

LIFELINE PUBLICATIONS PRESENT

THE BIG BLUE BOOK OF DRUGS



WHO USES DRUGS?

A RUTHLESS PUSHER HANGS AROUND OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL GATES TRYING TO GET INNOCENT YOUNG CHILDREN HOOKED BY GIVING AWAY

FREE DRUGS

WANT SOME FREE DRUGS ?



If you believe this then you probably believe the Martians have invaded earth!

You will not be tied to a chair and forced to consume drugs. If you use drugs, regularly you will almost certainly pay for them and go to considerable lengths to get hold of them. Your decision to use or not to use will be influenced by what you know and feel, what your friends think and do, how much they cost and what you can get hold of.

You are growing up in a world full of drugs. If you want to know what a drug user looks like, take a look in that bathroom mirror. Nearly all of you will use alcohol.

Between **40%** and **60%** of you will have tried an illegal drug by your 16th birthday, depending on what part of the country you live in. The drug most of you will have tried is **cannabis**, nearly all of those that try it will get it from a friend.

Amphetamine, ecstasy, LSD, cocaine and solvents will also tempt many of you to experiment. Only a very small number of you will inject, use **heroin** or **crack**. The vast majority of you who do use, will only ever experiment with drugs and not go on to use for long periods. The vast majority of those who do go on to use regularly will come to no serious harm. However, some of you will become addicted to drugs; some of you will die from using drugs.

Drugs are used by people just like you, with all the strengths and weaknesses that make us human and unique. Most of you will know something about drugs; some of you will have already tried drugs; all of you will have an opinion on drugs. The aim of this book is to provide you with easy to understand information that is honest and accurate so that your opinion is based on reality.

UNDERSTANDING DRUGS

EVERY YEAR IN
BRITAIN UP TO
100,000 PEOPLE DIE FROM
SMOKING TOBACCO.

ABOUT 40,000
DIE FROM USING ALCOHOL.

ABOUT 2,000
PEOPLE DIE AS A RESULT OF
ALL THE ILLEGAL DRUGS
PUT TOGETHER.

Alcohol is an addictive drug that can kill you if you take too much of it in one go, even the first time you use it. But imagine someone offering you your first drink of alcohol and you refuse by saying:

"No thanks I don't want to die an alcoholic!"

This kind of reply would probably result in howls of laughter all around. Even so, many more people have problems with, and die from, alcohol than all the illegal drugs put together. Death and alcoholism is not most people's experience of alcohol and in exactly the same way, death and addiction is not what happens to most people who use illegal drugs. Both the effects and risk involved in using drugs depend on a number of things:

THE DRUG: what drug it is; how pure/strong it is; how often it's used; how it is taken (is it swallowed, smoked or injected).

YOU: your sex; weight; your genes; mood; personality; your past drug experience etc.

WHERE YOU ARE: with friends in a club; driving a car; on your own; about to go in to see your head teacher etc.

Using drugs, like climbing mountains, involves some risk. Different drugs have different effects and therefore have different risks. Risk is not just about your health, but your relationship with your friends and family, your career prospects and goals you set for your life.



CANNABIS



DRAW, BLOW, POT, BLACK, WEED, PUFF, SENSE, MOROCCAN HASH, GRASS, MARIJUANA, SKUNK, WACKY BACKY ETC

WHAT IS IT?

Cannabis comes from a family of plants known as hemp and is grown all over the world. Cannabis is by far the most widely used illegal drug in Britain. It is estimated that about four in ten young people have tried it by the age of 16 and many of those will become regular users. Cannabis is available in **resin** form- looking like a piece of liquorice, rubber or brown slate. Or in **herbal** form – looking like mixed herbs but often with seeds and stalks in.



SKUNK AND RESIN FORMS OF CANNABIS

Some herbal forms are very strong indeed. They look like lumps of grass stuck together. These are flower 'buds', the strongest part of the cannabis plant. '**Skunk**', so called because of its strong smell, is a very potent type of herbal cannabis made up of buds only. **Cannabis oil** is a thick, sticky tar like liquid. It is rarely seen today. Cannabis is mainly smoked but it is also eaten (on its own or baked in '**space cakes**') or brewed into a tea.

