Drugs are essentially poisons. The amount taken determines the effect.

A small amount acts as a stimulant (speeds you up). A greater amount acts as a sedative (slows you down). An even larger amount poisons and can kill.

This is true of any drug. Only the amount needed to achieve the effect differs.

But many drugs have another liability: they directly affect the mind. They can distort the user’s perception of what is happening around him or her. As a result, the person’s actions may be odd, irrational, inappropriate and even destructive.

Drugs block off all sensations, the desirable ones with the unwanted. So, while providing short-term help in the relief of pain, they also wipe out ability and alertness and muddy one’s thinking.

Medicines are drugs that are intended to speed up or slow down or change something about the way your body is working, to try to make it work better. Sometimes they are necessary. But they are still drugs: they act as stimulants or sedatives, and too much can kill you. So if you do not use medicines as they are supposed to be used, they can be as dangerous as illegal drugs.

The real answer is to get the facts and not to take drugs in the first place.

WHY DO PEOPLE TAKE DRUGS?

People take drugs because they want to change something in their lives.

Here are some of the reasons young people have given for taking drugs:

* To fit in
* To escape or relax
* To relieve boredom
* To seem grown up
* To rebel
* To experiment

They think drugs are a solution. But eventually, the drugs become the problem.

Difficult as it may be to face one’s problems, the consequences of drug use are always worse than the problem one is trying to solve with them. The real answer is to get the facts and not to take drugs in the first place.

Marijuana

Marijuana is usually rolled up in a cigarette called a joint or a nail. It can also be brewed as a tea or mixed with food, or smoked through a water pipe called a bong.

Marijuana is often more potent today than it used to be. Growing techniques and selective use of seeds have produced a more powerful drug. As a result, there has been a sharp increase in the number of marijuana-related emergency room visits by young pot smokers.

Because a tolerance builds up, marijuana can lead users to consume stronger drugs to achieve the same high. When the effects start to wear off, the person may turn to more potent drugs to rid himself of the unwanted conditions that prompted him to take marijuana in the first place. Marijuana itself does not lead the person to the other drugs: people take drugs to get rid of unwanted situations or feelings. The drug (marijuana) masks the problem for a time (while the user is high). When the “high” fades, the problem, unwanted condition or situation returns more intensely than before. The user may then turn to stronger drugs since marijuana no longer “works.”

### SHORT-TERM EFFECTS:

Loss of coordination and distortions in the sense of time, vision and hearing, sleepiness, reddening of the eyes, increased appetite and relaxed muscles. Heart rate can speed up. In fact, in the first hour of smoking marijuana, a user’s risk of a heart attack could increase fivefold. School performance is reduced through impaired memory and lessened ability to solve problems.

### LONG-TERM EFFECTS:

Long-term use can cause psychotic symptoms. It can also damage the lungs and the heart, worsen the symptoms of bronchitis and cause coughing and wheezing. It may reduce the body’s ability to fight lung infections and illness.

## STREET NAMES

**MARIJUANA:**

Astro turf

Bhang

Blunt

Boom

Chronic

Dagga

Dope

Gangster

Ganja

Grass

Hemp

Herb

Home grown

J

Kiff

Mary Jane

Nederweed

Pot

Purple Haze

Reefer

Roach

Smoke

Skunk

Super Skunk

Texas tea

Weed

White

Widow

**HASHISH:**

Chocolate

Hash

Shit

## ALCOHOL

Alcohol depresses your central nervous system (brain and spinal cord), lowers inhibitions[**1**](http://www.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/drugs/alcohol.html#footnote1_c12aeuy) and impairs judgment. Drinking large amounts can lead to a coma and even death. Mixing alcohol with medications or street drugs is extremely dangerous and can be fatal. Alcohol influences your brain and leads to a loss of coordination, slowed reflexes, distorted vision, memory lapses and blackouts. Teenage bodies are still growing and alcohol has a greater impact on young people’s physical and mental well-being than on older people.

### SHORT-TERM EFFECTS:

Feeling of warmth, flushed skin, impaired judgment, lack of coordination, slurred speech, memory and comprehension loss. Heavy drinking usually results in a “hangover,” headache, nausea, anxiety, weakness, shakiness and sometimes vomiting.

