

R.I.P. COCAINE

◆ CONCERNING YOUR HEALTH ◆

A DANGEROUS AND HIGHLY ADDICTIVE DRUG

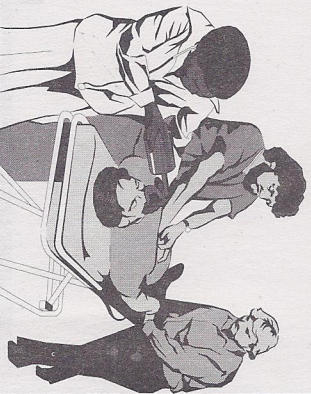
Cocaine is a powerful stimulant and anesthetic and is possibly the most dangerous illegal drug available today. Few other drugs carry such great risks or have such high potential for addiction. People who have used cocaine have found it to be extremely habit forming and often find themselves rapidly losing control of their lives as the pursuit of the drug becomes their most overwhelming concern.

Cocaine is a white powder made from the leaves of the coca shrub, and most of the world's supply is grown in South America. Although stiff laws have been designed to prevent the importation, manufacture, and use of cocaine, many people who are addicted to cocaine are willing to risk their lives and money to obtain it illegally.

Typically, users "snort" a small amount of cocaine powder into the nose where it is absorbed into the bloodstream through the thin tissues of the nasal lining. Cocaine may also be dissolved and injected into a vein. When users smoke a form of cocaine called freebase, a rapid and intense "high" often occurs. Cocaine is also made into small pellets known as "crack" or "rock" which when smoked produces powerful effects similar to freebase.

CRACK COCAINE

Crack cocaine provides a cheap and almost instant high and has earned a reputation as *one of the hardest drug addictions to overcome*. Because crack cocaine enters the body so readily, the physical effects are almost immediate. Cocaine causes sharp increases in the heart rate with corresponding elevations in blood pressure, breathing rate, and body temperature. Users experience slurred speech, dilated pupils, and often feel more alert and energetic. Hunger pains diminish and users may sense a feeling of well-being and euphoria. Users sometimes have pow-



erful feelings of fear and anxiety instead of the pleasant feelings they had desired.

The "high" experienced by cocaine users usually wears off after 20-40 minutes and is often followed by a corresponding "low" of intense depression. Desperate users often try to get another dose of cocaine immediately in an effort to offset the severe depression. The drug quickly becomes habit forming and some people experience long-term psychosis (severe mental breakdown) accompanied by unfounded fears, paranoia, and suspicions long after they have stopped using cocaine. Extended use of cocaine greatly increases the risk of hallucinations, "cocaine psychosis," delirium, and psychological problems. Since the purity of cocaine is hard to estimate, it is possible to overdose on a small amount of the drug. An overdose may cause convulsions, respiratory failure, and death.

Experiments on laboratory rats have demonstrated that rats will choose cocaine over food and will literally starve to death, taking continual doses of cocaine instead of eating food. Researchers do not fully understand all of the factors involved in establishing or breaking an addiction to a powerful drug like cocaine.

REHABILITATION OR ABSTINENCE

Many users who have gone through rehabilitation programs have later started to use the drug again. Because cocaine addiction is so hard to break, many people avoid using the drug altogether.

If you find yourself addicted to cocaine, there are solutions. It will be one of the hardest things you have ever done, but you can regain control of your life. Just remember—YOU CAN BEAT COCAINE!