When cannabis is eaten it takes longer to start working. But once it starts it lasts for hours and can be very strong indeed. Cannabis is usually smoked by mixing it with tobacco and rolling it into a cigarette. The cigarettes are called '**joints**', '**draws**' or '**spliffs**'. It can also be smoked in a variety of pipes and contraptions like '**bongs**', which are either home made or bought from a shop. Bongs can cause a large amount of the drug to be inhaled in one go, which can be a bit overwhelming.

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

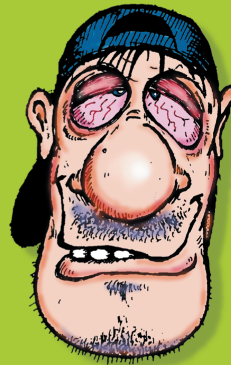
The effects depend on how strong it is and how much is smoked. Very strong cannabis can have similar effects to LSD. Taking a couple of puffs of low strength cannabis may make you feel relaxed and mellow. The effects start a few minutes, after smoking. It is a bit like being drunk, but the effects tend to be very dreamy, mellow and relaxing. The effects usually peak after about half an hour and gradually wear off over the next hour or so. Things all seem a bit strange and different, but the effects are fairly handleable. The effect of cannabis can be quite subtle at first; many first time users feel as though the drug has had no effect on them as they giggle at the wallpaper.



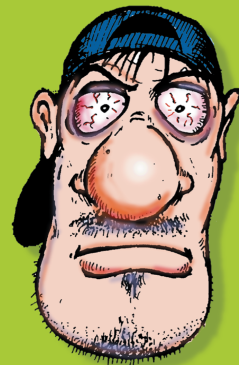
Smoking a standard dose of average quality cannabis.



Onset of Effects
Between one and ten minutes (up to an hour if eaten)



Peak Effects
Occur between 15 minutes and 1 hour



Residual Effects
Experienced for another 2 hours. After effects experienced for up to 24 hours



Other effects include: **THE MUNCHIES** – a mad craving for food like chocolate; **PARANOIA** – thinking that people are out to get you, watching you or bugging you; **THE GIGGLES** – giggling and laughing a lot at silly things or talking nonsense; feeling sick or **VOMITING**; and ‘whities’ (feeling dizzy).

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

You will not die from an overdose of cannabis. **The lethal dose is a 2 kilo block, dropped on your head from the 25th floor of a high rise building.** Cannabis doesn't cause brain damage. Cannabis can trigger off episodes of mental illness in people with a history of these illnesses, and people who smoke cannabis are more likely to experience mental illness, although there is no convincing evidence that cannabis actually **causes** this (it may be that cannabis is used to cope with the symptoms of mental illness). Some users experience panic attacks, anxiety and paranoia are fairly common. However these are temporary and only last whilst intoxicated. Cannabis can very rarely cause ‘**acute intoxication**’ where people become mentally confused. However, this usually happens when cannabis is eaten and usually in people with underlying mental disorders. In any case the effect is temporary disappearing within a few days to a few weeks with or without medical assistance.

Cannabis does affect **short term** (and long term) **memory**, but this effect is only temporary and only lasts whilst intoxicated. So it's not a good idea to read a text book when stoned on cannabis as you'll probably forget what you've read... probably forget what you've read.

There have been twenty five years of research attempts to find an ‘**amotivational syndrome**’ (the drug makes you lazy and unmotivated), nothing has been found. Having said that, cannabis is very popular with lazy and unmotivated people. If you spend too much of your time smoking cannabis you may end up doing little else.

Cannabis does not lead to the use of other drugs any more so than tobacco use does.

Smoking anything for a long enough period is harmful to the lungs. Cannabis smoke does contain some irritants and carcinogens and may cause cancer (although there is no

evidence) **smoking cannabis can cause lung disease**, though the tobacco commonly put into joints is probably more harmful and most people do not tend to smoke 20 joints of cannabis a day.

