

Hipocrates

Eugene Schoenfeld M.D.

QUESTION: Marijuana is often heavily weighted down with sugar, as I'm sure many smokers know. The obvious purpose seems to be to give as little grass as possible for the weight of the kilo or lid.

I understand that sugar, when smoked, turns to tar in the lungs which can easily and rapidly cause emphysema. What is your opinion of this? Personally, I am going back to baking brownies.

ANSWER: Several readers have asked about sugar found in their marijuana. But my informants tell me its purpose is neither to add weight nor to sweeten the effect.

Sugar or sugar containing soft drinks are used to make the leafy particles stick into kilogram bricks and illegally imported into the country.

Try burning a cube or lump of sugar. The black chunk of carbon which results will give you an idea of the effect on your lungs of smoking sugar. Even when marijuana hasn't been sugared, its smoke leaves a tarry residue. No one knows at this time whether marijuana smoke is more or less harmful than an equivalent amount of tobacco smoke.

QUESTION: I read an article recently which claims that LSD has been linked to leukemia. How true is this?

The last time I dropped acid was 2 years ago—altogether only twice.

ANSWER: The article concerned a person who took a drug said to be LSD and later developed leukemia. But no relationship was established between these two events. At present, there is no scientific evidence that LSD causes leukemia. For that matter, the latest research indicates there is no difference between the chromosomes of LSD users and non-LSD users.

I mentioned a drug "said to be LSD." This qualification is added because all the legal LSD in the United States is strictly controlled by agencies of the federal government. "Street" LSD may be impure, a mixture of drugs or a different drug altogether.



Dr. Eugene Schoenfeld speaking at Community Arts Auditorium, May 28, 1969 at a benefit for Open City.

Photo: Alan Gotkin.

QUESTION: I am 18 and have had sexual relations on and off since the age of 14. I find sex wonderful and beautiful. The boys (men) involved have been those I dated for more than 4 months steadily.

I'm Catholic and always vow to never sleep with anyone again, but somehow I always do. I mean like it's on my mind a lot.

I secretly fear that I am sterile and have used few precautions. A couple of times my lovers have, but last year we were having relations 3 or 4 times a week and I didn't become pregnant.

Do you think something is wrong with me? I tried going to a doctor to find out but I was 17 then and my mother wouldn't give permission for a pelvic examination. Could it be that my lovers (5 in all) have all been sterile, that I am sterile or that we have all been extremely lucky?

ANSWER: Most gynecologists would not be concerned about possible infertility in a female until she had been with one man for a year or more using no contraceptive methods. But you should have a pelvic examination by your family physician or gynecologist now that you're old enough. (California law permits persons 14 years and older who are living independently of their parents to receive medical treatment without parental consent.)

The chances are you've just been fortunate. Whatever else you press, don't press your luck.

Dear Dr. Hippocrates is a collection of letters and answers published by Grove Press. \$5 at your favorite bookstore.

Dr. Schoenfeld welcomes your questions. Write to him c/o P.O. Box 9002, Berkeley California 94709.

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Fifth Estate #86, August 21-September 3, 1969

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