LONG-TERM EFFECTS:

Tolerance to many of the unpleasant effects of alcohol and a resulting ability to drink more. This leads to a deteriorating physical condition that can include liver damage and increases the risk of heart disease. A pregnant woman may give birth to a baby with defects that affect the baby’s heart, brain and other major organs. A person can become dependent on alcohol. If someone suddenly stops drinking, withdrawal symptoms may set in. They range from jumpiness, sleeplessness, sweating and poor appetite to convulsions and sometimes death. Alcohol abuse can also lead to violence and conflicts in one’s personal relationships.

## SYNTHETIC DRUGS

Synthetic drugs are created using man-made chemicals. A class of synthetic drugs known as “designer drugs” include synthetic marijuana (“Spice” or “K2”), synthetic stimulants (“Bath Salts”) and “N-bomb”. These are chemically made versions of illegal drugs that have been slightly altered to avoid classification as illegal, allowing dealers to make profits on the Internet or in stores without technically breaking the law. When a designer drug becomes illegal, the chemist alters it again. This repeats over and over. Because the chemicals used constantly change, users have no way of knowing the content and effects.

### SHORT‑TERM EFFECTS:

Hallucinations and delusions, confusion and disorientation, psychosis, suicidal thoughts or suicide, extreme agitation and anxiety, panic attacks, depression, insomnia, violent behavior, unresponsiveness, loss of consciousness. Headaches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, heavy sweating, high fever, kidney malfunction, heart attack, bleeding in the brain.

### LONG‑TERM EFFECTS:

Long-term permanent effects can include kidney damage and failure, liver damage, seizures, brain swelling and brain death, tremors, extreme tiredness, insomnia, forgetfulness and confusion, paralysis, persistent and severe anxiety and depression, breakdown of skeletal muscle tissue, death.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| STREET NAMES | | | |
| * K2 * Smiles * Spice * Bath salts | * Blizzard * N-bomb * Fake weed * Black Mamba |  |  |

## ECSTASY

Ecstasy is usually taken orally in pill, tablet or capsule form. Taking more than one at a time is called “bumping.”

Ecstasy is a synthetic (man-made) drug made in a laboratory. Makers may add anything they choose to the drug, such as caffeine, amphetamine[**1**](http://www.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/drugs/ecstasy.html#footnote1_5e84j4m) and even cocaine. Ecstasy is illegal and has effects similar to hallucinogens and stimulants. The pills are of different colors and are sometimes marked with cartoon-like images. Mixing Ecstasy with alcohol is extremely dangerous and can be lethal.

The stimulative effects of drugs such as Ecstasy enable the user to dance for long periods, and when combined with the hot, crowded conditions found at raves, can lead to extreme dehydration and heart or kidney failure.

### SHORT-TERM EFFECTS:

Faintness, chills or sweating, muscle tension, impaired judgment, depression, blurred vision, sleep problems, false sense of affection, nausea, severe anxiety, drug craving, involuntary teeth clenching, confusion, paranoia.[**2**](http://www.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/drugs/ecstasy.html#footnote2_0illzoj)

### LONG-TERM EFFECTS:

Prolonged use causes long-lasting and perhaps permanent damage to the brain, affecting the person’s judgment and thinking ability.

## STREET NAMES

**ECSTASY**

Adam

Cadillac

Beans

California Sunrise

Clarity

E

Essence

Elephants

Eve

Hug

Hug Drug

Love Drug

Love pill

Lover’s speed

Roll

Scooby snacks

Snowball

X

XE

XTC

## COCAINE & CRACK COCAINE

Cocaine and crack cocaine can be taken orally, through the nose (snorted), injected with a syringe or, in the case of crack, through inhalation of the fumes from heating it.

The terms used to describe ingestion include chewing, snorting, mainlining (injecting into a large vein) and smoking.

The word *cocaine* refers to the drug in a powder form (cocaine) and a crystal form (crack). It is made from the coca plant and, next to methamphetamine,[**1**](http://www.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/drugs/cocaine-crack-cocaine.html#footnote1_gscclj2) creates the greatest psychological dependence of any drug.