Cannabis is not addictive like alcohol or heroin, but it can become a habit and some people find it hard to stop using. They might feel anxious, or have trouble sleeping. It is unclear whether this is actually related to the drug or to the person, but it tends to be people who smoke a lot who experience more problems giving up. Although cannabis is relatively cheap, young people with little money who want to use cannabis regularly can end up in trouble.

Although in relation to other drugs the physical health risks from using cannabis are relatively minor, this does not mean it is harmless. Cannabis is still **illegal** and socially disapproved of. Cannabis use can lead to problems with parents, friends and relatives.

Having a **criminal record** for ‘drugs’ can close all kinds of doors in education and employment; from applying for a job to getting a mortgage it is likely that you will be asked questions about your criminal record or drug use. Whilst many of these things may not seem important now, they certainly will be as you get older.



LSD

ACID/TRIPS

The LSD story begins just before five on the afternoon of Monday, April 19th 1943. At 4.40 pm Albert Hoffman (A Swiss research chemist) took 250 millionths of a gram of LSD in a glass of water.



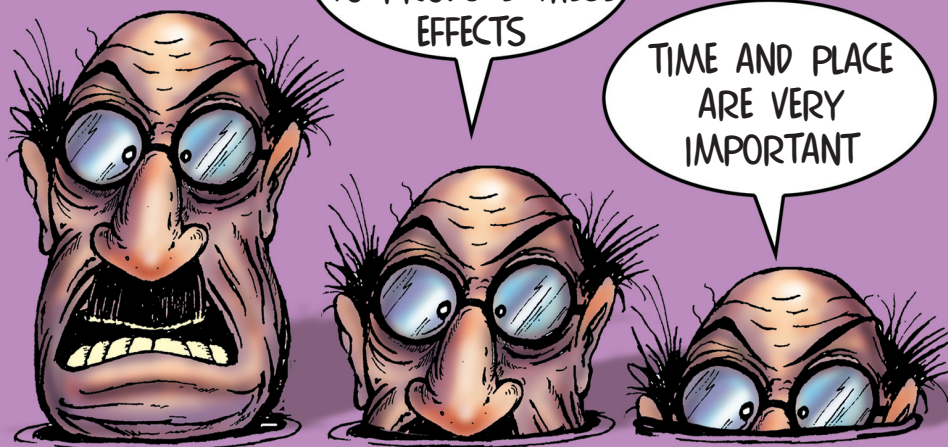
He thought this would be a very small dose. By five o'clock he knew he was **WRONG!** He got dizzy. Ordinary objects changed their shape or colour or smelt different. Albert got on his bicycle to pedal home; instead he pedalled into 12 hours of hell. The man who had discovered LSD was on a '**mad one!**'

IT HAS
EXTRAORDINARILY
POWERFUL EFFECTS

ONLY TINY
DOSES ARE NEEDED
TO PRODUCE THESE
EFFECTS

ONCE **ALBERT** CAME
ROUND THE WORLD KNEW
THREE THINGS
ABOUT **LSD**:

TIME AND PLACE
ARE VERY
IMPORTANT



LSD is called 'acid' or 'trips'. A trip can be in doses as small as 35 micrograms, which when you think that a microgram is one millionth of a gram and there are 28 grams in an ounce isn't much. A postage stamp weighs about 60,000 micrograms!



Most LSD in Britain these days is produced on small squares of paper or card; there are hundreds of different designs. The way that LSD trips on paper are made isn't an exact science. The LSD content has varied from as low as 35 micrograms to over 400 micrograms.

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

You never know until it's too late how strong the tab of acid will be. The effects of a standard dose (100-250mcg) usually last about 6 to 12 hours. The range of visual distortions runs from a heightened sense of colour to much more suggestive and sometimes frightening changes in the way everyday objects and people appear and sound.

