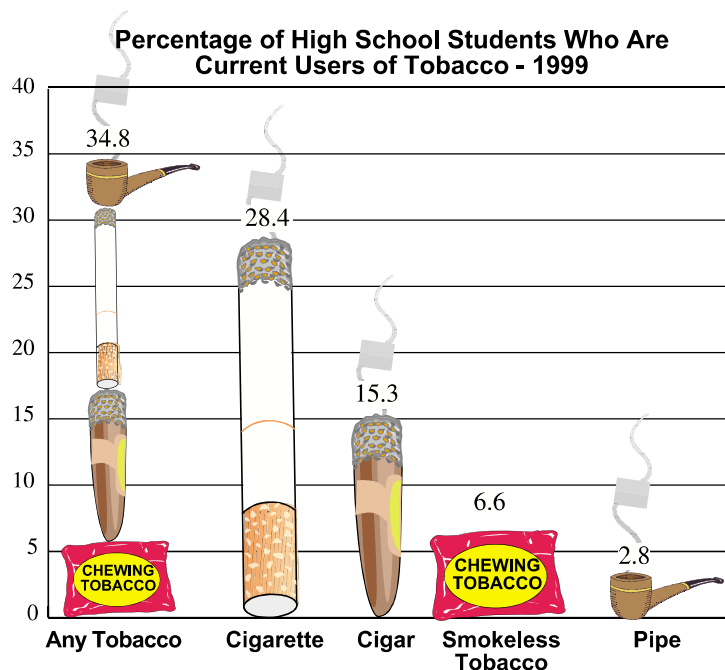


- I don't have to buy cigarettes; I'm saving a lot of money. I don't have to carry cigarettes around.
- I don't smell; my breath, clothes, and hair smell good again.
- I don't have to offend others and foul their air with my smoking habit.
- I can date many more people who otherwise would not tolerate my bad habit.
- My surroundings are no longer filled with dirty ashtrays and ugly cigarette butts. And I'm not tempted to litter the streets with my cigarette butts.

Try to concentrate on the gains you'll make from not smoking rather than the craving you feel for another cigarette. Avoid the places and situations where you used to smoke—change your routine. When you feel the urge for a cigarette, go for a walk, exercise, or spend time with people who don't smoke.

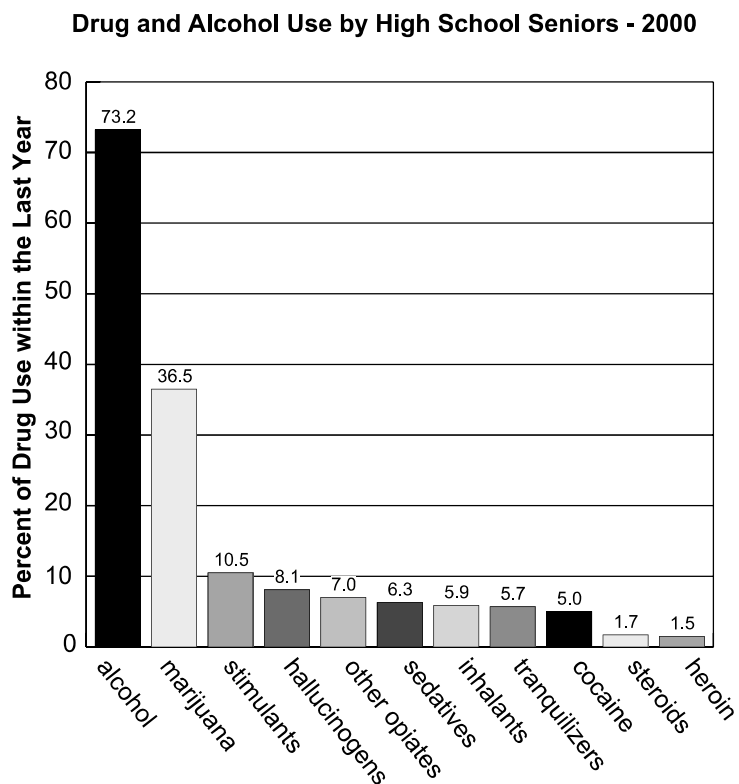
If you need help to quit, see your doctor, nurse, or local health department. The sooner you decide to quit, the easier it will be.