### SHORT-TERM EFFECTS:

Cocaine causes a short-lived intense high that is immediately followed by the opposite—intense feelings of depression and edginess and a craving for more of the drug. People who use it often don’t eat or sleep properly. They can experience greatly increased heart rate, muscle spasms and convulsions. The drug can make people feel paranoid, angry, hostile and anxious, even when they aren’t high.

### LONG-TERM EFFECTS:

In addition to those effects already mentioned, cocaine can cause irritability, mood disturbances, restlessness, paranoia and auditory (hearing) hallucinations. Tolerance to the drug develops so that more is needed to produce the same “high.”

Coming down from the drug causes severe depression, which becomes deeper and deeper after each use. This can get so severe that a person will do almost anything to get the drug—even commit murder. And if he or she can’t get cocaine, the depression can get so intense it can drive the addict to suicide.

## STREET NAMES

**CRACK COCAINE**

24-7

Apple jacks

Badrock

Ball

Base

Beat

Candy

Chemical

Cloud

Cookies

Crack

Crumbs

Crunch & munch

Devil drug

Dice

Electric kool-aid

Fat bags

French fries

Glo

Gravel

Grit

Hail

Hard ball

Hard rock

Hotcakes

Ice cube

Jelly beans

Kryptonite

Nuggets

Paste

Piece

Prime time

Product

Raw

Rock(s)

Rock star

Rox/Roxanne

Scrabble

Sleet

Snow coke

Sugar block

Topo (Spanish)

Tornado

Troop

## CRYSTAL METH & METHAMPHETAMINE EFFECTS

Crystal meth and meth are inhaled, smoked or injected. Low doses are in pill form.

Crystal meth is a form of [**methamphetamine**](http://www.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/crystalmeth.html) that resembles small fragments of glass or shiny blue-white rocks. On the street, it is known as “ice,” “crystal,” “glass” and other names. It is a highly powerful and addictive man-made stimulant that causes aggression and violent or psychotic behavior. Many users report getting hooked (addicted) from the first time they use it. It is one of the hardest drugs to treat.

### SHORT-TERM EFFECTS:

Negative effects can include disturbed sleep patterns, hyperactivity, nausea, delusions of power, increased aggressiveness and irritability. Can cause decreased hunger and bring on weight loss. In higher doses has a greater “rush,” followed by increased agitation and sometimes violence. Other effects can include insomnia, confusion, hallucinations, anxiety and paranoia. Can cause convulsions leading to death.

### LONG-TERM EFFECTS:

Increased heart rate and blood pressure, damage to blood vessels in the brain, leading to strokes or irregular heart beat and cardiovascular (involving the heart and blood vessels) collapse or death. Can cause liver, kidney and lung damage. Users may suffer brain damage, including memory impairment and an increasing inability to grasp abstract thoughts. Those who recover are usually subject to memory gaps and extreme mood swings.

## STREET NAMES

**METH:**

Beannies

Brown

Chalk

Crank

Chicken feed

Cinnamon

Crink

Crypto

Fast

Getgo

Methlies Quik

Mexican crack

Pervitin (Czech Republic)

Redneck cocaine

Speed

Tick tick

Tweak

Wash

Yaba (Southeast Asia)

Yellow powder

**CRYSTAL METH:**

Batu

Blade

Cristy

Crystal

Crystal glass

Glass

Hot ice

Ice

Quartz

Shabu

Shards

Stove top

Tina

Ventana

## INHALANTS

Inhalants include chemicals found in such household products as aerosol sprays, cleaning fluids, glue, paint, paint thinner, nail polish remover, amyl nitrite[**1**](http://www.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/drugs/inhalants.html#footnote1_yi8096a) and lighter fuel. They are sniffed or “huffed” (act of inhaling vapors).

