



## Teens Turn to Digital Drugs

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You can't see, taste or even touch digital drugs, but some people say all you need to get high is your computer. Digital drugs, also referred to as sonic drugs or "I-dosing," are sound files that are downloadable, legal and popular with teenagers.

For as little as \$1, you can download audio files that promise to deliver the experience of being drunk or of taking marijuana, cocaine, ecstasy or just about any other drug you can name. "There's one track that actually mimics driving under the influence of alcohol. There's other ones for crystal meth, cocaine, heroin, all different kinds of drugs," Stephanie Moran, program director at the Governor's Prevention Partnership, said. <http://www.preventionworksct.org/>

Her organization has been tracking the trend in Connecticut for the past six months. "We are expecting there to be a spike since kids are curious and they do like to try different things occasionally," she said. The music is on i-doser.com and YouTube and people wearing headphones claim they feel the effects while listening to the music.

A teenager, who only wants to be identified as Zach, is in treatment for dependency on actual drugs and admits to doing digital drugs. "It's weird. You listen to something, you get high. You fall into a trance, and when the music stops playing, you wake up and you're high off of whatever drug you took," he said.

This is supposedly based on binaural beats, where a tone of one frequency is played into the right ear and a slightly different frequency is played into the left. The difference purportedly affects brainwaves and mimics the use of recreational drugs. It's no secret that music can affect one's mood, and binaural beats do exist, but doctors said there's no scientific basis that binaural beats can get you high. "Saying it will induce specific recreational drug experiences, it's really a hoax in my opinion," Dr. Daniyal Ibrahim, chief of toxicology at St. Francis Hospital, said. "There is no logical basis to suggest that somehow listening to sound that will simulate a neurochemical change that a drug is predictably doing to kids."

What videotaped experiences on YouTube show is the power of suggestion, he said. "I think it's what we call the placebo effect," Ibrahim said. The big fear is that experimenting with digital drugs might make some teens more curious to experience the real thing, especially those who are on the fence and might not want to try any illegal drug.

Dr. Ibrahim said it's a dangerous, slippery slope.

"To me, it's really a gateway for inciting kids to try real drugs that's my biggest concern," he said.



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# Family dinners one of your best anti-drug tools

November 20, 2011

By CATHY BROWNFIELD - Staff Writer , Salem News

Do you recall dinner hour at your house when you were growing up? Was there a set hour when your family sat down together to eat the evening meal? When your mother called you in from your outdoor activities and you knew you'd better get moving immediately because you had to wash your hands, ditch the baseball hat and be at your designated place at the table?

What did your family talk about over supper? Current events? What you learned at school that day? Why it was wrong to bully another kid? Did you learn some of life's best lessons sitting around that table? Did you learn about your dad's job -the one that supported the family? Did you laugh about funny things together and feel connected? What did you do after supper? Did you help Mom clear the table and pull out a board game of Parcheesi, Monopoly or drag out a deck of cards to play War, Crazy Eights or Uno? And did you talk, reminisce and laugh some more? Those were some of the best times. When you recall them, you may wish you could go back and do them all over again. What did you get from those times? Why do they mean so much to you? Have you given your children some of those same lessons from life that lead to better decision-making?

"Family dinner is an ideal time to strengthen the quality of family relationships," says Joseph A. Califano Jr., founder and chairman of CASA (National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University. "As the quality of teens relationships with their parents declines, their likelihood of using tobacco, alcohol and marijuana rises. Siblings are important, too: teens who believe their older siblings have tried illegal drugs are more likely to say they expect to try drugs in the future."

Between 1999 and 2011, teens were asked, other than food, what did they consider the best part of family dinners? More than half surveyed said "that talking, sharing, catching up and interacting with family members is the best part." Here are a few questions for you to ponder about your family dinners: How long is your family gathered around the dinner table? Under 15 minutes? 15-20 minutes? Half an hour? Or more than half an hour?

How much time do you spend checking in with your teens to see how they are doing? Would your teens like to spend more-or less-time with you? Do you and your child's other parent agree on what to say about alcohol, marijuana and drug use? "Over the past 17 years," Califano reports, "CASA Columbia's national survey of teens and parents has consistently found a relationship between the frequency of family dinners and teen drinking, smoking and other drug use."

A lot of us grew up sitting down together every night for supper. If having frequent family dinners prevents substance abuse in teens, and if the experience is uplifting for the whole family, why wouldn't you want to? What are your priorities? Do you need to reconsider them?

The survey shows that teens who have a good relationship with Mom and/or Dad are less likely to abuse harmful substances. And this study also reports that teens who eat dinner with their families are also more likely to attend religious services that contribute to stronger family values. For more information about this topic, contact the New London Community & Campus Coalition, 120 Broad Street, New London, CT; phone, 860-442-1497.

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