

ILLEGAL DRUGS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

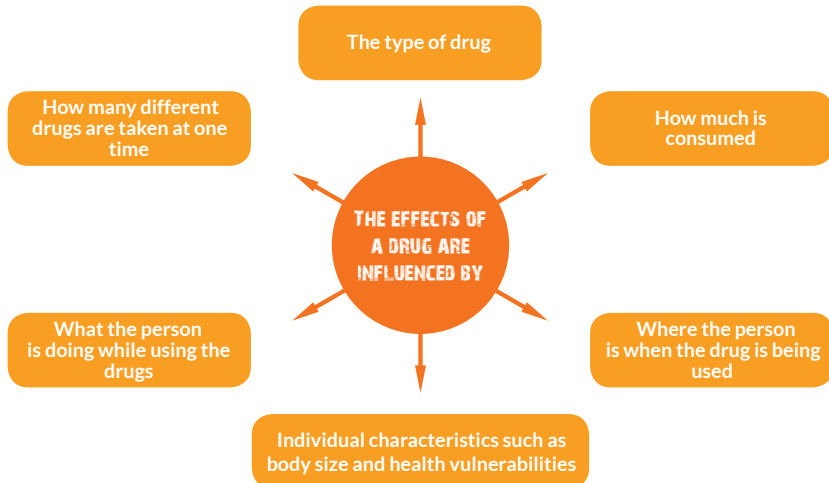
STUDENT VERSION

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WHAT ARE ILLEGAL DRUGS?

A drug is a substance that affects the way the body functions. If a drug is classified as 'illegal', this means that it is forbidden by law. Different illegal drugs have different effects on people and these effects are influenced by many factors. This makes them unpredictable and dangerous, especially for young people. On pages 16–27 you will find a list of common illegal drugs and their effects.



HOW MANY YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 12-17 HAVE USED ILLEGAL DRUGS IN THE PAST YEAR?¹

IT MAY BE SHOWN DIFFERENTLY BY THE MEDIA, BUT THE TRUTH IS THAT THE MAJORITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE NEVER TRIED AN ILLEGAL DRUG.

CANNABIS

1 IN 7

13.6%

OPIATES (E.G. HEROIN)

1 IN 90

1.1%

ECSTASY

1 IN 38

2.6%



COCAINE

1 IN 71

1.4%

HALLUCINOGENS

1 IN 45

2.2%

METHAMPHETAMINE

1 IN 52

1.9%

¹Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (2016). Australian secondary school students' use of tobacco, alcohol, and over-the-counter and illicit substances in 2014. Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer, Victoria.

ILLEGAL DRUGS AND THE LAW

It is against the law to possess, use, make, import, or sell illegal drugs. The possession of drug-using equipment (e.g. a cannabis bong or pipe) is also against the law in most states and territories. For example, if illegal drugs are found in a person's locker, home, or car they may also be charged, unless it can be proven that the drugs do not belong to them.

The penalties for drug offences vary between each state and territory. In general, the severity of any penalty depends on the type and quantity of the drug/s in question. The age of the offender and their criminal record of any previous offences are also considered.

MINOR DRUG OFFENCE

Most states and territories can allow police to divert someone from going to court if charged for a minor drug offence such as possession of very small amounts of certain illegal drugs.

This can result in:

A CAUTION

A formal warning recorded on a database for police records.

A YOUTH JUSTICE CONFERENCE

A meeting where issues surrounding the offence are discussed with the parent/guardian, police, and health professionals.

A DRUG ASSESSMENT AND EDUCATION SESSION

This involves being assessed for drug use and undergoing an education and counselling session.

MAJOR DRUG OFFENCE

If someone is caught with a larger quantity of illegal drugs or is a repeat offender, they may not qualify for a diversion or caution. This may result in other penalties such as:

A FINE

This can be up to \$100,000.

A CRIMINAL PENALTY

This can include a heavy fine and/or imprisonment which may be up to 25 years.

A CRIMINAL RECORD CAN LEAD TO DIFFICULTIES GETTING A JOB, CREDIT CARD OR EVEN A VISA FOR OVERSEAS TRAVEL.

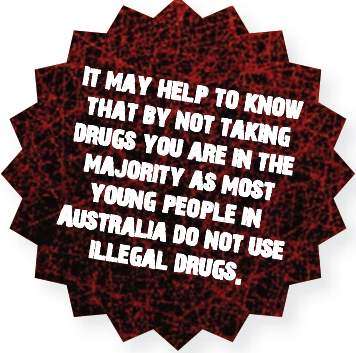
DRUG USE AND SCHOOLS

All schools take drug use very seriously. Although their first priority will be to look after the student and provide help, the person could also be suspended or expelled. The consequence will usually depend on the school policy and the nature of the specific drug incident.

MAKING CHOICES

There is no single reason why people use drugs. Usually several things act in combination. Influences include:

- To fit in/feel part of a group
- A belief that everyone else is doing it
- To forget problems
- To escape reality
- To loosen up
- To be rebellious
- Out of curiosity
- Out of boredom
- To feel more sociable
- To try and have fun and feel happy



IT MAY HELP TO KNOW THAT BY NOT TAKING DRUGS YOU ARE IN THE MAJORITY AS MOST YOUNG PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA DO NOT USE ILLEGAL DRUGS.

Although it varies from person to person, situations where you have to disagree with others or refuse something can sometimes feel awkward and difficult to handle.