Inhalants affect the brain. When substances or fumes are inhaled through the nose or mouth, they can cause permanent physical and mental damage. They starve the body of oxygen and force the heart to beat irregularly and more rapidly. People who use inhalants can lose their sense of smell, suffer nausea and nosebleeds and may develop liver, lung and kidney problems. Continued use can lead to reduced muscle mass, tone and strength. Inhalants can make people unable to walk, talk and think normally. Much of the damage is caused to the brain tissue when the toxic fumes are sniffed straight into the sinus.[**2**](http://www.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/drugs/inhalants.html#footnote2_ay97bfa)

### SHORT-TERM EFFECTS:

In addition to the above, inhalants can kill a person by heart attack or suffocation as the inhaled fumes take the place of oxygen in the lungs and central nervous system. Someone on inhalants may also suddenly react with extreme violence.

LONG-TERM EFFECTS:

Can lead to muscle wasting and reduced muscle tone and strength. Can permanently damage the body and brain.

1. [**1.**](http://www.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/drugs/inhalants.html#footnoteref1_yi8096a) amyl nitrite: a pale yellow liquid used to open or widen blood vessels, sometimes abused as a stimulant.
2. [**2.**](http://www.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/drugs/inhalants.html#footnoteref2_ay97bfa) sinus: one of the open spaces in the front of the skull that a person breathes through with the nose.

## STREET NAMES

**INHALANTS:**

Air blast

Ames

Amys

Aroma of men

Bolt

Boppers

Bullet

Bullet bolt

Buzz bomb

Discorama

Hardware

Heart-on

Hiagra in a bottle

Highball

Hippie crack

Huff

Laughing gas

Locker room

Medusa

Moon gas

Oz

Pearls

Poor man’s pot

Poppers

Quicksilver

Rush Snappers

Satan’s secret

Shoot the breeze

Snappers

Snotballs

Spray

Texas shoe shine

Thrust

Toilet water

Toncho

Whippets

Whiteout

## HEROIN

Heroin is usually injected, snorted or smoked. It is highly addictive. Heroin enters the brain rapidly but makes people think and react slowly, impairing their decision-making ability. It causes difficulty in remembering things.

Injecting the drug can create a risk of AIDS, hepatitis (liver disease) and other diseases caused by infected needles. These health problems can be passed on to sexual partners and newborns. Heroin is one of the three drugs most frequently involved in drug abuse deaths. Violence and crime are linked to its use.

### SHORT-TERM EFFECTS:

Abusers experience clouded mental functioning, nausea and vomiting. Awareness of pain may be suppressed. Pregnant women can suffer spontaneous abortion. Cardiac (heart) functions slow down and breathing is severely slowed, sometimes to the point of death.

### LONG-TERM EFFECTS:

Scarred and/or collapsed veins, bacterial infections of the blood vessels, heart valves, abscesses and other soft-tissue infections, and liver or kidney disease. Lung complications may result. Sharing of needles or fluids may result in hepatitis, AIDS and other blood-borne virus diseases.

## STREET NAMES

**HEROIN:**

Big H

Brown Sugar

H

Hell Dust

Horse

Junk

Nose Drops

Skag

Smack

Thunder

## LSD

LSD is sold in tablets, capsules or in liquid form. It is commonly added to absorbent paper and divided into small decorated squares. Each square is a dose.

LSD is still one of the most potent mood-changing chemicals and is derived from the extremely poisonous ergot fungus, a mold which grows on rye and other grains. Its effects are unpredictable. A tiny amount can produce 12 hours or more of effects.

### SHORT-TERM EFFECTS:

Dilated pupils, higher body temperature, increased heart rate and blood pressure, sweating, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, dry mouth and tremors. People can experience severe, terrifying thoughts and feelings, fear of losing control, fear of insanity and death and feelings of despair while using LSD.

### LONG-TERM EFFECTS:

Flashbacks, or recurrences, of an LSD “trip” can be experienced long after the drug is taken and its effect has apparently worn off. The “trip” itself usually begins to clear up after about 12 hours, but some users manifest long-lasting psychoses.

## TREET NAMES

**LSD**

Acid

Battery acid

Blotter

Boomers

California Sunshine

Cid

Doses

Dots

Golden Dragon

Heavenly Blue

Hippie

Loony toons

Lucy in the sky with diamonds

Microdot

Pane

Purple Heart

Superman

Tab

Window pane

Yellow sunshine

Zen