

SMOKES, TOKES & OTHER DRUGS

SMOKES:

Smoking causes serious health concerns, including cancer, heart disease and stroke. When you have diabetes, the risks to your health are increased. For the person with diabetes, smoking can:

- Raise blood sugar and interfere with the timing and effects of insulin (1 cigarette can decrease the body's ability to use insulin by up to 15%)
- Increase muscle and joint pain
- Decrease the amount of oxygen going to the tissues
- Increase the cholesterol and other fats in the blood
- Increase the risk of circulation problems, as well as delay wound healing
- Increase the risk of long-term complications (permanent vision loss, decreased sensation or pain in fingers/toes, kidney damage)
- Increase the risk of heart diseases (11 times the risk of a non-smoker!)
- Decrease insulin absorption

Many of these problems are related to how long you have smoked, so if you haven't started smoking: **DON'T**. If you do smoke—quit as soon as possible. The sooner you stop, the better for your health.

Chewing tobacco is just as dangerous and as addictive as smoking tobacco.

If you need help, talk with your diabetes doctor or nurse educator for tips, or contact the BC Lung Association for programs and support groups.

Websites: www.quitnow.ca
www.tobaccofacts.org

Reference:

- Glasgow RE, Haire-Joshu D. Diabetes & Smoking: Why You Should Kick Butts, *Diabetes Forecast* 53(8):46-50, 2000.

TOKES AND OTHER DRUGS:

Non-prescription drugs, even in small doses, can alter the way you think and feel. Some of the short-term effects of these drugs include:

- Memory/learning problems
- Problems thinking or problem solving
- Increased heart rate

- Decreased muscle coordination
- Decreased reaction time
- Altered perception to sights, sounds, time, touch and reality

All of these can result in missing a meal, snack, or insulin injections, causing problems with blood sugar levels. For example:

Marijuana:

- 1-2 joints per day is equal to smoking 1 pack filtered cigarettes/day
- Can cause slightly increased blood sugar levels
- Can mask the symptoms of low blood sugar, so you don't recognize or treat it right away
- Can lead to the "munchies", resulting in over-eating and high blood sugar levels
- Can cause significant impairment if mixed with alcohol

Heroin, cocaine, speed, and morphine can increase blood sugar levels, as well as severely impair judgement. Cocaine can also decrease your appetite. **Crystal meth** can lead to psychological dependence. **Ecstasy** may make you feel you have boundless energy, leading to low blood sugars. All of these substances are highly addictive and can affect how you respond and manage your diabetes.

How would you plan for this?

- Think about your food, insulin and activity. There is an increased possibility of dosage errors, timing errors, and delayed reaction to changes in blood sugar levels
- Check your blood sugar regularly and respond appropriately to the reading
- Think before driving—any drug can impair your reaction time and judgement
- Think ahead—drugs are just as dangerous for driving as drinking alcohol
- Make sure your friends know about your diabetes—especially about low blood sugars!

Websites: www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/club-drugs
www.deal.org
www.drugabuse.gov/marijbroch/marijteens.html
www.darebc.com
www.teens.drugabuse.gov
www.drugcocktails.ca

References:

- Youth Health Program, Children's & Women's Health Centre of British Columbia. Cocktails: Facts for Youth about Mixing Medicine, Booze and Street Drugs, 2002.
- Glick D. Are You In the Danger Zone? What Every Person With Diabetes Should Know About Legal and Illegal Drugs. *Diabetes Health*, November 1, 2003. Online at: www.diabeteshealth.com/read/2003/11/01/3163.html