

ILLICIT DRUGS

Illicit drugs have very serious long and short term health implications which affect your lifestyle, work and education and can lead to crime, addiction and death.

- » About 2 in 5 people in Australia (39.8%) have used an illicit drug at some point in their lifetime.
- » Illicit drug users were more likely to be diagnosed or treated for a mental illness and report high or very high levels of psychological distress compared with those who had not used an illicit drug.¹

3 types of drugs

Depressant drugs

Don't necessarily make a person feel depressed. They slow down the central nervous system and the messages between the brain and the body. They may cause unconsciousness, vomiting and, in some cases, death.

Depressant drugs include:



cannabis



GHB



opiates, including heroin



alcohol

Stimulant drugs

Speed up the central nervous system and can make the user feel more awake, alert or confident. Stimulants increase heart rate, body temperature and blood pressure. Stimulants can “over-stimulate” the user, causing anxiety, panic, seizures, headaches, stomach cramps, aggression and paranoia.

Stimulants include:



amphetamines (eg. speed & meth)



cocaine



ecstasy

Hallucinogenic drugs

Hallucinogens distort the users perception of reality. Effects include dilation of pupils, loss of appetite, increased activity, excessive talking or laughing, jaw clenching, sweating, panic, paranoia and nausea.

Hallucinogens include:



ketamine



LSD



magic mushrooms



Illicit drug use affects your health and can lead to:

- Nasal damage
- Paranoia, Agitation, Hallucinations
- Impaired memory and attention

- Violent or erratic behaviour
- Eating and sleeping disorders
- Ongoing respiratory problems
 - Teeth and jaw problems

- Cardiac arrest
- Stroke

- Seizures
- High risk of dependence (addiction)

- Overdose and Death

- HIV and hepatitis infections through needle sharing

- Convulsions
- Kidney failure

- Impaired sexual performance



EVERYONE WHO TAKES ILLICIT DRUGS HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BECOME ADDICTED.

**SUPPORT
IS ALWAYS
AT HAND**

ILLICIT DRUGS

What to do if someone you know is using drugs?

- » Ensure your own safety first
 - » Express your concern and ask them why they are taking drugs
 - » Talk about some of the side effects and risks of the particular drug or drugs they are taking
 - » Find out if they were pressured to take drugs and how they can handle a similar situation in the future
 - » Discuss the dangers of experimenting with drugs
 - » Explore reasons why they are taking drugs
 - » Find out if they are having problems in other areas of their lives
 - » Talk about less risky and healthier ways of feeling good
- » Let them know that they don't need drugs to feel confident
 - » Provide them with some services with staff who are trained to help¹.



If you or someone you
know has taken drugs
and starts to feel unwell

**CALL AN AMBULANCE
IMMEDIATELY!**



FOR MORE INFORMATION

National Drugs Campaign

Information about the
campaign and support
services in each
State/Territory.

1800 250 015 (freecall)

www.australia.gov.au/drugs

Australian Drug Foundation

Information on drugs;
including latest research,
fact sheets and
government policy.

www.adf.org.au