## Psychoactive Drugs: Drugs That Affect the Mind

Drugs of abuse are also known as **psychoactive drugs**. *Psycho-* refers to the *mind*, or brain. These drugs act on the user's brain. Some of them will put us to sleep; others will keep us awake. Some of them will make us hallucinate; others will confuse and disorient us. According to how they act on the brain, psychoactive drugs can be classified as **cannabinoids**, **hallucinogens**, stimulants, depressants, **narcotics**, or **inhalants**.

One thing all of these drugs have in common is that they are extremely dangerous. When abused, these drugs will harm the body and the mind. Some may even cause death.



### Cannabinoids: Marijuana and Hashish

Marijuana is often called by its slang names, including *pot*, *grass*, *weed*, and *Mary Jane*. Marijuana is smoked as a cigarette, called a *joint*, or in a pipe. Some users eat marijuana. Marijuana comes from the dried flowered tops and leaves of the hemp plant *Cannabis sativa*. Hashish is a concentrated form of marijuana and is usually smoked in a pipe.

## How Cannabinoids Affect the Body and Mind

When these drugs are smoked, their key ingredient, THC (tetrahydrocannabinols), is absorbed into the lungs. It then travels through the blood to the brain. Once in the brain, it begins to act on the central nervous system. These drugs give the user a feeling of euphoria. Some users will also hallucinate, or begin to see and hear things that aren't really there. Users will also experience an altered sense of time. A few minutes may seem like hours, or an hour may seem like a few minutes. Almost all users feel the urge to eat, an experience commonly referred to as the *munchies*. Marijuana and hashish users often have reddened eyes and dilated, or enlarged, pupils. Their mouths often become very dry.

Marijuana and hashish can make some users feel anxious and uncomfortable. They may feel afraid of the surrounding world. This experience is called *paranoia*. Some users will lose their self-confidence and become confused. They may not be able to understand others or put together sentences that make sense. They may lose their coordination, balance, and ability to drive—just as they would if they were drunk. They may also feel sleepy and weak.



*Marijuana comes from the dried flowered tops and leaves of the Indian hemp plant, *Cannabis sativa*.*

## Health Risks

During the 1960s, when marijuana and hashish use was common, users claimed that the drug was safe and not harmful. However, these drugs are not harmless. They damage the lungs more than even tobacco does. Users of these drugs increase the risk of developing lung cancer. These drugs cause the heart to beat faster or irregularly. The user's immune system is impaired and loses some of its ability to fight off diseases. Some marijuana plants have been treated with dangerous and poisonous pesticides. Users will never know whether the marijuana or hashish they are smoking contains these poisons. These drugs also reduce a male's sperm count.

Marijuana and hashish not only damage the body, they also damage the mind. Users experience short-term memory loss. Consequently, they find it difficult to learn while using these drugs. They lose their ability to

concentrate and pay attention. Users of these drugs can also develop **amotivational syndrome**—commonly called *burn out*. Marijuana and hashish users may become bored with life and lose their interest in accomplishing long-term goals. They perform poorly in school and work, and they become irresponsible. However, scientists and researchers do not think that these drugs cause permanent brain damage.

Although marijuana and hashish users do not develop a physical addiction, they have been known to become psychologically dependent. When they stop using these drugs, they may *crave* the drug, or want the drug very much. Withdrawal from the drug may cause restlessness, irritability, and nervousness.

### **Hallucinogens: LSD, Mescaline, Psilocybin, and MDMA**

LSD, mescaline, psilocybin, and MDMA (ecstasy) are the most commonly abused hallucinogenic drugs. LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) is often called by its slang names: *acid*, *trip*, *cubes*, *dots*, and *big D*. It comes from a fungus that grows on some grains. It usually comes in the form of a capsule, tablet, liquid, or is added to absorbent paper, such as blotter paper. LSD is extremely powerful. One danger in using LSD is that the people who make it often pay little attention to the amount they put in each dose. A square of blotter paper may contain enough LSD on it to permanently harm or even kill the user.