Here are a few options you can take that will help you deal with situations where you may be inclined or pressured to take drugs:

OPTION 1: AVOID SITUATIONS

OPTION 2: MAKE AN EXCUSE

OPTION 3: WALK AWAY

OPTION 4: BE ASSERTIVE

OPTION 5: BE A 'BROKEN RECORD'

OPTION 1: AVOID SITUATIONS

If you don't think you will be able to resist the offer or pressure to take drugs then it may be best to avoid that situation or group of people altogether. Try to hang out with people who share similar interests and do not use drugs. Good friends should respect your decision not to use drugs. Get involved in a new activity and meet some new people.

OPTION 2: MAKE AN EXCUSE

As the title implies, this involves the person making an excuse to get out of what they don't want to do. For example:

- *"No thanks, my parents are picking me up soon"*
- *"Last time I had it I reacted really badly"*
- *"I've got to go soon"*
- *"I can't take any tonight, I'm on medication"*
- *"No thanks, I will stay sober and keep an eye to make sure everyone else is safe"*

OPTION 3: WALK AWAY

If a person offers you drugs, you can simply make your excuses and go. You can leave by saying: "I need to go to the bathroom" or "Is that Angela over there? I need to catch up, I haven't seen her in ages".

OPTION 4: BE ASSERTIVE

Assertive communication involves a person clearly stating their needs, wants and feelings whilst still being respectful of others. Learning to be assertive takes practice, so don't worry if it doesn't come naturally.

Assertive communication includes three steps:

1. **Stating your answer**
2. **Giving your reason**
3. **Showing understanding**

The following is an example of assertive communication:

Tom: *Just have one pill, your parents won't know.*

Katie: *No thanks, I don't want to risk it. They probably won't find out but if they do I'll be grounded for life.*

Showing this understanding makes it very difficult for people to keep trying to exert pressure. There will still be the odd person who will keep trying, but most people will stop.

If you're comfortable with your decision not to use drugs, that will come across in your body language. Usually people will see that it's a waste of their time and will drop the subject pretty quickly. This can be achieved by:

- Keeping a clear firm voice, speaking clearly and deliberately
- Maintaining eye contact
- Facing the person with your body so that you do not look like you are hiding
- Having a facial expression that says what you mean

OPTION 5: BE A 'BROKEN RECORD'

This just involves continually saying "no" in the politest possible way. You just say it over and over again and never change your tune.

E.g. Sam: *Come with me tonight.*

Jess: *No thanks, I don't really want to go to a club.*

Sam: *Just this once.*

Jess: *No thanks, not even this once.*

Sam: *But you're normally such fun.*

Jess: *Not tonight. No thanks.*

Sam: *Go on, you're my best friend.*

Jess: *Yeah, but no thanks, I don't feel like going tonight.*



HOW TO HELP A FRIEND WHO HAS TAKEN A DRUG

CALL 000 FOR AN AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY IF THERE IS EVEN THE SLIGHTEST RISK THAT ANOTHER PERSON MAY BE HAVING AN UNUSUAL REACTION TO A DRUG.

A PARENT OR GUARDIAN WILL ONLY BE NOTIFIED IF THE PERSON IS UNDER THE AGE OF 18 AND TAKEN TO HOSPITAL. POLICE WILL ONLY BE NOTIFIED IF THERE IS A RISK TO THEIR OWN PERSONAL SAFETY OR IF SOMEONE DIES.

WHAT TO DO IN THESE SITUATIONS:

PANIC ATTACKS

These can happen due to the increased feelings of paranoia, anxiety, and hallucinations that illegal drugs can bring on. These can be very frightening at the time, but it is important to know that these usually pass with time.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SIGNS

- Sweating and shaking
- Chest pains and difficulty breathing
- Increased heart rate
- Sense of impending death
- Dizziness, headaches, and lightheadedness
- 'Spaced-out' and non-responsiveness

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE HAS A PANIC ATTACK

- Calm them down and reassure them that the feeling will pass
- Take them somewhere cool and quiet away from crowds and bright lights
- Encourage them to relax and take long, slow, deep breaths
- If they pass out due to over-breathing, follow the DRS-ABCD life support chart (see page 12)

OVERHEATING AND DEHYDRATION

There is a serious risk of overheating and dehydration when people dance for hours and do not maintain their fluids. Stimulants such as ecstasy and methamphetamine will increase the body temperature, and this problem can be made worse if taken with alcohol as it will further dehydrate the body. Those who take stimulants should try to drink half a litre of water every hour, but make sure not to drink too much too quickly.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SIGNS

- Feeling hot, unwell, lethargic, faint, or dizzy
- Inability to talk properly
- Headache
- Vomiting
- Inability to urinate or urine becoming thick and dark
- Not sweating even when dancing
- Fainting, collapsing, or convulsing

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE BECOMES OVERHEATED AND DEHYDRATED

- Take them somewhere cool and quiet such as the first aid area or chill-out room
- Get the person some cold water and get them to sip it slowly
- Make sure someone stays with them
- Give them salted foods like crisps or peanuts to replace salts lost through sweating
- Fan them to cool them down
- If symptoms persist or get worse seek first aid immediately, call 000, or take them to the nearest emergency department

FEELING VERY DROWSY

If someone becomes very drowsy from using drugs they could fall asleep and lose consciousness. It is important to keep them awake while waiting for the ambulance.

