

DRUGS



Despite drugs being illegal, they have been used for thousands of years by people to alter perceptions and/or mood.

Young people are more likely to be offered drugs. Most of them refuse but some ignore warnings and accept.

There are many reasons that lead people to take drugs: peers influence, simple curiosity or desire to take risks but also escaping from family or personal worries. It is evidenced that people taking drugs are more likely to have mental ill health.

This guide is to provide information on legislation regarding drugs and on the impact taking drugs may have on your body and your mind.

1. DRUGS AND THE LAW

The law on drugs is complex and police don't accept ignorance. Most drugs are illegal substances and possession and/or dealing is severely penalized.

Drugs are divided into three classes: A, B and C. Classification is depending on the harm it causes to individual, families and society with A considered as the most dangerous.

A difference is made between possession and dealing/supply:

- Possession means being caught with drugs you intend to use yourself
- Supply means selling or giving drugs to someone else

=> Giving drugs to a friend is considered as supply

=> Intending to sell or give drugs is classified as dealing by law

The table below gives classification rank and penalties

CLASS	DRUGS	POSSESSION	DEALING
A	Ecstasy LSD Heroin Cocaine Crack Magic Mushrooms Methylamphetamines	Up to 7 years in prison or/and an unlimited fine	Up to life in prison or/and unlimited fine
B	Cannabis Amphetamines Methylphenidate pholcodine	Up to five years in prison or/and unlimited fine	Up to 14 years in prison or/and unlimited fine
C	Tranquilisers Some painkillers Ghb ketamine	Up to 2 years in prison or/and unlimited fine	Up to 14 years in prison or/and unlimited fine

=> It is an offence to allow anyone to take, sell or supply drugs in your house.

=> It is illegal to grow or produce drugs

2. DRUG OVERVIEW

Everyone reacts differently to drugs, taking drugs is dangerous for your physical and mental health. The more vulnerable people are more likely to get addicted and to take risks.

All drugs affect the brain and so are responsible for changes in feelings and moods. Each drug creates its own effect but it is difficult to know exactly how one particular drug may affect a specific individual.

Drugs are more harmful to young people as their bodies and brain are still developing.

The effect of a drug will depend on many factors such as how pure the drug is and the person's mood, health and circumstances.

All drugs are very dangerous and may cause overdose. Therefore, if you are a drug user, you should take as much precaution as possible.

There are three kinds of drugs:

- Stimulants which accelerate the central nervous system and appetite and desire to sleep
- Psychedelic which alter the way users perceive the world such as objects moving
- Depressant which lower the nervous system activity

The following A to Z guide provides information on the most common drugs used.

2.1 Amphetamines

Known as speed, meth, uppers or sulphate, amphetamines are a synthetic stimulant drug which acts on the brain and the nervous system. You can find them in a white pinky or yellowish powder or putty.



They can be snorted, swallowed or injected and can also be added to drinks. You may find it in crystal forms which can be smoked.

Speed is the most impure illegal drug in the UK. It is easily cut with paracetamol, baby powder milk, talcum or any other substances so it is likely you will not know what you are taking.

EFFECTS

It takes up to an hour to make effect and lasts up to 6 hours.

Quicker heartbeat Speeder breathing Increased confidence
Reduced appetite Euphoria and excitement
Decreased need for sleep Increased blood pressure and temperature

RISKS

Addiction Becoming tense and anxious
Paranoia, auditory and visual hallucinations Tooth decay
Irritability and aggression Stomach and body cramps
Developing psychosis and depression Severe headache
Loss of memory and concentration Death from overdose
Damaging your veins if injected with possible ulcer and gangrene or damaging your nose if sniffed

2.2 Cannabis

Known as hash, smoke, draw, grass marijuana, cannabis is the most widely used drug in the UK. It is a plant which can be found in the form of dried leaves/seeds, in block of resin in various shade of brown/dark green or in dark coloured oil.

Cannabis is usually smoked in joint or pipe but it can also mixed in food (cakes or hot drinks) in which case effects will take longer to come and will be more intense.



EFFECTS

Cannabis essentially affects mood and behaviour and effects last for up to 4 hours.

Feeling more relax and more sociable Enhanced appetite
Heightened senses as colours, taste and music Pain relieve

RISKS

Addiction to cannabis is more psychological than physical. It is unlikely cannabis will cause mental ill health but there is strong evidence that it makes mental illness worse.