Mescaline comes from the peyote cactus. Its slang names include *mesc*, *buttons*, *peyote*, and *bad seed*. It comes in the form of hard brown discs, which are chewed, swallowed, or smoked. It also comes in tablets or capsules that are swallowed. Users may experience vomiting, sweating, and severe stomach cramps.

Psilocybin is a drug that grows on some mushrooms. It is often called *mushrooms* or *shrooms*. The mushrooms are chewed, swallowed, or made into tea.

Although once legal, MDMA, often called *ecstasy*, can no longer be legally produced or used. Ecstasy is not considered a safe drug. Some people may be extremely sensitive to ecstasy and even a single dose can kill them. Research also has linked ecstasy to long-term damage to parts of the brain critical to thought and memory. Many adolescents, however, continue to abuse this drug.



## How Hallucinogens Affect the Body and Mind

Users of hallucinogenic drugs will *hallucinate*. These drugs cause users' brains to alter some or all of the images and sounds they receive. Colors may change or grow brighter. Sounds may echo or become louder. In addition, users may see and hear things that are not really there. A streak of light may suddenly pass through the sky. A snake may suddenly wiggle across the floor.

Hallucinogenic drugs are unpredictable. When people take hallucinogens, they cannot know how their mind will be affected. They may experience exciting images and suddenly think of new ideas. Or they may have a *bad trip* and find themselves in a nightmare world they can't escape. Everyone may look like monsters and make them fear for their lives. They may be unable to turn off deafening sounds and blinding lights. As you can see, taking hallucinogens is like rolling dice. You never know what kind of experience you will have or what will happen to you.



*Users may have a bad trip on a hallucinogenic drug, and a snake may suddenly appear to wiggle across the floor.*

## Health Risks

Scientists are unsure whether LSD, mescaline, and psilocybin cause long-term damage to the mind and body. However, these drugs can be very dangerous. They can make users behave dangerously. Users may jump from a high ledge, believing they can fly. They may think a moving car is not dangerous and stand in front of it.

In addition, LSD can leave users with *flashbacks*. In some cases, people who used LSD weeks or months in the past can suddenly experience an LSD trip at any time. Users may be driving a car or taking an important exam. **Remember:** LSD is unpredictable.

After repeated use, larger doses are needed to produce the same effects. However, hallucinogenic drugs do not cause withdrawal symptoms when use is stopped. But do keep in mind that, for some people, even a single dose of ecstasy may cause death.

## Stimulants: Amphetamines and Cocaine

Besides caffeine (the drug in coffee and many sodas), the most commonly abused stimulants are amphetamines and cocaine. Amphetamines have many slang names including *bennies*, *speed*, *uppers*, and *crystal*. They are also called *pep pills* because they *pep up* the user.



*coca plant*

Cocaine comes from the leaves of the coca plant and is used in many forms. When it is made into a white powder, it is called *cocaine*. Cocaine is either snorted or sniffed into the nose or injected into a vein. Cocaine has many slang names including *coke*, *snow*, *blow*, *toot*, *lady*, and *line*. In recent years, cocaine has been sold in a form that can be smoked, commonly known as *crack*, or *rock*. Crack cocaine is sold in small rocks that look like soap. When it is smoked, it makes a *crackling* sound.

Amphetamine addicts are often called *speed freaks*. Cocaine addicts are often called *coke heads*. And crack cocaine addicts are often called *crack addicts*.

### How Amphetamines and Cocaine Affect the Body and Mind

Amphetamines and cocaine stimulate the nervous system and do have some medical uses. However, when people use them without a doctor's prescription, this is drug abuse.

People who abuse amphetamines, cocaine, and crack cocaine take the drugs to get the euphoria and rush they produce. However, the rush from these drugs lasts a very short time. These drugs also make users feel excited and powerful—as if nothing can hurt them. This feeling alone often leads users of stimulants to commit violent and dangerous acts. People can become addicted to amphetamines and crack after only one use.

Crack addicts and amphetamine addicts are known to do almost anything to get more of the drug. When people use crack repeatedly, they lose interest in everything else. Their thinking becomes confused. Their vision can become blurred. They don't care about eating, having sex, or even caring for their children.