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE BECOMES VERY DROWSY

- Call an ambulance, but make sure they are not left on their own
- Keep them awake, make them walk around, or make them talk to you
- Don't give them coffee or try to shock them
- If they aren't responsive or lose consciousness put them in the recovery position (see page 13)



FITS OR SEIZURES [CONVULSIONS]

Large amounts of alcohol and some drugs can cause convulsions, otherwise known as a fit or seizure.

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE STARTS CONVULSING

- Call an ambulance
- Clear the area of any nearby harmful objects
- Loosen any tight clothing
- Cushion their head
- It is important not to put anything in their mouth or to try and restrict their movement
- Once the fit has finished, check their breathing and put them in the recovery position

A PERSON COLLAPSES

If a person collapses, it may be necessary to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) in order to temporarily maintain circulation to provide the brain with enough blood to keep functioning. An easy way to remember the steps involved in this process is to remember the acronym DRS-ABCD (see next page).



DRS-ABCD: BASIC LIFE SUPPORT FLOW CHART

D	check for DANGER -First ensure that your safety is not at risk. -If your safety is assured and the person is in danger move them out of the dangerous situation.
R	check for RESPONSE - Ask them their name or to open their eyes.
S	SEND for help - If you receive no response call for an ambulance on '000'. - If you are on your own with the person, first place them in the recovery position (see next page) and then call '000'. - If you know what drugs the person has taken tell the operator and ambulance officers.
A	open the AIRWAYS -If the airway is not clear, place them in the recovery position and open and clear the airway. -If the airway is clear, leave on back, then tilt the head backwards and lift the chin.
B	check for BREATHING Look and feel for chest movements. Listen for breathing from airways. -If they are breathing, place them in the recovery position and monitor until ambulance arrives. -If the person is not breathing, place the person on their back, pinch their nose closed, seal your lips over their mouth and give two initial breaths, ensuring that the chest rises with each breath.
C	CPR If they are still not breathing, commence CPR until the ambulance services arrive. -Place one hand on top of the other, palms facing down, over the centre of the chest. -Compress the chest one third of the depth, 30 times, at a rate of two per second. -Give 2 breaths for every 30 chest compressions (mouth to mouth can be considered unnecessary). -Continue CPR until: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Signs of life return;• Qualified help arrives; or• It is impossible to continue (e.g. exhaustion).
D	Attach an automated external DEFIBRILLATOR if available and follow the prompts.



PUTTING SOMEONE IN THE RECOVERY POSITION

1

Kneel beside the person



2

Straighten their arms and legs



3

Fold the arm closest to you over their chest



4

Place the other arm at a right angle to their body



5

Get the leg closest to you and bend the knee



6

While supporting the person's head and neck, gently take the bent knee closest to you and very gently roll the person away from you. Adjust the upper leg, so both the hip and knee are bent at right angles. Ensure the person is steady and cannot roll



7

Tilt the head back and make sure the airways are clear and open

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND WITH A DRUG PROBLEM

If you have a friend or someone else who you think is having problems because of drug use, here are some tips to allow you to support them and talk to them about their drug use:

- **Learn** more about the drug you think your friend may be taking.
- Have a clear idea of what it is that worries you about their drug use.
- **Be prepared for a negative reaction.** One reason for this may be because your friend does not view their drug use as a problem.
- Try to stay calm and reasonable. Don't let it turn into an argument.
- **Choose a time to talk** where you will have some privacy and won't be interrupted.
- **Don't be judgemental or tell them what to do.** The chances are that they will stop listening to what you've got to say if you start lecturing them.
- Ask about their drug use; **don't make assumptions** about what they are doing.
- Don't focus on the reasons for why they are using drugs – this can mean you get side tracked from the main issues that concern you.
- **Use statements including "I" as this doesn't put the blame on them.** So instead of saying "You make me feel worried when you use drugs" say something like "I feel worried about your drug use".
- Let your friend know you care about them and emphasise the feelings that you are having. **Remind them of their good qualities**, as someone will be more likely to listen and take advice on board if they feel valued and respected.





- **Be trustworthy and supportive** so that your friend knows that they can rely on you and that what they tell you is kept confidential.
- **Remind them that we are all human and that we all have problems**, so that they are not too hard on themselves.
- Let them know that **change is possible but it may take time**, so don't try to set deadlines for them as they may be less ready to change when they are being forced.
- If your friend does not want to change, encourage them to learn how to reduce their risk of harm. **Let them know you are available to talk in the future.**
- At the back of this booklet you can find a list of places available to help with any drug issues.

IF YOU THINK SOMEONE IS IN SERIOUS DANGER BECAUSE OF DRUGS LET SOMEONE SUCH AS A PARENT OR TRUSTED ADULT KNOW. SOURCES OF HELP ARE MENTIONED AT THE BACK OF THIS BOOKLET.

CANNABIS



“ THE LAST TIME I HAD A JOINT WAS ONE OF THE WORST NIGHTS OF MY LIFE. I FELT LIKE I WASN'T AWARE OF TIME AND THAT I WAS LOSING MY MIND. MY HEART WAS RACING AND I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO HAVE A HEART ATTACK. IT'S DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN BUT IT WAS A TRULY TERRIFYING EXPERIENCE THAT HAS MADE ME NEVER WANT TO TOUCH WEED AGAIN.

—Thomas, 15 ”

WHAT IS IT?

