

HEALTH

NNPA FEATURE

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by
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HYPNOSIS

Is hypnosis a good way to lose weight? Can anyone be hypnotized? Can a person be hypnotized and not wake up from it?

Hypnosis has been talked about and used for hundreds of years. Yet, there are many people who tremble at the mere mention of the word.

I want you to approach hypnosis with confidence so that you can use it to improve your life. Skilled hypnotherapists are now using hypnosis to cure everything from depression to excess weight to acute shyness.

I place hypnosis way up high on the list of the best procedures for gaining self-confidence, withdrawing from the horrible smoking habit and losing all of that excess weight that you have tried so often to lose over the years. Hypnosis can help you to change nearly any ugly habit that you don't like and don't want into a beautiful new form of behavior that will make you a much better and happier person. And the best part about it is that hypnosis is so easy.

But, what is hypnosis? Hypnosis is similar to pleasant daydreaming. The hypnotist, who is often referred to as a hypnotherapist, will ask you to sit in a comfortable chair or lie on a soft sofa. You might be asked to close your eyes and think about pleasant things.

You'll picture yourself floating gently and safely down on a soft cloud. You'll imagine yourself walking along the shore of a beautiful beach — and listening to waves splash quietly against the shore. You will see yourself lying in a comfortable hammock that sways majestically and rhythmically back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. The voice of the hypnotist will create the most wonderful experiences of your life as he describes in detail the things that you will enjoy thinking about.

And, before you know it, you will no longer think about the hypnotist. In your mind, you will really be on that cloud, you'll be at the beach or in that comfortable hammock.

Easy, isn't it? And guess what. You're still awake. But you are now using your imagination. In effect, you are having the best daydream of your life. You won't want to smoke. But you will have more confidence that you have ever had. This is known as a post-hypnotic suggestion.

Is there a chance that you won't be able to open your eyes and eventually end the daydream? The answer is that all daydreaming eventually ends. Remember, hypnosis is not sleep. It is merely deep daydreaming. You can open your eyes whenever you want to.

Can anyone be hypnotized? Yes. Anyone who can daydream can be hypnotized. Actually, the better your imagination, the easier it will be to hypnotize you.

Can you be hypnotized if you don't want to be? The answer to that question is no. If you don't cooperate, hypnosis won't happen. You and hypnotherapist are a team.

Can you be made to do anything under hypnosis that you wouldn't normally do? It is your mind that determines if you will be hypnotized. A competent hypnotherapist will discuss with you in advance what you want him to place in your subconscious.

DRUG BABIES: KIDS WHO CAN'T SAY NO

Thousands of drug-exposed babies are born every year — and at great cost to society, reports the February 1991 *Reader's Digest*.

At Yale-New Haven Hospital in Connecticut, 50 percent of welfare mothers-to-be tested positive for cocaine. Comparable figures prevail in other cities.

"Nationwide, tens of thousands of drug-exposed infants are born each year," reports the federal government's General Accounting Office (GAO).

The exact number of drug-exposed babies is unknown because hospitals are not identifying them all. Nine of ten hospitals surveyed by the BAO relied mostly on mothers' own statements in deciding whether newborns had been exposed.

At one large Detroit hospital, self-reporting indicated 600 infants were born drug-exposed, mostly to crack, in 1989. When actual tests were used, however, the number shot to nearly 3,000 births.

Crack babies can suffer from a host of medical problems. They are far more likely to be born prematurely. Even among babies who reach term, low birth weight is common. As many as one third suffer from microcephaly, reduced skull size. AIDS is common in crack babies because of their mothers' multiple sex partners. And some experts say crack babies may suffer developmental and behavior disorders.

At Hale House in New York City, a foster home for children exposed to drugs in the womb, one otherwise normal looking little girl throws a limb-flailing tantrum before each meal. A 2 1/2-year-old boy suddenly goes

into corner, turns his back on the other children and screams for minutes on end.

"Incredible mood swings are common among these children," says Hale House president Lorraine Hale. "You watch the transition, and you can't explain what happened."

Dr. Judy Howard, professor of clinical pediatrics at the UCLA School of Medicine, says that "Babies exposed to drugs in the womb are at high risk for learning and behavior disorders."

In the clinic, she has compared hundreds of drug-exposed children with normal ones from similar neighborhoods and poverty levels. The drug-exposed children almost invariably score lower in standardized developmental tests.

"Crack children are scary," adds Thelma Farley, director of the Beacon Day School in Oakland, Calif., and a child-development expert. "So many drug-exposed children seem to lack moral reasoning — they just don't get it when they've done something wrong."

Many experts see huge costs ahead for taxpayers. In Florida, officials estimate an annual cost of over \$40,000 per child to get crack babies ready for school. In Los Angeles County, total 1988 medical costs for drug-exposed babies came to \$81 million.

The national price tag? According to an internal memo by Senate Finance Committee Chairman Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas, the cost to all levels of government to prepare drug babies to enter kindergarten will soon reach \$15 billion a year.

Dr. Hallam Hurt of Philadelphia's Albert Einstein Medical Center believes that

crack cocaine can erase the powerful maternal instinct.

In one study, Hurt found that 71 percent of crack mothers-to-be had poor or no prenatal care, versus 26 percent of nonusers in the same low-income neighborhoods. Since prenatal care is readily available at no charge in Philadelphia, "poverty wasn't the cause," Hurt notes.

In another study, crack mothers were found to visit their hospitalized newborns far less frequently than mothers who did not use drugs. "When they do come, they are less likely to hold or become involved with their babies," says Dr. Barry Phillips, director of the intensive care nursery at Children's Hospital in Oakland, California.

Dr. Ira Chasnoff of Chicago's National Association for Prenatal Addiction Research and Education adds: "We've never seen anything like crack in terms of its potential for damage to the unborn. Using crack even once

is like playing Russian roulette."

Some state and local authorities have prosecuted crack mothers. In Michigan, a judge sentenced one to life in prison for letting a drug dealer have sex with her daughter to settle a debt. In Florida, another was convicted of illegally delivering drugs through her umbilical cord. Her children were taken away at birth, and she drew a year of house arrest, plus a requirement that she enter drug treatment.

But a solely punitive approach isn't the answer, say most experts. "I would advocate punishment in an instant if I thought it would help," says former drug czar William Bennett. "But it might cause more pregnant addicts to avoid treatment, and you might end up with even more crack babies."

For a free reprint of "Kids Who Can't Say No," send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Reader's Digest, Reprint Manager, Dept. D291, Pleasantville, N.Y. 10570.



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