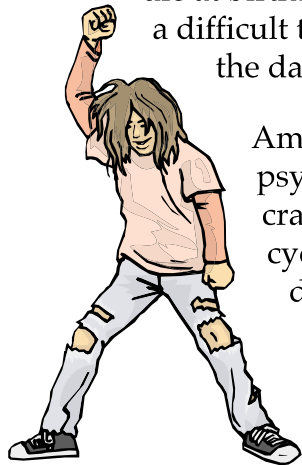
Drug pushers, or sellers, began to make crack or rock because it is cheaper to make than cocaine. Drug pushers could then sell this drug to people who otherwise could not afford to buy it. A dose of crack may cost between \$10 and \$25. A dose of the drug provides 5-20 minutes of a rush. People will often buy and do crack until their money runs out.

## Health Risks

People who use amphetamines, cocaine, and crack do much damage to their bodies. Their bodies are forced to work harder than usual. Bodies are like machines, and users of stimulants wear them out. These drugs can cause bleeding of the brain, high blood pressure, and heart and liver damage. Users may even become mentally ill. Many users die of heart attacks, seizures, and strokes. Some famous entertainers and athletes have died from using these drugs.

People who snort cocaine damage their nose and sinuses. They may develop constant nose bleeds. The lining of their nose and sinuses may swell up. They may even end up with a hole in the cartilage that separates their nostrils. People who inject cocaine are apt to contract hepatitis B, AIDS, and other infections.

Smoking crack can cause lung infections and chronic coughs. Pregnant mothers who use crack often have babies with birth defects or babies who die at birth. The babies are born addicted to the drug. They have a difficult time just surviving and will never fully recover from the damage.



*People who abuse stimulants take the drugs to get the euphoria and rush they produce.*

Amphetamine, cocaine, and crack addicts develop a psychological addiction. When the drug wears off, they crash and depression sets in. They often will begin a cycle in which they take the drugs to escape their depression. When the drug wears off, they crash again. And so they take the drug again to escape the tired and empty feeling.

During withdrawal they will feel irritable, tired, and sleepy. Most will experience depression and will do most anything to get drugs. Some amphetamine addicts have even committed suicide when they couldn't get the drug.

