

\*The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has information on the effects of tobacco, smoking cessation, and tobacco control programs: 1600 Clifton Rd., Atlanta, GA 30333; 800-232-4636; email: [tobaccoinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:tobaccoinfo@cdc.gov); <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco>.

## **Alcohol.**

Acute or chronic abuse of alcohol (ethanol) is responsible for many acts of violence, suicide, accidental injury, and death. Alcohol drinking is likely to begin in the middle school years and increase with age. By 18 years old, 80% to 90% of adolescents have tried alcohol. Ethanol is a depressant that reduces inhibitions against aggressive and sexual acting out. Severe physical and psychological symptoms accompany abrupt withdrawal, and long-term use leads to slow tissue destruction, especially of the brain and liver cells. The most noticeable effects of alcohol occur within the CNS and include changes in cognitive and autonomic functions, such as judgment, memory, learning ability, and other intellectual capacities. Young people with alcoholism often drink alone and cannot control their use of alcohol. They often rely on the substance as a defense against depression, anxiety, fear, or anger. Not all of these characteristics are observed in adolescents who are abusing alcohol, but if several signs are evident, the child or adolescent should be considered at risk. Referral to a health care professional and detoxification therapy may be necessary. Information about alcohol and answers to questions are available through the Alcohol Hotline.\* Other groups that provide support and counseling for families are Al-Anon, Alateen, Alatot, and Alcoholics Anonymous (an organization that has listings in all local directories).

## **Cocaine.**

Although cocaine is not pharmacologically considered a narcotic, it is legally categorized as such. Cocaine is available in two forms: water-soluble cocaine hydrochloride, which is administered by “snorting” or intravenous injection, and non-soluble alkaloid (freebase) cocaine, which is used primarily for smoking. Crack, or “rock,” is a purer, more menacing form of the drug. It can be produced cheaply and smoked in either water pipes or mentholated cigarettes.

Cocaine creates a sense of euphoria, or an indefinable high.