Your **'trip'** can be an eye opening experience that can be both fascinating and funny. In some cases you can be transported to a complete 'other' world, though real hallucinations (seeing imaginary things) are rare. If your trip goes wrong, you don't like it or you get frightened, the problem is, **there is no easy way of switching it off**. You could be stuck in a nightmare world for hours. For advice on what to do in this situation see the section **Looking After Your Mates**. In short the world could be a heaven or Albert's hell.

Communicating with someone who isn't on LSD when you are, can be extremely difficult. You hear of users being thrown into a blind panic just by trying to order a drink at a bar. This is why the way you feel at the time you take it, where you are and who you are with are so important. For example, **it's one thing to be 'tripping' with your friends but something completely different if you have to go home and see your parents.**

The physical side effects of LSD aren't that great - it's not a poison like alcohol. The most serious physical injuries come about as a result of users having accidents while under the influence, although some do get sick and have stomachaches. LSD really is a drug of the MIND. Because it's illegal, you can't know the exact quantity that each trip contains. There is always an element of doubt. Also some people may not know that they are prone to mental illness until they use it. If you think you are, or you know you are, you should stay well away from LSD.

'Spiking' - giving someone LSD without their knowledge is very dangerous and illegal.

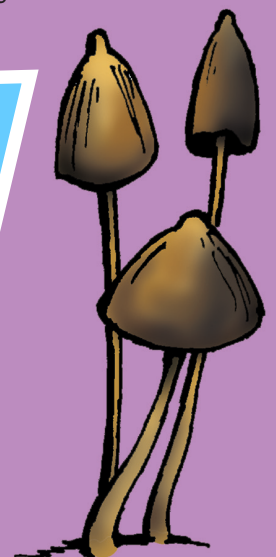
Not only is LSD the most powerful illegal drug it is also one of the cheapest. (£2-£5) The price of LSD also means that the age at which people start using is getting younger. Some users may be living at home with their parents and this can lead to problems. Trying to talk to parents and family on LSD is almost impossible and parents can easily think that their child has gone mad.



MAGIC MUSHROOMS

'MAGIC MUSHROOMS' contain drugs called 'psilocin' and 'psilocybin'.

The Liberty Cap mushroom (shown opposite) grows wild in many parts of the country. The effect depends on the amount taken and the freshness of the mushroom, but is similar to an LSD trip, though only half as long. Picking the wrong mushroom can be dangerous as some similar looking ones are poisonous. Any mushroom that contains psilocin or psilocybin is a class A drug.



SNIFFING

GASES, AEROSOLS, SOLVENTS ETC

Sniffing is not like smoking cannabis or dropping acid, it kills a significant number of those who use it. Sniffing solvents accounts for 1 in 100 of all deaths (from any cause) of young people aged between 15 and 19



WHAT IS IT?

Twenty years ago it was known as '**Glue Sniffing**', because young people were sniffing glue. In response to this, the law was changed, so that it became difficult for young people to buy certain glues from shops. This well-meaning change in the law led to young people changing the substances they sniffed to a wide range of household products, which were even more dangerous: **lighter fuel, aerosols, petrol, nail varnish, correction fluid, felt tip pens**; the list is endless. For this reason it is now known as

VOLATILE SUBSTANCE ABUSE
VSA FOR SHORT.

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

Sniffing involves either squirting gases directly into the mouth or inhaling the vapours through a cloth into the mouth or inhaling the vapours from a bag placed over the mouth. Occasionally a bag is placed over the whole of the head. This practice is likely to cause suffocation, but is thankfully rarer these days.

Unlike some drugs that can take a while before the effects are appreciated, most people who sniff feel the effect straight away. The effect of sniffing is a bit like being drunk. The effect varies depending on the type of chemical sniffed, but usually lasts for about ten minutes with one dose, building up as more is taken. In some cases with higher doses the effect is a bit like a 'trippy' feeling, with distortions in the way people see and hear things. Sometimes there can be hallucinations that many say are more controllable than with LSD.