Cannabis is derived from the plant *Cannabis sativa*. The main active ingredient responsible for the 'high' produced by cannabis is called delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

Cannabis is produced in three main forms:

- **Cannabis herb** (also known as marijuana) — the dried flowering tops/buds and leaves of the cannabis plant
- **Cannabis resin** (also known as hashish) — the resin (a secreted gum) of the cannabis plant
- **Cannabis oil** (also known as hash oil) — a thick oil obtained from hashish

While hashish and hash oil contain more THC than marijuana, they are not widely used in Australia. Cannabis is typically smoked and often mixed with tobacco. It is also sometimes added to food and eaten. **Cannabis is also known as grass, pot, dope, weed, joints, mull, hydro, yandi, ganja, bud, or green.**

EFFECTS OF CANNABIS

If smoked, the effects can come on quickly as the drug is rapidly absorbed into the lungs and can enter the bloodstream within minutes.

The effects of cannabis vary, but may include:

IMMEDIATE		LONG TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of inhibitions• Drowsiness• Increased appetite• Loss of co-ordination• Bloodshot eyes• Dryness of the mouth and throat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lethargy• 'Greening out' (sweaty, dizzy, nauseous, vomiting)• Anxiety and panic attacks• Paranoia (feeling extremely suspicious)• Psychosis (see glossary).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Problems with memory and learning• Dependence (addiction)• Decreased motivation and concentration• Increased risk of respiratory diseases• Paranoia (feeling extremely suspicious)• Psychosis (see glossary).





PILLS AND ECSTASY

ANALYSIS IN 2011/2012 BY THE AUSTRALIAN CRIME COMMISSION INDICATES THE AVERAGE PURITY OF PILLS SOLD AS ECSTASY RANGED FROM 15-18% ACROSS AUSTRALIA

WHAT ARE THEY?

'Pills' is a word used to describe a range of substances sold in pill-form. Traditionally, 'pills' referred to tablets containing MDMA (ecstasy). However pills or tablets sold as ecstasy may not contain any MDMA at all, and may contain a wide range of other substances. Some substances found in pills can be highly toxic even at low doses. It is important to note that even pure ecstasy is risky.

Ecstasy is usually sold in pill form, although it can also be sold as powder, crystals, or in capsules. Pills usually have a logo stamped on them. However, a logo is no guarantee of quality or purity: two pills that look the same may have very different effects as they can come from different sources and have different ingredients.

Ecstasy and pills are also known as E, pills, pingers, doopa, love drug, disco biscuits, XTC and eccy.

EFFECTS OF ECSTASY

Ecstasy causes activity in the central nervous system to speed up, and can take effect within 60 minutes of initially taking it. However, the time taken to have an effect can vary. Sometimes people mistakenly think the first pill they took isn't working and take more — this can be very dangerous.

Effects of ecstasy vary, but may include:

IMMEDIATE	LONG TERM	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dilated (enlarged) pupils• Increased heart rate and blood pressure• Increased energy• Feeling of euphoria (a 'high')• Teeth grinding and jaw clenching• Anxiety and panic attacks• Overheating and dehydration (when the body loses more water than it takes in)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A 'comedown' (see glossary)• Nausea, vomiting and dizziness• Visual distortions (things looking weird or different)• Paranoia (feeling extremely suspicious and frightened)• Psychosis (see glossary)• Serotonin syndrome (see glossary)• Stroke	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dependence (addiction)• Long-term problems with depression• Impairments to memory and attention• Liver problems

METHAMPHETAMINE



WHAT IS IT?

Methamphetamine comes in three main forms:

Form	Usual appearance	Also known as	Potency	Mainly used by
Ice/ Crystal meth	Translucent crystals, sometimes shards	Shabu, Tina, glass, meth, crystal	Medium to high; Normally the most potent form	Smoking, injecting
Base	White to brown thick oily substance	Pure, point, wax, meth	Medium to high	Swallowing, injecting
Speed	White or off-white powder	Goe, meth	Low to medium	Snorting, swallowing, injecting

All forms of methamphetamine can be 'cut' (mixed) with other substances, which reduce the purity. Sometimes these other substances can also be harmful. Ice or crystal usually gives a stronger high and lasts longer, but also has stronger negative side effects.

EFFECTS OF METHAMPHETAMINE

Methamphetamine takes effect quickly. The effects can last between 4 and 12 hours, although it can take 1 to 2 days for the drug to completely leave the body.

Effects of methamphetamine vary, but may include:

IMMEDIATE		LONG TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased heart rate and blood pressure• Dilated (enlarged) pupils• Increased energy• Feeling of euphoria (a 'high')• Aggressive behaviour• Trembling• Bad headaches and dizziness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A 'comedown' (see glossary)• Insomnia• Stomach cramps• Reduced appetite• Blurred vision• Anxiety and panic attacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dependence (addiction)• Dental problems• Heart, kidney and lung problems• Malnutrition and exhaustion• Depression• If injected there is an increased risk of infections like Hepatitis C and HIV• Paranoia (feeling extremely suspicious and frightened)• Psychosis (see glossary)• Stroke





COCAINE

“ IT STARTED OFF ONLY OCCASIONALLY. BUT SOON I WAS TAKING COCAINE IN THE MORNING JUST TO GET THROUGH THE DAY. MY FRIENDS STOPPED TALKING TO ME, MY GIRLFRIEND LEFT ME AND I HAD TO STEAL FROM MY OWN FAMILY JUST TO PAY FOR DRUGS. ”

—Francis, 17

WHAT IS IT?

