Dear Teacher:

This issue of your Scholastic classroom magazine launches an exciting new year of Heads Up, featuring articles that bring students relevant and cutting-edge news about drug abuse and their health.

Our newest article, “Genetics and Addiction,” outlines connections scientists are making between genetics and drug addiction. These findings can help teens understand some of the main factors that play a role in their individual risk for drug addiction.

In addition to showing how drug abuse can run in families, the article outlines other biological and environmental factors that play a part in determining whether or not a person will become addicted to drugs.

I hope you share this article with your students—to provide them with important facts and information that will help them make smart choices in their lives.

Sincerely,

Nora D. Volkow, M.D.
Director,
National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

Lesson Plan and Worksheet

Assessment Tool
Use the Worksheet as an assessment quiz to determine what your students have learned about genetics and drug addiction.

In This Installment:
• How genetics plays a role in drug addiction
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What Do You Know About Genetics and Addiction?

Answer the questions below to find out what you know about genetics and its role in addiction.

1. Genes can influence how a person responds to drugs.
   A True  
   B False

2. Genes can significantly contribute to the risk of addiction.
   A True  
   B False

3. Genes come in different forms, or “variants.”
   A True  
   B False

4. Addiction is a chronic yet treatable disease that affects the brain and behavior.
   A True  
   B False

5. Some genes can make people more likely to abuse drugs.
   A True  
   B False

6. No single factor determines whether a person will become addicted to drugs.
   A True  
   B False

7. Genes carry instructions to make
   A proteins  
   B bones  
   C hair  
   D all of the above

8. Which of the following is a risk factor for substance abuse?
   A peers who use drugs  
   B substance abuse at home  
   C a chaotic home environment  
   D all of the above

9. Which of the following is a protective factor that reduces the risk of drug abuse?
   A parental involvement  
   B strong community or school attachments  
   C strong family connections  
   D all of the above

10. A genetic variation that decreases the enzyme CYP2A6 can protect a person against addiction:
    A heroin  
    B cocaine  
    C nicotine  
    D alcohol