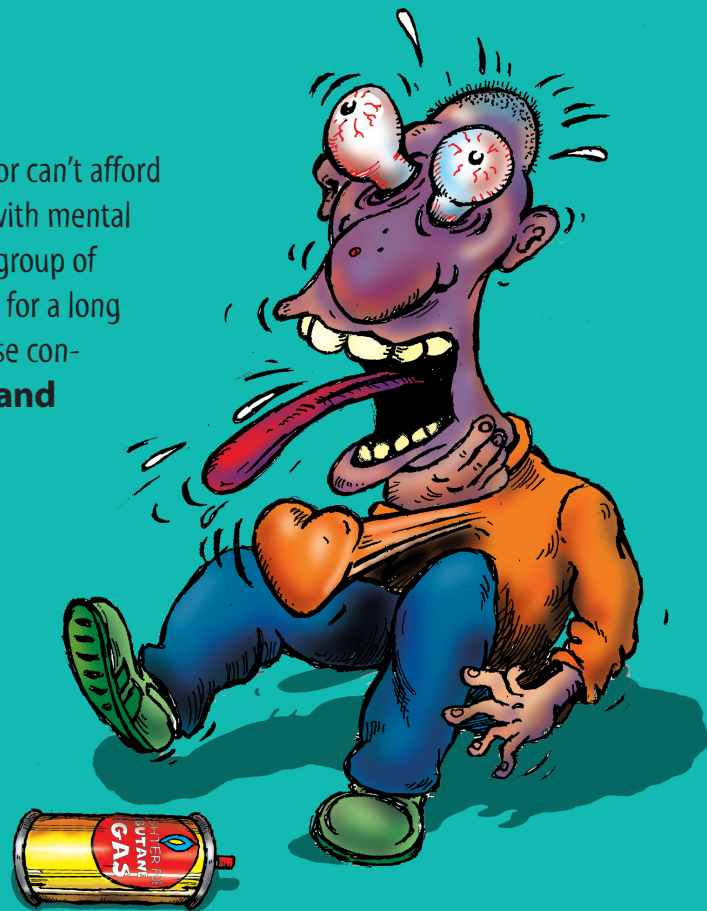
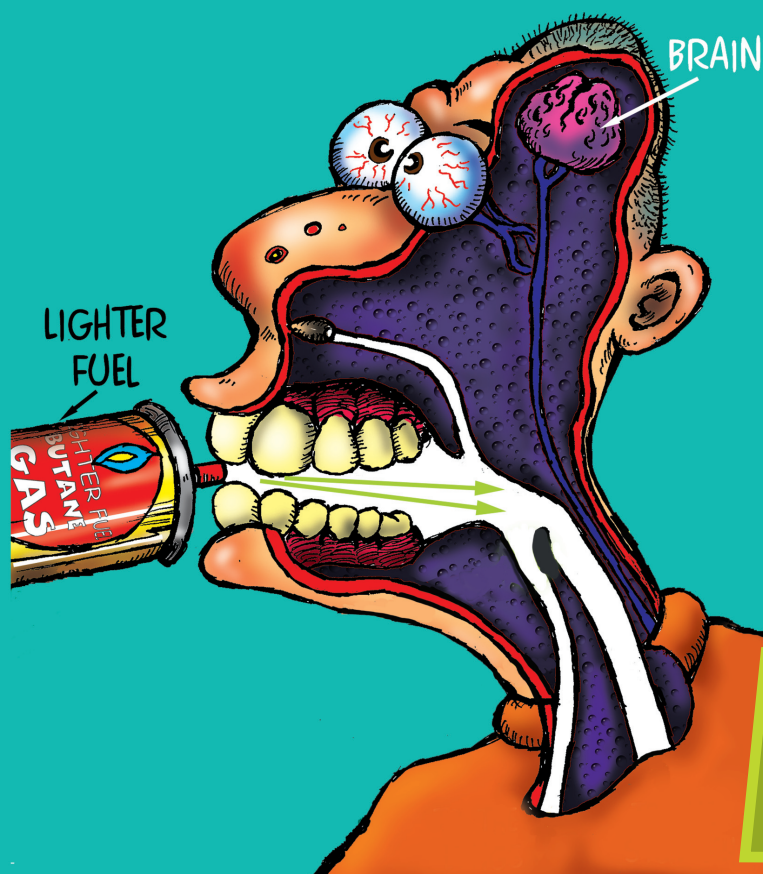
WHO USES IT?

