PURE RUSH

YOU’VE PLAYED THE GAME...
NOW GET THE FACTS!
WHAT ARE ILLEGAL DRUGS?

A drug is a substance that affects the way the body functions. If a drug is classified as 'illegal', it means that it is forbidden by law. Different illegal drugs have different effects on people and these effects are influenced by many factors. This can make them unpredictable and dangerous, especially for young people. On pages 4 – 11 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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cannabis</td>
<td>1 in 8</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecstasy/Pills</td>
<td>1 in 50</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallucinogens</td>
<td>1 in 41</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methamphetamine</td>
<td>1 in 45</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**WHAT IS IT?**

Cannabis, also known as marijuana, comes from the plant Cannabis sativa. It comes in three main forms: herb, resin and oil.

In Australia, cannabis is usually smoked, or sometimes added to food and eaten.

*Cannabis is also known as grass, pot, dope, weed, joints, mull, hydro, bud or ganja.*

**MYTH: IT IS SAFE TO DRIVE AFTER USING CANNABIS**

Using cannabis can increase the likelihood of a car crash by 300%. Cannabis slows down thinking, reflexes and reduces concentration and co-ordination. As a result, cannabis affects performance on a range of tasks and activities.

**EFFECTS**

The immediate effects of cannabis include feeling very slowed down. Cannabis slows thinking, reflexes, and reduces concentration and motivation to do things.

Other effects include:

**IMMEDIATE**

- Bloodshot eyes
- Dry mouth & throat
- Drowsiness
- Lethargy
- Loss of inhibitions
- Loss of coordination
- ‘Greening out.’ (sweaty, dizzy, nauseous)
- Increased appetite

**LONG TERM**

- Impaired memory
- Impaired learning
- Addiction
- Decreased motivation
- Decreased concentration
- Paranoia
- Psychosis
- Increased risk of respiratory problems
PILLS AND ECSTASY

Only 1 in 50 students aged 12–17 tried ecstasy last year

WHAT ARE THEY?
‘Pills’ refers to a range of substances sold in pill-form. ‘Pills’ mainly refer to tablets containing MDMA (ecstasy). However, pills or tablets sold as ecstasy may not contain MDMA at all, and are often mixed with other (potentially harmful) chemicals. It is important to note that even pure MDMA (ecstasy) is risky, MDMA (ecstasy) is usually sold as a pill, but also comes in powder, crystals and capsules.

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

MYTH: THE LOGO ON A PILL IS A GOOD INDICATOR OF ITS INGREDIENTS & HOW STRONG IT WILL BE
A logo or stamp is no guarantee of a pill’s 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. Taking a pill is like rolling a dice: you can never be sure what chemicals are in them or how you will react.

You never know what’s in a pill.

EFFECTS
The effects of ecstasy/pills are difficult to predict because they are often cut with other substances and users can never be sure of what they are taking. Depending on the ingredients, the user could find the effects similar to those described below:

IMMEDIATE
- Dilated pupils
- Visual distortions
- Dizziness
- Tooth grinding
- Jaw clenching
- Feeling ‘high’
- Anxiety
- Panic attacks
- Stroke
- Coma (overdose)
- Increased heart rate
- Increased blood pressure
- Nausea
- Vomiting

LONG TERM
- Addiction
- Depression
- Impaired memory
- Impaired attention
- Liver problems
METHAMPHETAMINE

WHAT IS IT?

Methamphetamine comes in three main forms:

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

All of these forms can be cut (mixed) with other substances. Methamphetamines are sometimes found in pills sold as ecstasy. Ice/crystal meth can have different effects to speed as it is usually purer, gives a stronger and longer lasting ‘high’, and has more potent side effects during use and in the ‘comedown’ or ‘crash’ phase. Methamphetamine is more addictive than most other drugs, especially when taken in crystal form.

MYTH: METH IS MADE IN CONTROLLED LAB ENVIRONMENTS

Because it is illegal, methamphetamine is commonly manufactured in unregulated underground laboratories that mix various forms of amphetamines and other chemicals to cut costs and boost its potency.

Angry, crazed, depressed

EFFECTS

Methamphetamine takes effect quickly, and can bring on mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. Methamphetamine use often results in aggressive reactions to situations.

Other effects of methamphetamine include:

IMMEDIATE

- Visual distortions
- Blurred vision
- Dizziness
- Teeth grinding

LONG TERM

- Anxiety/panic
- Feeling ‘high’
- Anger
- Coma (overdose)
- Stroke
- Dental problems
- Heart problems
- Lung problems
- Kidney problems
- Malnutrition
- Exhaustion

Addiction
Depression
Paranoia
Psychosis

Nausea
Vomiting
Stomach cramps
Reduced appetite

For more information see www.comorbidity.edu.au/cre-resources/public

Illegal Drugs - The Facts
**HALLUCINOGENS**

Only 1 in 41 students aged 12-17 tried hallucinogens last year

**WHAT IS IT?**

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 common synthetic hallucinogen is LSD, also known as acid, trips or tabs. Naturally-occurring hallucinogens include magic mushrooms, DMT and mescaline (found in peyote).

**MYTH: NO-ONE HAS EVER DIED ON LSD**

Hallucinogens cause disorientations, confusion and hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that aren’t really there), which can increase the risk of injury or accidental death. People who are having a ‘bad trip’ can sometimes become aggressive towards themselves or other people.

**Trapped in a Nightmare**

**EFFECTS**

The effects of hallucinogens are extremely variable and unpredictable, even if the person has used the same substance before. A negative experience, known as a ‘bad trip’, can produce intense feelings of fear, anxiety and terror, which can last for hours, or even days. Other effects of hallucinogens may include:

**IMMEDIATE**

- Hallucinations
- Dilated pupils

- Tiredness
- Dizziness
- A trance-like state
- Feeling ‘high’
- Memory loss
- Loss of consciousness
- Paranoia
- Anxiety
- Panic attacks

- Nausea & vomiting
- Poisoning

**LONG TERM**

- Flashbacks
- Addiction
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Panic attacks
- Memory problems
- Personality changes
- Psychosis
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. For example:

Sam: Come with me tonight, I hardly know your friends.
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.

**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:

**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.kids helpline.com.au
Phone: 1800 55 1800

**REACH OUT**

This website has fantastic information on the actual 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

**NATIONAL DRUGS CAMPAIGN**

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

www.australia.gov.au/drugs

**NATIONAL CANNABIS PREVENTION AND INFORMATION CENTRE**

Provides evidence-based cannabis resources and factsheets, as well as a cannabis information helpline.

www.ncpic.org.au
Phone: 1800 30 40 50

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