Abused Drugs and Substances					
Drug	Drug Forms	Slang Names	Effects of Normal Dose	Effects of Single Overdose	Effects of Habitual Overdose
<b>Barbiturates</b>	sleeping pills	downers, goofballs, yellow jackets, reds, phrennies, red devils, sopers, blues, ludes	sleepiness; fatigue; forgetfulness; unable to think clearly	extreme sleepiness; poor or unclear speech; deep sleep or coma; death	persistent sleepiness; persistent forgetfulness; psychological and physical dependence; causes tolerance; death
<b>Tranquilizers</b>	ativan, librium, valium, xanax	downers	feeling of calm and no worries; induce sleep	extreme sleepiness; dizziness; poor vision; poor or unclear speech	psychological and physical dependence; may destroy blood cells; may cause coma; may cause death
<b>Narcotics</b>	codeine, heroin, methadone, morphine	schoolboy; H, horse, junk, scag, smack, dolly, M, white stuff	stop pain; sleepiness; unable to work or think clearly	extreme sleepiness; possible deep sleep; possible coma; may cause death	persistent sleepiness; persistent forgetfulness; psychological and physical dependence; causes tolerance; may cause death
<b>Alcohol</b>	beer, wine, whiskey, other liquors	booze, hooch, juice brew, vino, sauce	causes silliness and clumsiness; unable to think clearly or react quickly	drunkness; upset stomach; coma; death	weight gain; alcoholism; brain damage; psychological and physical dependence; causes tolerance
<b>Caffeine</b>	coffee, cola, tea, cocoa	none	feeling of being awake; increased ability to think and react quickly	crankiness; nervousness; unable to sleep; upset stomach	extreme restlessness; unable to sleep; upset stomach; bouts of anger; psychological dependence; causes tolerance
<b>Amphetamines</b>	benzedrine, dexedrine, methedrine	uppers, bennies, dexes, speed, crystal, ice	increased blood pressure; increased heart beat; increased breathing rate; extremely awake and overly excited	extreme restlessness; rapid speech; inability to sleep; cause stomach problems; loss of control of muscle movement	extreme sleeplessness; poor eating habits; mental illness; skin problems; hallucinations; brain and heart damage; psychological dependence; causes tolerance; may cause death
<b>Cocaine</b>	powder, pills, "rocks"	snow, coke, toot, line, crack, rock, C, blow, lady	increased blood pressure; increased heart beat; increased breathing rate; overly excited	extreme restlessness; inability to sleep; stomach problems; depression; mental illness	sleeplessness; persistent state of being overly excited; mental illness; damage to blood vessels; psychological dependence; causes tolerance
<b>Nicotine</b>	cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, smokeless tobacco	smokes, butts, chew	feeling of calm; increased blood pressure	headaches; upset stomach; loss of appetite	breathing problems; heart and lung diseases; psychological dependence; causes tolerance
<b>Marijuana</b>	cigarette	pot, grass, weed, Mary Jane, tea, reeler, joint, roach, doobie	light-headedness; loss of sense of time and how fast things are moving	feeling of drunkness and fear; hallucinations	extreme fatigue; loss of interest in school or work; throat and lung problems; mental illness; psychological dependence; low sperm count
<b>Other Hallucinogens</b>	LSD, mescaline, psilocybin, PCP, MDMA	acid, blotter, green/red dragon, big D, sugar, dots, trip, cube, mesc, buttons, peyote, dad seed, mushrooms, shrooms; angel dust; loveboat; ecstasy; designer drug; X	loss of sense of time and how fast things are moving; increased energy; feeling of fear; hallucinations	feeling of fear; sickness; mental illness; extreme fatigue; shaking and tremors; hallucinations; death	extreme feelings of fear; mental illness; hallucinations; psychological dependence; causes tolerance
<b>Inhalants</b>	solvents, aerosols	glue, benzene, toluene, freon	feeling of calm; unable to move well; damage to nose and lungs	extreme sleepiness; feeling and look of drunkness; deep sleep or coma; death	hallucinations; damage to the brain, liver, kidneys, and bones; psychological dependence; causes tolerance; death

## Depressants: Barbiturates and Tranquilizers

Stimulants *speed up* the nervous system. Depressants do just the opposite—they *slow down* the nervous system. The depressant most often used and abused is alcohol. Barbiturates and tranquilizers are the other most abused depressants. They come in the form of pills. Barbiturates and tranquilizers have many slang names including *yellow jackets*, *reds*, *downers*, *goofballs*, *sopers*, *ludes*, and *blues*.

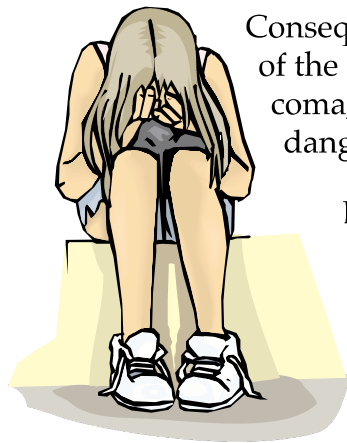
### How Barbiturates and Tranquilizers Affect the Body and Mind

Barbiturates and tranquilizers slow the heart rate and lower blood pressure. Used under a doctor's directions, barbiturates and tranquilizers can improve and even save some people's lives. These drugs can help control epilepsy and mental illness.

Abusers of these drugs enjoy having their senses dulled by the drug. They enjoy having their body functions slowed down. They like the sleepy feeling and calmness brought on by the drugs. Some people even enjoy the confusion, lack of judgment, and forgetfulness produced by barbiturates. However, these drugs pose serious dangers.

### Health Risks

Long-term use of barbiturates and tranquilizers can cause depression in users. Because their judgment and memory is poor, they may not remember how many pills they have taken.



