**Fact or Myth Explanation — Teacher Answer Guide**

**Answers**

1. **Myth**: According to the Ontario Student Drug Use Survey, conducted by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in early 2005, 14% students reported smoking more than one cigarette during the past 12 months and 9% smoked daily.
2. **Myth**: 142 ml (5 ounces) of wine has the same alcohol as 341 mL (12 ounces) of beer or 43 mL (1.5 ounces) of hard liquor/spirits. This is known as a standard drink. (Source: *Alcohol and Your Health; It’s a Question of Balance*, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 1999)
3. **Myth:** Because marijuana is smoked unfiltered, it contains more tar than a filtered cigarette. Short-term use of marijuana will impair judgment, co-ordination and concentration, thus posing risks to school/workplace safety and driving ability. Over the long term, it can do damage to the respiratory system.
4. **Fact**: Each year, tobacco causes four times as many deaths as motor vehicle collisions, suicides, homicides and AIDS combined. (Source: Chief Medical Officer of Health, “Tobacco: Sounding the Alarm”, Ontario Ministry of Health, 1994.)
5. **Myth**: Anyone can become an alcoholic. You can be rich or poor, any race, religion or occupation. Alcohol does not discriminate.
6. **Fact**: Typically, students who begin to use drugs may change their circle of friends. They often seek out others who also use drugs. Teenagers who have become regular drug users may feel guilty about their own use when they are with non-users. They feel their non-using friends are judging them or looking down on them. They may have reached a stage where they are preoccupied with drugs, and no longer have other interests in common with their previous friends. Regular use of drugs can promote a “who cares?” attitude, permitting the user (or group of users) to try risk-taking activities - their previous friends are not interested in these activities. (Adapted with permission from “Challenges, Beliefs & Changes: Peer Education Program”, PAD Drug Education and Support Services, 1998.)
7. **Myth**: The physical damage from smoking sets in almost immediately — even within a year after you start. Teen smokers cough and wheeze more. They produce more phlegm. They have lungs that are damaged and actually smaller. They have weaker hearts. They perform worse in physical fitness tests and competitive sports and become sick and miss school more often. (Source: Tobacco Quiz, Toronto Public Health, York Office, 1998)
8. **Fact**: Motor vehicle accidents are the number one killer of those under 25. Those between the ages of 16 and 19 are in the most danger. One study found that older drivers (20 years and above) with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC\*) of 0.15% or higher were about 100 times more likely to be involved in a fatal accident than those with no alcohol in their blood. But 16–19 year-olds with this BAC were 400 times more likely to die than same-aged drivers who had not been drinking. (Source: “Facts About: Alcohol, Other Drugs, and Driving”, Addiction Research Foundation, 1992.)
9. **Fact**: Impaired drivers kill 4.5 Canadians every day. Impaired drivers injure more than 300 Canadians every day. (From “Drinking and Driving: Our National Tragedy”, MADD Canada, 1997.)
10. **Myth**: Someone who passes out from heavy drinking could suffer from alcohol poisoning and need immediate medical attention. Alcohol poisoning can cause a stoppage of breathing and even death. Death can also occur when a person becomes unconscious and chokes on his or her own vomit.
11. **Fact**: Within two days of quitting smoking, the user’s sense of taste and smell can be greatly improved. There are other immediate benefits of quitting. The levels of carbon monoxide and nicotine in the body go down quickly. The heart and lungs will begin to repair the damage done by smoking. The user will begin to breathe easier. The smoker’s cough will begin to disappear. And the person will soon notice a boost in energy and stamina. (From *Tobacco Quiz*, Toronto Public Health, York Office, 1998)
12. **Fact**: The repeated use of alcohol and other drugs can change the body's ability to adapt to the presence of these substances. One result is that people become less sensitive to the drug and so need to increase the dosage to obtain the desired effects. This loss of sensitivity is called tolerance. (*Alcohol and Drug Problems: A Practical Guide for Counsellors, CAMH, 3rd edition*, pg. 6, 2004)
13. **Fact**: When a woman drinks alcohol during pregnancy, it passes directly into the baby’s bloodstream through the placenta. It is poisonous to the growing cells in the baby’s body. Some of the possible adverse effects of alcohol on the developing fetus may include congenital defects of the heart, other organs and the central nervous system. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (“FAS”) is the name given to the permanent/life-long condition caused in the fetus.
14. **Fact**: Each day, over 200 young people become new smokers. That is more than 70,000 new smokers each year. 90% of these young people will be trapped into regular smoking that typically lasts 30 to 40 years. (From *Tobacco Quiz*, Toronto Public Health, York Office, 1998)
15. **Fact**: Raves, all-night dance parties, and electronic music are worldwide underground phenomena. The significant difference between dance clubs and raves is that raves are all-ages events, while dance clubs are restricted to those over the age of 19. Raves continue to grow in popularity among adults, young people and teens and encompass a variety of genres including Jungle, Trance, House or Techno. The distinctive electronic music and all-night dancing have resulted in a “rave” culture associated with clothing styles and items such as baby toys. Designer or Club drugs such as ecstasy, methamphetamine, GHB (gamma hydroxy butyrate), ketamine, LSD and psilocybin may be available and/or used at raves. Efforts to increase safety at raves are underway both by authorities and by peer-based harm reduction groups.
16. **Myth**: Food can slow down the effects of alcohol by slowing its absorption into the bloodstream, but alcohol will still get into your bloodstream, causing intoxication. Many factors (e.g., amount consumed, gender, body size, age, type of food eaten, mood, other drugs consumed) affect the rate of alcohol absorption. Once the alcohol has passed into the blood, however, no food or beverage can slow or interfere with its effects. (Source: “Facts About….”, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 1997.)
17. **Myth**: Chewing tobacco is not a safe non-addictive alternative to cigarettes. It can cause cracked lips, bleeding gums and mouth sores that never heal. It can stain your teeth a yellowish-brown colour and give you bad breath. Worst of all, it can cause mouth cancer and other kinds of cancer. It also may play a role in heart disease and stroke. Like cigarettes, smokeless tobacco contains nicotine, and nicotine is addictive. One “dip” of smokeless tobacco can deliver as much nicotine as several cigarettes. (From *Tobacco Quiz*, Toronto Public Health, York Office, 1998)
18. **Myth**: Even after one drink, a driver may feel false confidence and take more risks at a time when skill level, judgment and reaction time are greatly reduced. This will result in a decreased ability to handle the vehicle.
19. Fact: According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health ‘Ontario Drug Use Survey (2005), males (3.2%) use steroids more than females (1.4%) to increase their levels of performance and to alter their physical stature (“bulk up”).
20. **Myth**: Individual factors such as body mass, gender, experience, state of mind, etc., can play a part in how alcohol affects every individual. The same amount of alcohol affects a woman more than a man because women have less water in their bodies, so alcohol is less watered down in women’s bodies. Alcohol also does more physical damage to women more quickly than it does to men. (Source: *Women and Alcohol,* AWARE and Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 1996 and 1999.)

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