Cocaine comes in three main forms:

- A paste which is often off-white or light brown
- A powder which is often white or off-white
- A white or off-white crystal rock known as crack cocaine

In Australia, cocaine is most commonly in a powder form which is often used by snorting. As with all powder drugs, it is often sold 'cut' (mixed) with other white powder substances which can sometimes be harmful in their own right.

Cocaine is also known as coke, blow, charlie, C, dust, flake, nose candy, snow, white, crack, rock, freebase.

EFFECTS OF COCAINE

When snorted or injected, cocaine quickly produces an intense 'rush'. This feeling or 'high' doesn't last very long — usually around 30–45 minutes if snorted.

Effects of cocaine vary, but may include:

IMMEDIATE		LONG TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dilated (enlarged) pupils• Irregular heart beat• Reduced appetite• Increased energy and confidence• Feeling of euphoria (a 'high')• Nausea and vomiting• Anxiety and panic attacks• A 'comedown' or crash (see glossary)• Aggressive behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headaches and dizziness• Twitches and tremors• Insomnia• Paranoia (feeling extremely suspicious and frightened)• Hallucinations (e.g. seeing or hearing things that aren't really there)• Delusions (strong beliefs that do not reflect reality)• Psychosis (see glossary)• Overdose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dependence (addiction)• Nasal and sinus problems including damage to the nasal septum• Depression• Heart damage• Lung problems• Kidney failure• Increased risk of strokes and seizures

INHALANTS



“ MY SON WAS SNIFFING AEROSOLS, NOT ALL THE TIME BUT NOW AND THEN, HE WAS AT MY SISTER’S HOUSE AND HE INHALED AN AIR FRESHENER. HE PASSED OUT AND WENT INTO CARDIAC ARREST WHICH KILLED HIM INSTANTLY.

—Natalie, 41

WHAT ARE THEY?

Inhalants, also known as volatile substances or solvents, are substances that are sniffed or breathed in through the nose and/or mouth to give the user an immediate high.

There are four main types of inhalants:

Type	Examples
Volatile solvents	Paint thinners, glues, petrol, correction fluid
Aerosol sprays	Deodorants, hairsprays, spray paints
Gases	Nitrous oxide (laughing gas), propane, fire extinguishers
Nitrites	Room deodorisers, leather cleaner

EFFECTS OF INHALANTS

Most inhalants have an immediate effect and usually only give a high for a few minutes. Users sometimes keep on sniffing to prolong the high – in some cases this can lead to loss of consciousness, brain damage, and even death.

Effects of inhalants vary, but may include:

IMMEDIATE	LONG TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased heart rate• Feeling light headed and dizzy• Loss of inhibitions• Agitation• Loss of coordination and balance• Irritation to the eyes, nose and throat• Aggressive behaviour• Slurred speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dependence (addiction)• Brain damage• Tremors• Problems breathing• Loss of hearing and vision• Increased risk of leukaemia from petrol sniffing• Damage to the immune system, bones, nerves, kidney, liver, heart, and lungs

Inhaling these substances can cause heart failure within a few minutes





HEROIN

HEROIN IS CONSIDERED TO BE THE SECOND MOST ADDICTIVE DRUG AFTER TOBACCO.

WHAT IS IT?

Heroin is one of a group of drugs known as opiates, so-called because they are natural products of the opium poppy – these also include opium, morphine, and codeine.

In Australia, heroin can be a fine powder, granules or rocks, and is normally white or off-white in colour although it is sometimes brown. It is normally injected, but is also snorted, smoked, or heated and the vapours inhaled (chasing the dragon). It can be sold 'cut' (mixed) with a range of substances that can also be harmful. This makes it hard for the user to know the purity of what's being taken.

Heroin is also known as hammer, gear, or smack.

EFFECTS OF HEROIN

Heroin produces a 'rush' within seconds of injecting or smoking it, or up to about 5 minutes if it's snorted. The effects of heroin can last for approximately 3–5 hours.

Effects of heroin vary, but may include:

IMMEDIATE

- Small ('pinned') pupils
- Drowsiness and sedation (a state of calm or sleep)
- Pain relief
- Feeling of euphoria (a 'high')
- Feelings of detachment
- Nausea and vomiting
- Overdose
- Coma

LONG TERM

- Dependence (addiction)
- Dental problems
- Constipation
- If injected there is an increased risk of infections like Hepatitis C and HIV
- Infertility
- Social problems, such as falling-out with friends
- Financial issues such as debt and poverty

HALLUCINOGENS



“ ME AND A FEW MATES DECIDED TO TAKE A FEW TABS OF ACID. FIFTY MINUTES LATER I COLLAPSED AND THOUGHT I SAW SHADOWS COMING TOWARDS ME. I WAS SCREAMING AND CRYING FOR HELP BUT MY FRIENDS WERE ALSO HIGH AND UNABLE TO HELP. ”

—Alice, 16

WHAT ARE THEY?

Hallucinogens (also known as psychedelics) are a category of drugs that cause perceptual distortions such as hallucinations. Hallucinations are experiences where people hear or see things that aren't really there, or where perception is altered. For example, colours or shapes may appear to be changing, more brightly coloured or moving. Users may also experience unusual thoughts, feelings, or beliefs.