*Long-term use of barbiturates and tranquilizers can cause depression.*

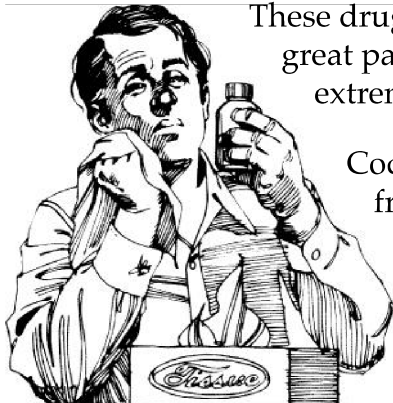
Consequently, they may take an overdose. An overdose of the drug may cause users to fall into a stupor or coma, and they may die. These drugs are particularly dangerous when mixed with alcohol.

Barbiturate and tranquilizer addicts become physically and psychologically addicted. During withdrawal, addicts sweat heavily. They may experience nausea and vomiting, and have seizures. They may suffer from panic attacks and even *psychosis*. Psychosis is a mental disorder. People with psychosis often hallucinate. They may withdraw from reality.

## Narcotics: Codeine, Heroin, Morphine, and Opium

Narcotics are derived from the opium poppy plant. Some narcotics are prescribed by doctors to relieve pain, coughs, or diarrhea. Narcotics are abused because they produce euphoria in users. The most commonly abused *narcotics* are codeine, heroin, morphine, and opium. These drugs have many slang names including *smack*, *horse*, *scag*, *white stuff*, and *M*.

### How Narcotics Affect the Body and Mind



The word *narcotics* comes from *narcosis*, which means sleep. These drugs are used to help patients who suffer from great pain. Narcotics help block pain and cause extreme sleepiness.

Codeine is legally used to help people who suffer from intense coughing. It comes in liquid form, capsules, and tablets. It is abused for the euphoria it produces.

Morphine is a very strong painkiller. Doctors use morphine to give cancer patients relief from the extreme pain they feel. It comes in white crystals, tablets, and solutions. It is swallowed or injected.

Some narcotics are prescribed by doctors to relieve pain, coughs, and diarrhea.

Heroin is the most abused of all the narcotics. It is illegal in the United States and has no medical use. It comes in the form of a powder or a tar-like substance. It can be smoked, snorted, or injected. Users of heroin say that all their worries disappear and they feel a sense of euphoria. However, when the heroin wears off, users will feel even more of the worry or anxiety they were trying to escape.

Opium relieves pain and produces euphoria. Users lose their appetite and their ability to think and remember. It comes in chunks or powders and is smoked, eaten, or injected.



## Health Risks

Users of narcotics are often sick. These drugs keep the immune system from working to fight disease. Abusers who inject narcotics may develop skin infections. Users sometimes do not care about their health or hygiene. They often share needles and many become infected with hepatitis B or the fatal AIDS virus. Abusers who overdose often die.

Narcotics cause physical and psychological addiction. During withdrawal, addicts experience chills, muscle aches, spasms, nausea, vomiting, and sleeplessness. Withdrawal is so painful that addicts will do almost anything to avoid it. The most important thing in most addicts' lives is to get more of the drug. They will commit crimes and sell their bodies to get a dose, or *fix*, of the drug.

## Inhalants: Solvents and Aerosols

Inhalants are substances that can be inhaled, or breathed in.

Users soak a rag with the substance and then inhale the fumes. *Solvents* and *aerosols* are the most commonly abused inhalants. Solvents are liquids that become fumes at room temperature. Aerosols are substances added to products to make them sprayable.



*Solvents and aerosols are the most commonly abused inhalants.*

## How Inhalants Affect the Body and Mind

Inhalants work on the cells in the brain. Like hallucinogens, inhalants cause unpredictable effects. They may cause excitement, irritability, lack of coordination, or loss of judgment. They may cause sleepiness and affect users much the way alcohol does. Some users lose their fear and will do many things they otherwise would not. Some users will even hallucinate.

## Health Risks

Inhalants are easy to find and use, but they may cause some of the most damaging health effects—including death—of any substances abused. They can cause paralysis. They can make users pass out and have seizures. If users pass out while they are in the act of inhaling a substance, they may continue inhaling the fumes and die.

Inhalants also cause brain damage, heart attacks, and lead poisoning. They can damage the nose, throat, lungs, and nervous system. Inhalants can displace the oxygen in the lungs and cause death by suffocation. They were never meant to be used inside the body, and the body reacts to them as it would to any poison.

