

# Cocaine epidemic in the usa in 1980s

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## Cocaine Epidemic in the USA in 1980s

The extent of psychostimulants use cyclically varies in contrast to the relatively constant level of opioids use. In the last century there were two periods of high popularity of cocaine. The last peak of its popularity can be traced in 1985 when the number of people who used this drug episodically reached 8.6 million people, while the number of those who used cocaine regularly reached 5.8 million. More than 23 million Americans used cocaine at least once in their life, but the number of those who kept using it was gradually decreasing to 2.9 million in 1988 and to 1.3 million in 1992. The middle of 1990s can be considered as the late phase of epidemic. Since 1991 the number of people who use cocaine very often (at least every day) remains stable and amounts to 640 000 people. Approximately 16% of people who used cocaine lost control and dependency occurred. That happened under the influence of many factors. Two important factors are the availability and the cost of the drug. Till 1980s cocaine hydrochloride used for intranasal and intravenous injection was the only available form of cocaine. Moreover, it was very expensive. Then cheaper alkaloids of cocaine, which could be used by means of inhalation, appeared. Moreover, they were available in many big cities just for \$2-5 for dose. Due to this fact, cocaine became available even for children and teenagers. In general, men used drugs more often than women and for cocaine this correlation amounts to 2: 1. However, the use of cheap alkaloids of cocaine was very widespread among young women and reaches the level that is characteristic for men. Due to this fact the popularity of use of cocaine among pregnant women was high. The third very important factor that influenced people was the fashion. It was fashionable and prestigious to use cocaine, it was very popular among rich

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and people blindly followed the stereotypes. Young people and teenagers were the most vulnerable. They were sure that in order to be considered “cool”, it is necessary to start using cocaine. Certainly, such stereotypes had many awful consequences (Demarest).

The cocaine epidemic was depicted in many movies. Some of them were even forbidden due to the active propaganda of cocaine use. The movie “Blow” (2001) tells us the real story of a man who decided to become one of the first distributors of cocaine in the United States. He made many famous and rich people dependent of cocaine, his sharpness allowed him to avoid any conflicts with police. But everything comes to the end at last. The movie “Scarface” tells spectators about the history of cocaine use in the USA when it was brought by criminals from Cuba. These movies shed the light on the hidden motives of drug barons who wanted to make a distinguished career making many people dependent on cocaine use that very often led to their death. Cocaine epidemic killed many people in the United States in 1980s.

#### Works Cited

Demarest, Michael. Cocaine: Middle Class High. Content. time. com, 1981  
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