

Monthly Newsletter

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Boomers' Drug Use Increasing as Teen Rate Lowers!

Some moms and dads might want to take a lesson from their kids: **Just say no.**

The recently released National Survey on Drug Use and Health reports that 4.4 percent of baby boomers ages 50 to 59 admitted that they had used illicit drugs within the past month. This marks the third consecutive yearly increase recorded for that age group. Meanwhile, illicit drug use among young teens *decreased* for the third consecutive year—from 11.6 percent in 2002 to 9.9 percent in 2005.

“Rarely have we seen a story like this where one generation exits stage right while entering stage left is a generation that somehow learned a lesson and is doing something very different,” says David Murray, Assistant Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy. The annual survey interviewed 67,500 people and provides an important snapshot of how many Americans drink, smoke and use drugs such as marijuana, cocaine and metamphetamines.

Overall, drug use remained relatively unchanged among those 12 and older in 2005. About 19.7 million Americans reported that they had used an illicit drug in the past month, which represents an increase from 7.9 to 8.1 percent. The increase was not limited to the boomers—an increase was also seen among those 18-25. Among the 18-25 group, drug use rose from 19.4 to 20.1 percent. “This contrast between young teens and baby boomers is a culture change and welcome news for our nation’s well-being,” said John Walters, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, “However the real test will occur when these younger teens enter that dangerous 18-25 year category.”

The study suggests that one’s lifelong disposition and attitude toward illicit drug use are formed during the critical 18-25 year period when peer influence and the popular culture can override one’s early training and good sense. It will be interesting to see if the current abstention rates of young teens remain constant as they enter the “danger zone” of ages 18-25. “Clearly, today’s senior baby boomers came of age during the 1960’s when the culture was inundated with pro-drug messages via music and media,” says culture observer Stephanie Healy. “Woodstock definitely left its mark on today’s 50-somethings.”

The fact remains that illicit drug use is incompatible with safe, sane and productive living. Your Employee Assistance Program provides a confidential means of addressing personal or family related substance abuse issues in a discreet, non-judgmental manner. Please feel free to call us today!