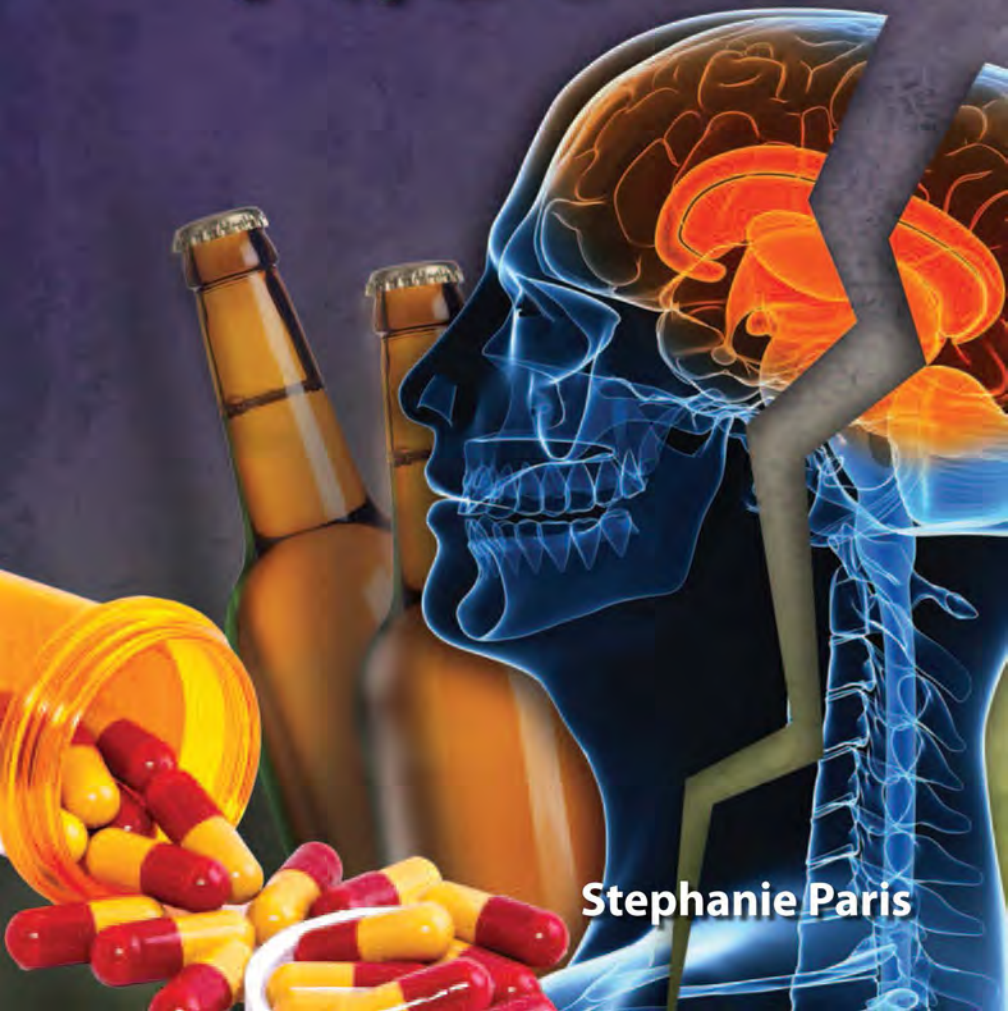
TIME FOR KIDS

STRAIGHT TALK

Drugs and Alcohol



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What Are Drugs?

People talk a lot about drugs. But what they say may not always make sense. You may hear there was a drug bust on the news. But there is also a drugstore on the corner. You may hear about people being in **rehab** because they are drug **addicts**. But maybe you know someone who needs to take drugs to stay alive. How can they all be talking about the same thing?

Some drugs are legal and some are illegal. Some drugs are medicines that can be helpful to your body. Others only cause harm. So when people talk about drugs, they may be talking about many different things.

A drug is any substance—other than food or water—that changes the way your body or mind works.



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Addiction

One word that comes up a lot when talking about drugs is **addiction**. Being addicted to something means it is really difficult to stop using it. A person's body and brain get tricked into thinking the drug is needed to feel good. Addicts may understand that something is causing them harm. But they still feel unable to stop. Addiction is very complicated. And it isn't something that can be faced alone.

Withdrawal

If someone taking drugs, he or she can feel very sick. It may be weeks before the drugs are completely out of the body. Someone who stops taking drugs may throw up, shake, or sweat a lot during **withdrawal**. Withdrawal is a physical and emotional reaction. It lasts until the person's body gets used to not having the drug again.





STOP the CYCLE

Drugs are chemicals. They change the way the brain normally works. Over time, people can develop a **tolerance** to drugs. They find they need to take more and more just to feel the same way.

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DIG DEEPER!

SIGNS OF ADDICTION

Addicts may behave in different ways. These are a few of the signs of addiction.

spending more and more time and energy on getting and using the drug

doing things you don't usually do [like stealing] to get the drug

feeling that you need the drug to deal with your problems

keeping an extra amount of the drug on hand

spending money you can't afford on the drug

failing to stop using the drug when you try

believing that you need to use the drug regularly



"At first, habit only binds us with silken threads. But, alas! These threads finally change to links of strongest steel."

—19th century morphine addict