One group of users is young people who either like the effect or can't afford or get hold of other drugs. Some young people sniff to cope with mental health and behavioural problems. Surprisingly, there is also a group of much older people, in their 20's and 30's who have been using for a long time. Most of the people in this group become isolated and lose contact with friends as **sniffing is seen as being 'seedy' and 'un-cool' even by other drug users.**

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

All drugs carry some risk, but that risk needs to be put into perspective. One of the problems of lumping all drugs together and over-exaggerating the risk is when something is really dangerous, young people don't believe it. Well believe this, sniffing is not like smoking cannabis or dropping acid, it kills a significant number of those who do it. Sniffing solvents accounts for 1 in 100 of all deaths (from any cause) of young people aged between 15 and 19. The actual number of deaths varies from 50 to 80 a year. **Sniffing kills!**

Sniffing gas lighter fuel now accounts for over half the total of teenage deaths from sniffing.



Heart failure can happen the first or 500th time somebody sniffs.

The most popular substance sniffed or 'tooted' in the 1990s was gas lighter fuel. This was also the most dangerous and accounted for half of all the deaths. Squinting lighter fuel directly into the mouth is no longer thought to kill by freezing the muscles in the windpipe - it is now thought that lighter fuel causes death from heart failure*. The sale of lighter fuel refills to under 18's was banned in 1999.

Another common cause of death is choking on your own vomit, (see the section on looking after your mates). That is why **sniffing on your own is more dangerous than sniffing in a group** as there is nobody to look after you.

Being 'drunk' from sniffing affects both your judgement (climbing on that roof seems like a really good idea) and your 'motorskills' (your ability to walk properly etc.). This is both part of the attraction and part of the risk.

*Sudden sniffing deaths are now thought to be caused by the effect of the substance and partly by the release of adrenalin when the sniffer is excited or panicky. It is therefore important not to cause fear or panic in someone who is intoxicated.

GETTING CAUGHT



THAT EMIR!
WHAT A
"✂️❄️❄️❄️"



Throughout history laws and rules about the use of drugs have changed. In the Middle East in the 14th century, the Emir Soudon Sheikhounei imprisoned users of cannabis and had his guards pull out the offender's teeth. This punishment had little effect on local use, which continues to this day.

GETTING CAUGHT BY THE POLICE

Despite the commonly held view that the 1960's were a time when everybody was stoned out of their heads, the number of people dealt with for drugs offences has gone from just over **3,000** in 1967 to nearly **122,000** in 1998 (the peak year) falling to about 82,000 by 2004. The vast majority of cases involve the possession of cannabis - which was reclassified from a class B to class C drug in 2004. Since the reclassification of cannabis arrests and convictions have fallen significantly.

The law uses three classes when deciding on punishment. Class A is the most serious and so on.

CLASS A DRUGS INCLUDE:

HEROIN, ECSTASY, COCAINE/CRACK, LSD
METHAMPHETAMINE & SOME MUSHROOMS

CLASS B DRUGS INCLUDE:

MOST STIMULANT AMPHETAMINES, CANNABIS.

CLASS C DRUGS INCLUDE:

SOME SLEEPING PILLS,
STEROIDS & SUBUTEX, GHB, KETAMINE

Any Class B drug prepared for injection counts as Class A.
Cannabis moved back to class B in 2009.

A lot of minor drug arrests come about when someone is searched in connection with something else and they happen to have drugs on them when they are stopped.

POSSESSION

Most drug offences involve simple '**possession**'. This is where the police find a small amount of a drug in your coat, pocket, bag, car, house etc. and the police accept that the drugs are for your own personal use.

