Millions of people have a problem with alcohol and illicit drugs. These problems are not only common, but can happen to anyone. People struggling with drugs are individuals who come from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds. The best way to protect yourself is to know the truth about drugs. What would you do to protect yourself from the effects of drugs?

The following are the most common questions youths have about drugs.

### What Is Drug Addiction?
Drug addiction is a complex brain disease characterized by compulsive, uncontrollable drug craving that persists even when knowing the extremely negative consequences. Addiction becomes compulsive due to the effects of prolonged drug use on brain functions and behavior.

### How Quickly Do You Become Addicted?
There is no easy answer. If and how quickly addiction develops depends on the drug and factors like individual sensitively, genetics and biology. While one person may use a drug many times and suffer no ill effects, another person may be vulnerable and overdose with first use. All drug abuse is potentially harmful and has life-threatening consequences.

### I’m Not Sure I Can Talk To My Parents…
One of the hardest things is to admit you might have a problem. Don’t be scared. Breach the subject in an easy manner. No matter what you think, your parents care about you and your well-being. If you can’t talk with them, try a school counselor, clergy, family doctor, older relative, close friend’s parent or a teen help hotline. Someone can provide solid advice and another point of view. Most young people report feeling better after “spilling their guts” to someone.

### Can Drug Users Get Help?
Definitely! But first, they must admit there might be a problem and they want help so THEY can do the work to kick the habit. People do not have to hit “rock bottom” before successfully getting help. They must recognize the need for change. It’s not impossible to get clean on your own, but it’s easier with support.

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**FOR EMERGENCIES, CALL 911**

Everett Police Department
Crime Prevention Unit
425-257-7497
crimeprevention@everettwa.gov
www.EverettPolice.org

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**Research resources:**
www.checkyourself.com & www.drugfree.org

**National Drug Awareness Resources:**
www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com
-U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency
www.drugfreeamerica.org
-Partnership for a Drug Free America

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