Hallucinogens can be naturally occurring or synthetic. **The most commonly known synthetic hallucinogen is LSD (Lysergic acid diethylamide), also known as acid, trips or tabs. Naturally occurring hallucinogens include magic mushrooms, DMT (Dimethyltryptamine), mescaline (found in peyote), or salvia.**

EFFECTS OF HALLUCINOGENS

The effects of hallucinogens are extremely variable and unpredictable, even if the person has used the same substance before. Factors that influence the drugs' effects include the person using (e.g. mood, personality), the setting, and the particular drug itself.

Effects of hallucinogens vary, but may include:

IMMEDIATE		LONG TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased heart rate and body temperature• Dilated (enlarged) pupils• A trance-like state• Feeling of euphoria (a 'high')• Restlessness• Nausea and vomiting• Hallucinations (e.g. seeing or hearing things that aren't really there)• Stomach cramps• Disorientation (increasing the risk of injury)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tiredness, dizziness and amnesia• Anxiety, panic attacks, fear or terror (a 'bad trip')• Loss of consciousness• Paranoia (feeling extremely suspicious) and psychosis, lasting up to several hours after the drug effects have worn off• Poisoning, particularly with magic mushrooms if the wrong type is used. This can be fatal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flashbacks (spontaneous recurrences of a specific experience). Sometimes these can last for days, weeks or sometimes even years after taking the drug• Dependence (addiction)• Depression• Anxiety and panic attacks• Memory problems• Personality changes• Psychosis (see glossary)





KETAMINE

KETAMINE IS COMMONLY USED BY VETERINARIANS TO SEDATE ANIMALS SUCH AS HORSES.

WHAT IS IT?

Ketamine is a white powder, usually sold in 'bumps' or grams. A bump is a small amount of powder, usually snorted through a small glass nasal inhaler called a bumper. Ketamine can also be swallowed, smoked, or injected.

As with all drugs sold in powder form, ketamine may also be sold 'cut' (mixed) with other white powder substances which may or may not be harmful – users can never be 100% sure of what they're getting.

Ketamine is also known as K, special K, Vitamin K, or horse tranquilizer.

EFFECTS OF KETAMINE

If snorted or 'bumped', ketamine takes effect within 5–10 minutes (longer if swallowed). Its effects can last for a couple of hours.

Effects of ketamine vary, but may include:

IMMEDIATE		LONG TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased heart rate and body temperature• Drowsiness• Feeling of euphoria (a 'high')• Loss of coordination• Slurred speech• Feeling dizzy or faint• Confusion and disorientation• Numbness and a feeling of paralysis• Nausea and vomiting• Anxiety and panic attacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hallucinations (e.g. seeing or hearing things that aren't really there)• Paranoia (feeling extremely suspicious and frightened)• Psychosis (see glossary)• An experience known as the 'K-hole' which is the feeling of being trapped in a state of detachment. This can be frightening• Overdose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dependence (addiction)• Problems with memory, attention, and decision making• Mental health problems• Ulcerative cystitis – symptoms include frequent and painful urination, cramps and involuntary urination.• Intense abdominal pains known as 'K-cramps'• Kidney problems

GHB

THERE'S A VERY HIGH RISK OF OVERDOSING WITH GHB. THERE'S VERY LITTLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE AMOUNT THAT CAUSES THE 'HIGH' AND THE AMOUNT THAT CAUSES AN OVERDOSE.



WHAT IS IT?

GHB is short for gamma-hydroxybutyrate and it is naturally produced in small amounts by the body. It is almost always sold as a clear or blue odourless liquid, usually in a little vial such as fish-shaped sushi soy sauce container and it is normally swallowed. Problems with safety, including concerns about its use as a date rape drug, have led to it being classified as an illegal drug.

Sometimes other substances called GBL and 1,4B are sold as GHB because they have similar effects but may be stronger (increasing the risk of overdose) or more toxic.

GHB is also known as fantasy, grievous bodily harm, GBH, liquid ecstasy, liquid E, G, or Gina.

Although it is sometimes referred to as liquid ecstasy or liquid E, it is not related to ecstasy at all.

EFFECTS OF GHB

Once swallowed, GHB takes around 15–30 minutes to take effect and the effects last for about half an hour.

Effects of GHB vary, but may include:

IMMEDIATE	LONG TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased heart rate and chest pains• Drowsiness, passing out, blackouts or memory loss• Blurred vision• Feeling relaxed• Feeling of euphoria (a 'high')• Lethargy• Hot/cold flushes• Heavy sweating• Confusion and agitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nausea and vomiting• Headaches and dizziness• Tremors or shaking• Difficulty breathing• Overdose• Seizures• Coma <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Little is known about the long term effects of GHB</i>



BENZODIAZEPINES

**OBTAINING
BENZODIAZEPINES WITHOUT
A PRESCRIPTION FROM A
DOCTOR IS ILLEGAL.**

WHAT ARE THEY?

Benzodiazepines are medications that may be prescribed for a range of problems, including anxiety and insomnia. They are usually prescribed in a tablet or capsule form and the most common is diazepam (Valium). Others include alprazolam (Xanax), and oxazepam (Serepax). If used as prescribed, benzodiazepines can be effective medications. However, there are risks, particularly if they're not used properly, or are used regularly (e.g. daily) for more than a few weeks.

Benzodiazepines are also known as benzos, sleeping tablets, downers, or sleeping pills.

