

The Effect of Drug Addiction on Adolescent's Oral Health: A Complication which is not taken Seriously!

Karimi M*

Department of Pediatric Dentistry, Sepideh Dental Clinic, Iran

***Corresponding Author:** Karimi M, Department of Pediatric Dentistry, Sepideh Dental Clinic, Iran.

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Even when it comes to hearing a word of addiction, it shakes the back of man, imagines what will happen if we would face it. Maybe many parents prefer that their child has had an illness rather than to be addicted. Drug addiction is a problem that destroys the family warmth, not only the addicted person, but the whole family member would suffer from that.

What is the future of an addicted adolescent? Which one is going to be: Theft, murder; or death along the street? We all know that drug use is one of the main problems in the world, which is a disaster more than cancer or an AIDS problem in the present, especially among children in schools. We may also aware of adolescent addiction treatment strategies, but how much do we have taught about oral complications due to drug use? This is the issue that as a dentist, we are responsible for teaching that.

Many people are aware of the publicity that crystal (Methamphetamine) abuse can cause tooth damages; however, they may not know how fast this can happens, or whether other drugs also affect oral and dental health. Unfortunately, the effects of these materials on teeth and oral tissues are so rapid and wide that in most cases there will be no prognosis for repair and maintenance of the teeth.

The most important and dangerous drug which I want to talk about is Pan Parag which commonly is used among children (especially in schools). This dangerous and inexpensive green package, found at low prices, even in some supermarkets, is a product of India, which is similar to drugs being produced in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and just like Naswar, is consumed through Saliva.

The raw material of this dangerous product is tobacco, lime, ash, aromatic spices, and saccharin. To increase the strength of euphoria, the addition of narcotics compounds such as opium and hashish and other chemical compounds such as arsenic, magnesium, lead; and even psychotropic drugs such as ecstasy have been reported.

The risk of this substance is higher when the child, without knowing the consequences and complications of this substance, buys that at a cheap and fairly convenient price and uses it for mouth freshening or pleasure. The worse thing is that because of stylish packaging like Chewing Gum, sweet candy, etc. parents won't be worried or curious by the fact that the package that the use of this drug causes dizziness, teeth discoloration, weakness, and lethargy for the individual, and the absorption of this material through the saliva can increase the risk of gum, larynx and mouth cancer.

This is a danger that calls for the efforts of all the apparatuses and the mobilization of the parents, and all departments to fight and eradicate this destructive catastrophe. The child's consumption can be chewing gum, not a drug!

Here are some important dental complications that should be made aware of:

- The direct effect of chemicals on teeth may appear as dark color in the neck area of the teeth.
- The gases from the burning drugs reduce the number and variety of beneficial bacteria in the oral cavity; provide the basis for the growth and proliferation of pathogenic bacteria and accelerate the process of dental caries.
- By reducing the antibacterial agents in the saliva, drugs reduce the resistance of the teeth and oral tissues against microbes and cariogenic factors.
- The drugs can reduce the activity of surface cells of oral tissues, and destroy the cells of the salivary glands, which causes the reduction of the level of salivation and dry mouth, ultimately can lead to the severe and rapid destruction of the teeth; causing severe complications in the gums and other parts of the mouth.
- In combination with food or bacterial agents, narcotics produce harmful chemicals around the teeth and connective tissues of the gingiva; causing great and disastrous damages to oral health.
- Last but not least, an addict is often faced with adverse social consequences, which provokes him to clench his teeth together; or finding a bruxism habit. Unfortunately, this kind of teeth wear is very destructive and its repair is not so successful. At the same time, these stresses can cause temporomandibular joint problems, which are the source of severe and very unpleasant pain in this area.

For the sake of this article, I just emphasized the most important side effects. There are other complications concerned with drug abuse that I will gather in another article in the very next future and I would comprehensively explain those unlisted side effects and complications.

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