Reduced memory and concentration Dependence (1 in 10 users)
Respiratory disorder and lung cancer
Lack of motivation in day to day life Feeling dizzy and disorientated
Depression, paranoia and anxiety, schizophrenia

2.3 Cocaine

On the rise amongst young people in the UK, cocaine is a stimulant made from the coca plant. You can find it in white powder, grain or occasionally rock. Cocaine powder is often mixed with other substances as glucose and starch or other stimulants.

It is usually taken involving sniffing or snorting small amount through a small tube. It can also be heated and fumes inhaled or injected.

EFFECTS

Effects come a few minutes after taking cocaine and last about 30 mins.

Feeling of well being, mental exhilaration, increased confidence

Higher body temperature Sleep problem

Faster heart beating Reduced appetite



RISKS

Damaging your veins if injected with possible ulcer and gangrene or damaging your nose if sniffed

Stomach cramps and bowel disorders Mood changes

Stroke/heart attack and panic attack Nausea and cold sweats

Reduced sex drive Overdose

Psychological dependence creating anxiety, paranoia and depression

2.4 Crack

Known as stone, wash, rock or pebbles, crack is a smoke able form of freebase cocaine, found in small white or creamy/yellowish lumps or rock, but is much purer and more concentrated (up to 90% of cocaine) which make it very addictive.

Crack can be taken in a pipe, in a glass tube, in a plastic bottle, in foil, smoked as a joint or injected

EFFECTS

It is the same than with cocaine but more intense and last a little 10 mins.

Feeling of well being, mental exhilaration and increased confidence

Nausea Cold sweats Mood changes

Higher body temperature

Faster heart beating Feeling hungry Sleep problem

RISKS

Causing lung damage if smoked Convulsion and breathing difficulties

Psychological dependence: anxiety, paranoia, panic attack

Chest pain, heart attack and stroke Overdose

Damaging your veins if injected with possible ulcer and gangrene or damaging your nose if sniffed



2.5 Ecstasy



Ecstasy is a hallucinogenic amphetamine that comes in a powder or crystalline form found in different colourful pills sold as ecstasy. Some pills have pictures or logo stamped on them.

It can be taken in pill or snorted and is often mixed with other drugs as speed or ketamines.

EFFECTS

Ecstasy is usually associated with dancing and loving as it makes you feeling high for several hours

Increased blood pressure and body temperature

Feeling of euphoria and well being

Muscle stiffness

Sound and colours are more intense

Eye flickering

Strong feeling of affection and love towards people

Dry mouth

RISKS

Nausea, sweating

Mouth ulcers

Paranoia, confusion, anxiety and depression

Death

Dehydration or over hydration

Teeth erosion

Heart failure and panic attack

Brain damage and memory loss

=> Drinking too much can be fatal as ecstasy prevents the production of urine as well as not drinking can bring you to death

2.6 Ghb

GHB is known as the rape drug and is found in a colourless and odourless liquid in small bottles or capsules.

It is usually taken in drinks but also in injections which is more risky.

EFFECTS

Effects take less than a hour to kick and can last up to a day

Increased sociability Increased sexual desire

Lower inhibitions Make you sleepy Making pass out

RISKS

Burn the mouth and the throat Breathing difficulties

Nausea and vomiting Drowsiness and sickness

Muscle stiffness Coma Convulsion

Overdose



2.7 Heroin

Reputed to be one of the most addictive drugs, heroin comes in a white to brown powder usually injected or inhaled. Less commonly it can also be snorted or smoked.

It is a painkiller made from morphine.

EFFECTS

Effects can last up to 2 hours

Feeling warm and relaxed Nausea or vomiting Blurred vision
Loss of sexual drive Drowsiness Lethargy Irritability
Lack of concentration, fear and anxiety



RISKS

High dependence Coma and death
Tolerance and need for more and more Spirals out of control
Damaging your veins if injection with possible ulcer and gangrene

2.8 Lsd

LSD is a hallucinogenic drug taken in tablets, sugar cube, square of gelatine or in liquid. Liquid Acid is stronger than other forms of Lsd.



EFFECTS

Effects of LSD are known as a trip. It depends on your state of mind before taking it and can last up to 12 hours.