People develop physical and psychological addictions to inhalants. During withdrawal, the addict may hallucinate, or have tremors, cramps, and chills.



## Other Illegal Drugs Produced and Sold: *Look-Alikes* and *Designer Drugs*

**Look-alike drugs** are made to look like certain illegal drugs. For example, *look-alike drugs* are made to look like real amphetamines and imitate their effects. They are sold on the street as *uppers* or *speed*. These drugs are really a mix of legal over-the-counter drugs found in diet pills and decongestants. However, each batch of look-alikes varies in strength. The user never really knows exactly what he or she is getting. Because look-alikes are often weaker than illegal drugs, people often take too many of them. The mixtures in look-alikes can cause dangerously fast heart rates, changes in blood pressure, strange behavior, nervousness, and breathing problems. Regular use can lead to psychosis. Use in combination with other drugs, such as alcohol, can lead to serious reactions.

*Designer drugs* are synthetic drugs similar in chemistry to certain illegal drugs. For example, the designer drug MDMA (ecstasy) resembles cocaine in chemistry. These drugs do not undergo quality control. They may be more dangerous than the original, imitated drug. Symptoms of designer drug use include uncontrollable tremors, drooling, impaired speech, paralysis, and irreversible brain damage.

## Drug Use: The Penalties You'll Pay

Obviously there are reasons why so many people use drugs. It would be a lie to say that drugs never make people feel good. Many people who have taken narcotics did experience euphoria. They did feel light and carefree. They did believe that the feeling the drug gave them was unique and special. If none of these drugs gave users a heightened experience, no one would do them. And the government would not have to make laws against their sale and use.

But look at all the penalties you'll pay for using a drug illegally or for using an illegal drug. Every state in this country has laws against producing, selling, or buying illegal drugs. Once you are a convicted felon, you can no longer vote, hold a federal job, or own a gun, and you may have difficulty getting hired for many responsible jobs.

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In addition to the legal penalties, developing an addiction or chemical dependence can cost you a lot. Many addicts use all of their money and valuables to buy drugs. They may steal and turn to other kinds of crime to raise money to support their drug addiction. Once addicted, getting the drug becomes the most important thing in their lives. They would steal from family and friends to make sure they can buy drugs.

Drug addicts and users often lose their families and friends. They surround themselves only with others who do drugs. They lose interest in anyone who is not a drug user.

Drugs threaten users' health in many ways. Each time people use drugs, they are risking their health and even their life. One overdose can cause death. If drug users continue to use some psychoactive drugs for months and years, they may permanently damage their health. If a woman uses drugs during pregnancy, she also risks the health of her baby.

Many drug users wake up one day and look back on an unproductive life. Very few long-term drug users would choose to be drug addicts—just ask one.

## **What to Do If You Have a Drug Problem**

If you are experimenting with psychoactive drugs, alcohol, or tobacco, stop now. Each time you use any kind of drug, you are one step closer to becoming a full-time user and one step farther away from getting free of drugs. If you find that you can't stop experimenting, then you know you need help to quit. Admitting to someone that you need help quitting is a very responsible and mature act.

*Denial* is a strategy used by many drug users to avoid the truth. They deny to themselves and to others the fact that they do have a drug problem. "I can quit anytime I want to," they will say. Or "I only do drugs because there is nothing else to do." They have trouble being honest about their drug use. Check to see if you are using denial to explain your drug problem. **Remember:** alcohol is the most abused psychoactive drug by adolescents.

Answer the following:

- Have your personal appearance and hygiene gotten worse since you first used drugs?
- Do you find yourself lying to your parents or friends to hide your drug use?
- Are you spending your money on drugs or borrowing money from others to buy drugs?
- Has your schoolwork suffered since you began doing drugs?
- Has your memory gotten worse since you began doing drugs?
- Do you find yourself spending a lot of time thinking about buying and using drugs?
- Have your relationships with your family and friends suffered since you began doing drugs?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, then do yourself the biggest favor of your life. Just make a call and talk to *someone*. The Center for Substance Abuse Treatment National Drug and Alcohol Treatment Referral Service will help you understand how drugs are affecting your life. They will help you find help. Call their toll free number: 1-800-622-HELP (1-800-622-4357). Pass the word on to a friend who could use the help.



