-Term Health Effects of Meth Use

Physical effects of chronic meth use include:

- Respiratory issues, Heart disease, Liver failure, Arrhythmias
- Blackened, rotting teeth , Kidney failure, Birth defects, Malnutrition, Premature aging, Reproductive issues, Seizures, Skin infection, High blood pressure, Sudden cardiac death

Psychological effects of meth use include:

- Impaired mental processes, Memory loss, Paranoia, Delusions, Depression, Aggression, Psychosis and Anhedonia (the inability to feel pleasure)



Make Health your New High in Life.
Say Yes to *Health* and Say No to *Drugs!!*

Visit your Uniclinic for Advice if you are struggling with Substance Abuse:

Uniclinic Nasinu

Mon- Friday

8.00am – 5.00pm