

Know What Drugs You Are Actually Taking

At some point in our life the majority of us will need to attend a doctor's office for an illness, injury, or a concern regarding one thing or another. In order to treat the problem it is common for the doctor to write a prescription. The pharmacist then provides verbal and written instructions regarding proper use of the prescription drug, its potential effects, and possible side effects.

Since no two people are exactly the same, it is easy to understand that even drugs that are strictly processed, regulated, and monitored could have vastly different effects. Care needs to be taken when combining prescription drugs with other substances (example: prescription drugs and alcohol).

The synergistic effect of combining alcohol with a variety of both illicit and prescription drugs can result in overdose and other life threatening

situations. Prescription drugs are highly regulated, undergo controlled clinical testing and require federal approval prior to being made available to the public.

Street drugs

- Street drugs, on the other hand, are not a controlled substance and therefore not regulated. Some of these street drugs may grow naturally from plants, whereas other street drugs may be largely chemical in origin.
- In addition, often very little is known about where these street drugs have come from.
- Other unknown and potentially dangerous aspects include purity of the drug, chemical composition and concentration, as well as expertise and skill of the individual producing the illicit drug.
- Many of these drugs are manufactured by back yard chemists who often include harmful additives (crystal meth).

Canadian police forces use forensic laboratories for analyzing illicit drugs that they seize during the course of their investigations. Laboratory testing often reveals that



one drug is being sold as another especially when one drug gets a negative reputation on the street (crystal meth being sold as ecstasy). This is a major concern for everyone in the community, since a person attempting to obtain a street drug with a low addiction potential may end up with a much stronger, addictive drug.

Some drugs can be addictive after a person has used them only a few times, and that it is difficult, if not impossible, for a person to tell what street drug that they might actually be obtaining and using. Parents and other community members are concerned about the harmful impact these drugs have on a youth's legal, medical, school and social areas of their life.

Community That Cares

An information evening about today's drug culture was held on April 25, 2006 with S/Sgt Ian Sanderson, RCMP Drug Awareness, as well as parent and teen testimonials. It was held at the St. Thomas Church, 4A Raven Drive, Sherwood Park from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. For more information call 464-4044.

Resources

For a complete listing of resources available, pick up the Drug/Alcohol Resource Directory at the Strathcona County Health Centre located at 2 Brower Drive or at Strathcona County Family and Community Services, 276, 2755 Broadmoor Boulevard (above Smitty's restaurant) in Sherwood Park.

Questions about drug or alcohol issues?

Call Strathcona County Family and Community Services at 780-464-4044.

