

What you need to know about drugs...straight up



What are drugs?

This may be a very basic question but it is one that needs to be clarified. Drugs are not just the substances that cause problems or are abused by “bad” people. By thinking about drugs in this way, we are likely to ignore other substances that, for one reason or another, are not thought of as drugs by our immediate communities.

A psychoactive substance is any substance people take to change either the way they feel, think, or behave (psychoactive means something that acts on your brain). This description covers alcohol and tobacco as well as other natural and manufactured drugs.

In the past, most of the drugs that were used were made from plants. That is, plants grown and then converted into drugs such as cocaine, heroin and cannabis (or marijuana).

In the 20th century, people found out how to make drugs from chemicals. These are called man-made, or synthetic drugs, and include speed, ecstasy, LSD, “batu”, “hot ice”, “kleenex”, “adam” and “meth”, etc.

What's wrong with using drugs?

Substance abuse has many negative physiological health effects, ranging from minor issues like digestion problems or respiratory infections, to potentially fatal diseases, like AIDS and hepatitis C. Of course, the effects depend on the drug and on the amount, method and frequency of use. Some drugs are very addictive, like heroin, while others are less so.

Whether you experiment with drugs every now and then, or use it regularly, drug abuse can cause physiological dependence, which means that when the person stops taking drugs, he/she experiences physical withdrawal symptoms and a craving for the drug.

Drug abuse also causes brain damage. It affects the way the brain functions and alters its responses to the world. How drug abuse will affect your behaviour, actions, feelings and motivations is unpredictable. By meddling in the natural ways the brain functions, you are exposing yourself to risks you may not even have imagined.

Finally, drug abuse damages your ability to act as free and conscious beings, capable of taking action to fulfill your needs. When you have no control over your actions or reactions, how can you be a free person? By giving in to bio-chemical processes that are deviant, a drug abuser loses what makes humans admirable and unique.

When people have been using drugs for centuries, what is wrong with occasional drug use?

In the past, drugs were not as strong and potent as they are now. Even so-called "natural" or soft drugs like marijuana are many times more powerful today than they were in the 1960's. Over the years, these drugs have been modified either biologically or chemically to create higher concentrations of the active ingredient - the thing that produces the "high".

No one 200 years ago could have dreamed of the potency of the drugs that are available today. Further, when psychotropic substances were used in the past, it was within a fairly well structured social space that regulated use and behaviour. In today's social conditions, this structured space has been lost. Moreover, the very strength of modern chemicals is such that it renders social control ineffective.

Additionally, there are some drugs like heroin and crack cocaine that are highly addictive. This means that even if they are used recreationally, they tend to induce physical dependence, leading to an increased need for the drug. Even those drugs that people think they can take occasionally, the "party drugs" (like Ecstasy, GHB and speed), tend to produce a craving to repeat the sensations again and again.

The effects of most drugs are not very well known. Even when they are, their influences are dependent on an individual's physical and psychological make up, and even occasional drug use can lead to unforeseen complications and reactions.

What all this means is that there's no such thing as harmless drug use. Even occasional experimentation with it, or recreational use during weekends and parties, can cause bad effects that you are unable to anticipate.

What's the best way to party? Without drugs.

"Drugs start out as an adventure, but where you end up is not where you started."

MARIJUANA

Marijuana is made from the dried flowering, fruiting tops and leaves of the cannabis plant. Hashish is the dried, compressed resin separated from the flowering tops of the plant, and is stronger than marijuana. The juice or resin of the hemp plant is called hash oil or cannabis oil, and is the strongest form of the drug.

What does it look like?

The colour of marijuana ranges from greyish-green to greenish-brown. It can look like a dried herb, or coarse, like tea.

Hashish is sold in block pieces, and ranges in colour from light brown to nearly black. Hash oil is a dark, almost black, thick liquid and is sold in small bottles.

How is it used?

Marijuana is usually smoked in hand-rolled cigarettes and can be cooked in foods and eaten as well. Hashish is usually smoked in a pipe or cooked in foods

and eaten. Cannabis oil is usually smoked with tobacco, smeared on to cigarettes or occasionally eaten.

The effects of using marijuana

People may have very different experiences using marijuana. Some people feel happy and they feel like they can do anything. Sometimes they babble and laugh more than usual. You may become very hungry or get “the munchies”, your heart-rate increases and your eyes become red. At a later stage, you will find you feel sleepy and become quiet.

contains 50 per cent more tar.

Using marijuana also leads to some problems in our “psychomotor” functions, that is, in the ability to coordinate our actions. This is especially important when you are doing things like driving, operating machinery etc.

Regular use of marijuana increases the risk of lung cancer and chronic bronchitis because the smoke

Regular use of cannabis can make you psychologically dependent on it.

Street names

Cannabis, marijuana, ganja, hash, grass, weed, dope, pot, blow, resin, hashish, oil, green, hooch, leaf, hemp.

INHALANTS AND SOLVENTS

Inhalants and solvents are chemicals that can be inhaled, such as glue, gasoline, aerosol sprays, lighter fluid etc. These are not drugs at all and are, in fact,

legally available from a large number of shops. However, they are abused widely by the poorer sections of society, particularly street youth.

What do they look like?

Inhalants can look like almost anything (glue, paint thinner, gasoline, lighter fuel, cleaning fluids, etc).