**The Center for Substance  
Abuse Treatment National  
Drug and Alcohol Treatment  
Referral Service**

1-800-622-4357

## Alternatives to Drugs

Many drug users began using drugs to relieve their boredom. Responsible people, however, find more productive ways to fill their time. Finding interesting things to do is not always easy. You have to take responsibility for your time.

Rather than harming your *body* with drugs, look for some healthful alternatives. Take up a sport. Develop a fitness routine. When you exercise, your brain releases *endorphins*. Endorphins are chemicals that give you a natural high. This effect is often called *runner's high*.

Rather than harming your mind with drugs, look for some healthful alternatives. Take up an art or a craft. The pleasure we get from using our creativity and making something also gives us a rush—a natural rush.



*Rather than harming your body with drugs, look for some healthful alternatives.*

Consider your time too important to spend in a wasteful activity such as using drugs. Drug use just burns time. All of us have bad days. We may find ourselves wondering whether it matters if we accomplish something. Drug users use their doubt as an excuse to do drugs. People with strong wills and positive attitudes take a different approach. They know that a productive and healthy life will not just happen. They know that they must make life valuable. And they know that drugs are valuable only to the person who sells them.

## Summary

*Drugs* are classified in three different ways. *Over-the-counter drugs* are easily available at many stores. *Prescription drugs* can only be bought with a prescription, or doctor's note. *Illegal drugs* describe drugs that cannot be legally made or sold. Illegal drugs also describe prescription drugs which have been stolen, given away, or sold on the street.

Many drugs are used properly and legally to help people with physical and emotional problems. However, drugs have become a major concern for our communities. Some drugs are powerful substances that many people are abusing. Some drugs, including *psychoactive drugs*, make users feel *euphoria*, or they speed up or slow down the *nervous system* of drug users. Some psychoactive drugs cause people to *hallucinate*, or see, hear, or feel things that are not real.

Psychoactive drugs include *alcohol*, *cannabinoids* (marijuana and hashish), *hallucinogens* (LSD and ecstasy), *stimulants* (amphetamines, cocaine, and crack cocaine), and *narcotics* (codeine, heroin, morphine, and opium).

These drugs can cause users to become *physically dependent*, *psychologically dependent*, or both. When users are dependent on, or *addicted* to, a drug, their bodies need the drug. If they don't get the drug, they will experience *withdrawal*. Withdrawal describes the physical or emotional symptoms a person experiences as a drug is cleansed from the body.

Users of psychoactive drugs will also develop a *tolerance* for a drug. They will have to use more and more of the drug to get the experience they want. The more drugs they take, the more damage could be done to their body.

Drugs harm the body in a number of ways. Some can cause immediate harm. An overdose, or taking too much of a drug, can cause psychosis, brain damage, or paralysis, and can even kill users. In addition, some drugs make users behave irresponsibly. An intoxicated person will experience loss of coordination and reflexes. However, users will also lose judgment. They may believe they can safely drive or do other difficult tasks. Users may *hallucinate* and believe they can safely jump from a high ledge. And many drugs cause people to lose their *inhibitions*. They may have casual sex or behave in ways they otherwise would not. Unfortunately, one moment of poor judgment can result in a person becoming pregnant or being infected with hepatitis B or the deadly AIDS virus.



Drugs also cause long-term harm to the body and mind. Alcoholics often suffer from liver disease and other organ damage. Cigarette smokers suffer from lung disease and heart problems, as well as premature wrinkles. People who are addicted to stimulants may die of heart attacks, seizures, or strokes.

Most drug *addicts* become so dependent on drugs that their whole life is centered on getting and using drugs. They may commit crimes to get money for drugs. They often lose their family's support and only make friends with other drug users. Few drug addicts enjoy their way of life—but addiction can be stronger than many people's wills. Escape from addiction can sometimes take years and may never occur. Fortunately, drug abusers can get help. Many people have recovered from drug *misuse* and *drug abuse*.