EFFECTS OF BENZODIAZEPINES

Once swallowed, benzodiazepines usually take about half an hour to start taking effect. The length of time the effects last for varies.

Effects of benzodiazepines vary, but may include:

IMMEDIATE	LONG TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decreased heart rate• Drowsiness and sedation• Shallow breathing• A feeling of calmness• Confusion• Loss of balance and coordination• Dizziness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slurred speech• Blurred vision• Blackouts• Overdose <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dependence (addiction)• For dependent users, suddenly stopping use can cause fatal seizures. People wishing to stop should seek advice from their GP

NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

WHAT ARE THEY?

These drugs are usually marketed as 'legal highs', 'synthetic drugs', 'party pills', 'research chemicals', or 'plant food' and are often used as substitutes for other illegal drugs. These new psychoactive substances are typically sold as powders, tablets, or as smoking mixtures. Most of these are illegal, or are quickly made illegal, because of health risks. They are continually changing, but current new psychoactive substances include:



Examples	Category	Attempting to copy the effects of
Mephedrone (meow meow)	Synthetic cathinone	Ecstasy, methamphetamine, cocaine
BZP, TFMP	Synthetic piperazines	Ecstasy, methamphetamine
2C-I, 2C-B, DOI	Substituted phenethylamines	Ecstasy, methamphetamines, cocaine, hallucinogens
Methoxetamine, MXE	Dissociative anaesthetics	Ketamine
DMT	Substituted tryptamines	Hallucinogens

One pill (or package) may contain a mixture of different substances. New psychoactive substances are sold under a wide variety of other names, including 'Infinity', 'Benzo Fury' and 'Diablo'. The list is endless and names change frequently. However, users can't be sure what they're getting as the packaging doesn't guarantee what's inside.

EFFECTS OF NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

Taking these is like a roll of the dice – they haven't been around long enough to know what the immediate risks are or what might happen later on in life to people who use them. However, it is known that a small number of people have died from using some types of new psychoactive substances.

Effects of new psychoactive substances vary, but may include:

IMMEDIATE	LONG TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased heart rate and body temperature• Dilated (enlarged) pupils• Feeling of euphoria (a 'high')• Twitches and tremors• Aggressive behaviour• Anxiety and panic attacks• Nausea and vomiting• Dizziness and headaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confusion• A 'comedown' (see glossary)• Insomnia• Hallucinations (e.g. seeing or hearing things that aren't really there)• Overdose• Serotonin syndrome• Paranoia and psychosis• Seizures

Early information suggests that use of some new psychoactive substances may lead to a range of problems including:

- Dependence (addiction)
- Memory problems
- Paranoia (feeling extremely suspicious and frightened)
- Psychosis (see glossary)



SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS

WHAT ARE THEY?



Synthetic cannabinoids are drugs that are often sold as a 'legal' alternative to **cannabis**, while claiming to have similar effects. They are often sold as 'herbal smoking blends' with different brand names, such as 'K2', 'Spice', and 'Kronic'. Despite the fact that these blends

are often sold in stores or online and marketed as 'legal' and 'safe', many contain ingredients that are actually illegal and potentially very dangerous.

Usually these products are plant material that have been sprayed with one or more active chemicals that, when smoked, mimic some of the effects of cannabis. As the active ingredients used are often synthetic and produced in laboratories, they are neither 'herbal' nor 'natural', but rather they are engineered to be stronger than traditional cannabis, and therefore may pose a greater risk.

Also, blends often contain a mixture of different active ingredients, despite being sold under the same brand name. In addition to this, ingredients can change as different substances are made illegal, although the brand or product name may stay the same. This means that buying the same brand twice does not guarantee that the contents will be the same, and therefore the effects may also be different. It is therefore very difficult to know what is actually in the product.

EFFECTS OF SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS

Like other new psychoactive substances, taking these is like a roll of the dice, and the immediate and long-term effects are still unknown.

Effects of synthetic cannabinoids can vary depending on the ingredients of the product, but may include:

IMMEDIATE	LONG TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drowsiness• Dilated (enlarged) pupils• Paranoia• Agitation• Irritability• Memory changes• Confusion• Sedation or loss of consciousness• Panic attacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very rapid heartbeat, as well as irregularity of heartbeat• Slowing down of heart rate• Chest pain• Extreme anxiety• Nausea• Vomiting• Appetite changes• Seizures and convulsions <p><i>Early information suggests that use of some synthetic cannabinoids may lead to a range of problems including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dependence (addiction)• Withdrawal symptoms when usage is ceased• Memory problems• Paranoia (feeling extremely suspicious and frightened)• Psychosis (see glossary)

POLYDRUG USE



WHAT IS IT?

Mixing drugs or taking one drug when under the influence of another drug is known as polydrug use. Combining drugs in this way carries extra risks and can be extremely dangerous. The more drugs a person takes (or is affected by) at a time, the more chance there is of something going wrong.

An example of polydrug use would be smoking cannabis while under the influence of alcohol. Mixing alcohol with drinks that contain caffeine is another example.

The effect of mixing drugs depends on which drugs are mixed together. Combining drugs that have the same physical effects (e.g. two or more stimulants or two or more depressants) is especially dangerous. This is because it increases the impact on normal functioning of the brain and body.