Powerful and unpredictable affect on the mind, thought and emotions

Hallucinations Flashbacks of past trips

Surroundings distortion of objects, movement, vision and hearing

RISKS

Bad trips can be terrifying Accidents may happen

Dizziness and disorientation,

Fear, paranoia and panic

Increased depression, anxiety and schizophrenia

2.9 Methadone

Methadone is a synthetic drug with painkilling properties available in various forms and strength. It can be found in green liquid preparation, tablet, ampoules or linctus form. Methadone is a substitute to heroin and is intended to be taken as part of supervised medical treatment.

EFFECTS

Effects come after one hour and are similar than the one for heroin but are lower and last longer.

Well being and euphoria

Reduce feeling of anxiety and pain

Pain relief Drowsiness



RISKS

Addiction and tolerance

Nausea and Vomiting

Hot and Cold sweating

Itching sensation

Overdose, coma and death

Insomnia

Cramps

3. SAFER DRUG TAKING

It is strongly recommended not to take any drug. If you therefore do drugs, here is some advice that can help you to reduce risks:

- Make sure you are aware of side effects of a drug before taking it.
- Never mix a drug with other drugs and alcohol
- Take only small quantities and don't top up until you feel the effects
- Don't do drugs alone, ensure there is a friend you trust and who can help you if things go wrong with you
- Do not share equipment such as needles as risks of being infected with HIV or Hepatitis B and C are high
- Avoid injection
- Always eat and sleep well before and after taking drugs
- Never accept a drink or drugs from someone you do not know
- Take medical advice if you stop taking a drug
- Do not drive after taking drugs
- If you are pregnant you should take medical advice and stop taking drugs as it harms the baby and may cause miscarriage or prematurity labour

4. RECOGNISING DRUG PROBLEMS

It is not always easy to identify drug problems as symptoms are similar to mood changes in young people. However, you should be alert if one of your friends is facing the following situation:

- Sudden changes in mood from happy and alert to sullen and moody
- Aggressive or irritable behaviour
- Loss of interest in university, sport or any other usual activity
- Insomnia
- Financial worries or belongings being sold
- Problems in relationship with friends and family

If you are worrying about a friend and want to help him:

- Do not bring up the topic when they are under influence of drugs
- Plan what you want to say
- Say what you believe
- Be supportive and not judgmental
- Do show you care
- Do not use scare tactics

5. DRUG 1ST AID

Drugs affect everyone differently and when people take too much it can affect them badly.

In emergency always call 999 as soon as possible!

While waiting for the ambulance help your friend.

DO NOT:

- Give them any other drug
- Put them in a shower or bath
- Walk around them
- Leave them on their own



☛ **Tension and panic:**

- Calm the person and reassure him/her
- Explain to them where they are, what is happening and that the effect will pass
- Bring them in a place without music, crowd and bright light
- Encourage them to relax and take long, slow and deep breath

☛ **Drowsiness:**

- **Keep the person awake and don't shake them**
- **Place the person in the recovery position and talk to him/her**
- **Do not give any coffee**

☛ **Dehydration:**

- **Move the person to a cool area**
- **Remove excess clothes and splash them with cold water**
- **Encourage to drink water slowly (no more than a pint per hour)**
- **If it remains persistent call an ambulance**

☛ **Faint or loss of conscious:**

- **Place the person in the recovery position**
- **Check their breathing**
- **Keep the person warm but not too hot**
- **Don't give them fluids as they can easily choke**

☛ **The recovery position:**

- **Turn the person onto their front, with their head sideways on the side nearest you**
- **Bend their upper arm and their leg on the side nearest to you**
- **Straighten the other arm and leg**
- **Stay with the person, keep an eye on the breathing and tell someone to call an ambulance**
- **Don't put someone in the recovery position if you think they have got a head or neck injury**

=> If the person stops breathing, do mouth to mouth resuscitation or cardiac massage.

Need help?

For free and confidential support and advice:

- National drug helpline “Frank” on 0800 77 66 00
- Know the Score on 0800 587 587 9 (24/7)
- Release on 0845 4500 215
- Get connected 0808 808 4994
- Crew 2000 0131 220 3404

Information is available on:

www.Crew2000.org.uk

www.thesite.org

www.Knowthescore.info/

You can pop up at the local Crew 2000 which provides information, advice and support to drug users:

Crew 2000

32-32a Cockburn Street,
Edinburgh EH1 1PB

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