They usually come in tubes or bottles.

How are they used?

Often, the chemical is placed in the bottom of a cup or container and then placed over the nose and mouth.

Other methods include: soaking a rag in inhalant; placing a rag in bag or sack; placing the bag over the face and inhaling the vapours.

The effects of using inhalants

Inhalants may give you a high for a very brief period of time. They make you feel numb for a short period of time, dizzy, confused, and cause progressive drowsiness. They can also cause headaches, nausea, fainting, accelerated heartbeat,

disorientation, and hallucinations. They can damage the lungs, kidney and liver in the long term. They can also cause suffocation, convulsions, and coma.

Street names

Glue, poppers, bolt, bullet, gum

COCAINE	
Cocaine is prepared from coca leaves, which are greenish-yellow leaves of different size and appearance. Cocaine is often called the “champagne of drugs” because of its high cost.	It makes you feel like your body is going very fast. Your heart races and the “highs” and “lows” are sudden. Crack, which is smoked, is a much stronger form of cocaine.
What does it look like?	
Cocaine usually comes in a white powdered form.	Crack looks like hard white rocks.
How is it used?	
Cocaine is usually snorted up the nose. It can also be injected or smoked.	Crack is smoked.
The effects of using cocaine	
A small amount of cocaine will raise your body temperature, make your heart beat faster, increase your breathing, make you feel over confident and make you more alert with extra energy. When crack is smoked, all of these feelings are intensified.	Excessive doses may lead to convulsions, seizures, strokes, cerebral haemorrhage or heart failure. Long term effects of cocaine/crack use will lead to strong psychological dependence, and other health problems like destroying nose tissues, breathing problems and losing weight.
Street names	
Cocaine, crack, coke, C, charlie, nose candy, toot, bazooka, big C, cake, lady, stardust, coco, flake, mister coffee, blanche, koks, snow.	
HEROIN	
Heroin is a drug obtained from morphine and comes from the opium poppy plant. Heroin is a drug that slows down your body and mind.	It is a very strong painkiller and can be one of the most dangerous things to mix with other drugs.
What does it look like?	
Heroin usually comes in a rock or powdered form, which is generally white or pink/beige in colour.	It can come also in dark grey/medium brown.
How is it used?	
Heroin can be injected, snorted, smoked, or inhaled.	This last method is often called “chasing the dragon”.
The effects of using heroin	
When injected, heroin provides an extremely powerful rush and a high that usually last for between 4 and 6 hours.	An overdose can result in death. One of the most dangerous effects of injecting heroin is the increased possibility of being infected by HIV from sharing contaminated needles.
The effects of heroin include a feeling of well being, relief from pain, fast physical and psychological dependence, sometimes nausea and vomiting, sleepiness, loss of balance, loss of concentration and loss of appetite.	Studies have also shown that people who are “high” on drugs tend to have unprotected sex. This, too, puts you at risk of being infected by HIV.
Street names	
Hammer, horse, H, junk, nod, smack, skag, white, beige, white lady, white stuff, joy powder boy, hairy, harry, joy powder.	

AMPHETAMINE-TYPE STIMULANTS

Amphetamine-type stimulants are a group of drugs (including metamphetamines, amphetamines and ecstasy) that affect your system by speeding up the activity of your brain and giving energy.

“Ice” is a crystal form of metamphetamines, which are a strong type of amphetamines, and is very similar to crack.

What do they look like?

Amphetamine-type stimulants are man-made drugs and relatively easy to make. Usually, they are white or light brown powder and can also come the form of a pill.

“Ice” usually comes as colourless crystals or as a colourless liquid when used for injecting.

How are they used?

ATS can be swallowed, snorted, injected or smoked.

The effects of using ATS

ATS can cause an increase in your heartbeat, faster breathing, increased blood pressure and body temperature, and sweating.

makes it difficult to sleep and might make you talk more. You may also feel anxious, irritable, and suffer from panic attacks.

ATS may make you more confident and alert, and give you extra energy. But it also reduces your appetite,

Frequent use can produce strong psychological dependence. Large doses can be lethal.

Street names

Amphetamines: Speed (amphetamines), pep pills.

Metamphetamines: Ya ba, bing du pian.

Crystal metamphetamines: ice, shabu/syabu, bing, batu, crystal meth, crack meth.

ECSTASY (MDMA)

Ecstasy belongs to the same group of chemicals as the above category that is, amphetamine-type stimulants, and is most often used in the form of tablets at rave parties and clubs.

Ecstasy is a drug that speeds up your system by increasing your physical and emotional energy. Ecstasy is also a synthetic (or man-made) drug.

What does it look like?

Ecstasy is usually a small, coloured tablet. These pills can come in many different colours. Some ecstasy tablets also have pictures on them, such as doves,

rabbits or champagne bottles. The colour or the “brand” of the tablet is usually unrelated to the effects of the drug.

How is it used?

Ecstasy tablets are usually swallowed.

The effects of using ecstasy

You'll probably feel happy, warm, loving and more energetic. You would feel emotionally close to others, you might say or do things that you usually would not.

Sometimes, dangerous combinations of metamphetamines and ketamine are sold as fake ecstasy pills.

Street names

Ecstasy, E, adam, essence, MDM, MDMA, XTC, eve, MDE, MDEA.