COMBINING STIMULANTS

e.g. cocaine and ecstasy



SEROTONIN SYNDROME

PSYCHOSIS

ANXIETY OR PANIC ATTACKS

HEART PROBLEMS

COMBINING STIMULANTS AND DEPRESSANTS

e.g. speed and alcohol



HEART PROBLEMS

**RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS
AND BRONCHITIS**

**DEHYDRATION, OVERHEATING,
AND KIDNEY FAILURE**

COMBINING DEPRESSANTS

e.g. benzodiazepines and alcohol



**ACCIDENTS OR INJURY
THROUGH BEING 'OUT OF IT'**

**FATAL OVERDOSE AS A COMBINATION OF DEPRESSANTS
WORK TOGETHER TO SLOW DOWN BOTH THE HEART AND
BREATHING RATE**

**NONFATAL OVERDOSE, WHICH CAN RESULT
IN PERMANENT BRAIN DAMAGE**



GLOSSARY

COMEDOWN

Just like getting a hangover from drinking alcohol, taking illegal drugs can lead to experiencing negative after-effects sometimes known as a 'comedown' or 'crash' which are the feelings experienced as the drug wears off. The type of effects experienced during this period depend on the type of drug(s) used. They might include feelings of depression, insomnia, extreme tiredness, irritability, and anxiety just to name a few and this can last anywhere from a few hours to a day or so after initially taking the drug. This is different to withdrawal effects (a sign that a person is addicted).

DEPENDENCE (ADDICTION)

People can also become physically and/or psychologically dependent on (addicted to) drugs, especially if they use regularly. They can develop tolerance, meaning that they need to take more of the drug to get the same effect.

The lifestyle of many people who are drug dependent (addicted to a drug) is difficult and often stressful and can lead to:

- Loss of jobs and problems finding work
- Losing touch with friends, family, and loved ones
- An inability to pay rent and bills, which can result in homelessness
- Impaired physical health
- Increased mental health problems
- Involvement in crime

PSYCHOSIS

People affected by psychosis may experience hallucinations (e.g. seeing or hearing things that aren't really there), delusions (strong beliefs that do not reflect reality), and paranoia (feeling extremely suspicious and frightened). If symptoms last for more than a few days, this could indicate that the person may have a more serious mental illness such as schizophrenia.

DEPRESSANT DRUGS

Reduce activity in the central nervous system. Examples include: **Alcohol, GHB, Ketamine, Benzodiazepines, Opioids (e.g. Heroin).**

WITHDRAWAL EFFECTS

People who are drug dependent may also experience withdrawal effects when they stop using. Withdrawal effects can last for several days to many weeks, depending on the type of drug and severity of their dependence. Withdrawal symptoms may include feelings of anxiety, depression, restlessness, irritability, and aggression. On top of this, withdrawal can also cause muscle spasms, headaches, muscle cramps, diarrhoea, vomiting, and cravings for the drug.

SEROTONIN SYNDROME

A life threatening condition that usually starts within 24 hours of taking the drug. It occurs when the brain is overloaded with a neurotransmitter (brain chemical) called serotonin. Symptoms include coma, seizures, shaking, confusion, rigid muscles, rapid heartbeat, and overheating.

STIMULANT DRUGS

Increase the activity in the central nervous system. Examples include: **Cocaine, Caffeine, MDMA (ecstasy), Methamphetamine (speed, ice, crystal, crystal meth, base), Ritalin, some new psychoactive drugs such as mephedrone and BZP.**

MORE INFORMATION AND SOURCES OF HELP

It takes a lot for someone to admit they may have a problem with drugs, but it's the first step to overcoming it. Talking to a friend, teacher, family member, or school counsellor can provide a helping hand and emotional support. There are also a number of places available to young people with drug related issues or for those wanting general information:

POSITIVE CHOICES

Positive Choices is an online drug education portal that provides evidence-based information & prevention resources for school staff, young people & their parents.

www.positivechoices.org.au

KIDS HELP LINE

Kids Help Line telephone, web and email counselling is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week to children and young people of Australia aged between 5–25 years of age.

www.kidshelpline.com.au

Phone: 1800 55 1800

REACH OUT

This website has information about drugs, where to seek help, how to help a friend, and many other youth related issues.

au.reachout.com

HEADSPACE

Headspace provides information and counselling services with anything to do with alcohol, drugs, education, employment and general or mental health. It's for 12–25 year olds and has centres all around Australia.

www.headspace.org.au

LIFELINE

A 24-hour phone and online counselling service designed to help anyone through all problems.

www.lifeline.org.au

Phone: 13 11 14

SANE

Sane has a helpline and website that provides information and support for mental health issues.

www.sane.org

Phone: 1800 18 7263



COUNSELLING ONLINE

Counselling online allows you to communicate with a professional counsellor about an alcohol or drug related concern using text interaction. This service is free for anyone seeking help with their own drug use or the drug use of a family member, relative, or friend. Counselling Online is available

24 hours a day 7 days a week across Australia.

www.counsellingonline.org.au

AUSTRALIAN DRUG INFORMATION NETWORK

This website provides a directory of places in all states and territories in Australia, where it is possible to seek information and services to assist with alcohol and other drug related issues.

www.adin.com.au

DRUG INFO

Drug Info provides information about alcohol and other drugs. They also provide a SMS service where you can text the name of a drug to the number below and receive a reply listing a number of the drug's effects and links to find further information.

www.druginfo.adf.org.au

NATIONAL DRUGS CAMPAIGN

Australian Government website provides information about illicit drugs and campaign resources.

www.australia.gov.au/drugs



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NDRI
national drug research institute

