

ADDERALL ABUSE



Adderall is a drug originally developed to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and narcolepsy. Though it has only been around since 1996, prescriptions for it have tripled in the past twenty years, largely because it has become a popular drug for college students who use it as a study aid, because it keeps them awake and alert longer than they might be otherwise. Though most college students who use Adderall consider it fairly harmless, it is in fact a DEA Schedule II substance, which means it has a "high potential for abuse," can "lead to severe psychological or physical dependence" and is considered "dangerous." High Times, a publication that has advocated for the legalization of cannabis since 1974, calls Adderall, "America's Favorite Amphetamine."

Adderall abuse is disturbingly widespread. According to a 2012 study published in the Journal of American College Health, 2/3 of college students have been offered Adderall and other prescription stimulants by the time they reach their senior year. Though many obtain the drug from friends, some go as far as faking the symptoms of ADHD in order to be prescribed the drug by a doctor, a tactic that is more likely to be taken by long-term, habitual users.

Between 2005 and 2010, emergency room visits related to non-medical use of ADHD tripled, from 5,212 to 15,585 visits. A common issue was students who had taken Adderall in combination with other drugs or with alcohol. Adderall is a stimulant, meaning it keeps you awake, and many students have reported using Adderall as a way to prolong their ability "to party." According to a report by Indiana doctor Ron Holmes, drinking alcohol while on Adderall "can lead to psychological issues such as paranoia, anxiety, and severe depression. Physically, it can cause nausea, vomiting, weight loss, heart palpitations, and headaches." Those who mix Adderall and alcohol over a long period of time can expect "convulsions, arrhythmias, fevers, malnutrition, tremors, and muscle twitching." Even occasional use of Adderall with alcohol can cause heart problems.

1. What is Adderall?
2. Explain why college students are abusing Adderall.
3. What kind of drug is Adderall?
4. What are the dangers of mixing Adderall and alcohol?