

Nursing Notes: Apply Your Knowledge

Your daughter brings her college roommate home for a weekend visit. She tells you she has tried to quit smoking many times before but this time she is determined. She went to her physician for a prescription for “the patch” and she even bought some nicotine gum at the drug store in case the cravings get really bad. You notice a patch on her right upper arm and her left upper arm. Since you are an RN, as well as the mother of a friend, what advice can you give her regarding smoking cessation?

PRINCIPLES OF THERAPY

Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse

Use measures to prevent substance abuse. Although there are difficulties in trying to prevent conditions for which causes are not known, some of the following community-wide and individual measures may be helpful:

1. Decrease the supply or availability of commonly abused drugs. Most efforts at prevention have tried to reduce the supply of drugs. For example, laws designate certain drugs as illegal and provide penalties for possession or use of these drugs. Other laws regulate circumstances in which legal drugs, such as opioid analgesics and barbiturates, may be used. Also, laws regulate the sale of alcoholic beverages.
2. Decrease the demand for drugs. Because this involves changing attitudes, it is very difficult but more effective in the long run. Many current attitudes seem to promote drug use, misuse, and abuse, including:
 - a. The belief that a drug is available for every mental and physical discomfort and should be taken in preference to tolerating even minor discomfort. Consequently, society has a permissive attitude toward taking drugs, and this attitude is probably perpetuated by physicians who are quick to prescribe drugs and nurses who are quick to administer them. Of course, there are many appropriate uses of drugs, and clients certainly should not be denied their benefits. The difficulties emerge when there is excessive reliance on drugs as chemical solutions to problems that are not amenable to chemical solutions.
 - b. The widespread acceptance and use of alcohol. In some groups, every social occasion is accompanied by alcoholic beverages of some kind.
 - c. The apparently prevalent view that drug abuse refers only to the use of illegal drugs and that using alcohol or prescription drugs, however inappropriately, does not constitute drug abuse.
 - d. The acceptance and use of illegal drugs in certain subgroups of the population. This is especially prevalent in high school and college students.

Efforts to change attitudes and decrease demand for drugs can be made through education and counseling about such topics as drug effects and nondrug ways to handle the stresses and problems of daily life.

3. Each person must take personal responsibility for drinking alcoholic beverages and taking mind-altering drugs. Initially, conscious, voluntary choices are made to drink or not to drink, to take a drug or not to take it. This period varies somewhat, but drug dependence develops in most instances only after prolonged use. When mind-altering drugs are prescribed for a legitimate reason, the client must use them in prescribed doses and preferably for a short time.
4. Physicians can help prevent drug abuse by prescribing drugs appropriately, prescribing mind-altering drugs in limited amounts and for limited periods, using nondrug measures when they are likely to be effective, educating clients about the drugs prescribed for them, participating in drug education programs, and recognizing, as early as possible, clients who are abusing or are likely to abuse drugs.
5. Nurses can help prevent drug abuse by administering drugs appropriately, using nondrug measures when possible, teaching clients about drugs prescribed for them, and participating in drug education programs. Some resources for information and educational materials include the following:

National Institute on Drug Abuse
6001 Executive Blvd
Bethesda, MD 20892-9561
Phone: (301) 443-1124
www.nida.nih.gov

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Information (NCADI)
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockwall II
Rockville, MD 20857
Phone: (301) 443-0365
E-Mail: nnadal@samhsa.gov
www.health.org
6. Parents can help prevent drug abuse in their children by minimizing their own use of drugs and by avoiding heavy cigarette smoking. Children are more likely to use illegal drugs if their parents have a generally permissive attitude about drug taking, if either parent takes mind-altering drugs regularly, and if either parent is a heavy cigarette smoker.
7. Pregnant women should avoid alcohol, nicotine, and other drugs of abuse because of potentially harmful effects on the fetus.

Treatment Measures for Substance Abuse

Treatment measures for alcohol and other drug abuse are not very successful. Even people who have been institutionalized