SUPPLY

If the police can prove you were going to sell or give the drugs to someone else or they think you '**intended**' to do this, then you could be charged with '**supply**' or '**possession with intent to supply**'. These are very serious offences and often mean **prison**.

Whether or not the charge is simple possession or intent to supply will depend on how much the person is caught with (quantity) and/or the style of packaging, whether any dealing materials are found (eg. scales, bags, wads of money); and, in particular, what you say to the police officers involved. It would be hard to argue that 10 kilos of cannabis was for your own personal use. If you were caught with a few grams of cannabis in one single block you might be charged with simple possession. If the same amount was chopped up into 30 small pieces wrapped in cling film the charge could well be intent to supply.

IF YOU ARE UNDER 18

If the police arrest you and you're aged between 10 and 17 **your parents or guardians will be contacted**. Your parents or guardians have a right to be present the whole time you are questioned.

Once you have been arrested the police can do a number of things:

- * They may decide that you're innocent or they may decide to take no further action.
- * They may decide to issue a **reprimand**, which is a first warning. This will be kept on record in case there are any further offences.
- * They may issue a **final warning**, where the case is more serious or a reprimand has already been given. A final warning will mean that you are made to attend at a **Youth Offending Team** (usually for a period of up to 12 weeks). This is a team of professionals who will look at all aspects of your life and behaviour and decide what if any further action is taken. **Reprimands and final warnings are given only when the you admit the offence.**
- * They may decide to **charge** you with an offence. If the offence is more serious you can be held overnight (in local authority accommodation) until you appear before the court.

Under 18's may still be arrested for possession of cannabis from the first offence.

IF YOU ARE 18 OR OVER

In most circumstances adults aged 18 and over caught in possession of a small amount of cannabis will have the cannabis confiscated and be given a '**cannabis warning**' on the first offence, on second offence, they will be given a **Penalty Notice for Disorder** - an £80 spot fine (like a parking ticket). After the first two offences, they will be arrested, and either cautioned, or prosecuted in court. A caution still counts as a '**criminal record**' so if you appeared in court at another time the caution can be mentioned, but there are no embarrassing court appearances or fines. You can be cautioned more than once. But if you carry on getting caught you will go to court.

To get a warning or caution you must admit the offence. In practice this amounts to saying something like:

"These are my drugs but they are just for my personal use."

In some areas there may be an **Arrest Referral Scheme** in operation. You will be given the option, whilst in custody to see a worker from a **drug service**.

If you are **not** given a caution you will go to court and if found guilty of possession most probably face a fine. It is **unlikely** you will go to prison for a charge of 'simple possession'.

In all cases where you are arrested you have the right to say nothing and can be provided with a solicitor for free.



GETTING CAUGHT AT SCHOOL

Some people say that getting caught with drugs in school gets you in much more hassle than being caught by the police. If you can get sent home for having your hair or your skirt too short then you don't need to be a genius to figure out that they're really going to freak out about you using drugs. They're not just bothered about illegal drugs either – getting caught using **cigarettes, alcohol, solvents** or drugs in school can all land you in serious trouble.

Everything in school is treated much more seriously so it's easy to get accused of being a junky with a serious drug problem when it's all just a bit of fun. Like elsewhere, supply is treated more seriously than possession or use. So getting caught buying cannabis and selling it on to a few mates (or worse still people you hardly know) will almost always lead to **exclusion** from school, your parents being told and you being arrested by the police. Whilst a few weeks off school might seem attractive the reality of losing regular contact with your mates and everyone you know being told that you have a serious drug problem can soon get very, very annoying.

GETTING CAUGHT BY DEALERS

Drugs cost money. If you have none you may end up stealing or bullying to pay for them. Getting drugs '**on tick**' causes a lot of problems. If you don't pay back on time you may get hassle from people who will not think twice about turning up where you live demanding money from your parents/carers. You could even get beaten up for owing a small amount of money.

GETTING CAUGHT BY PARENTS

For many people this is the most serious of all. Many young people find that there is such a gulf in understanding between themselves and their parents, that even talking about drugs is a nightmare and getting caught is well... use your imagination. If you get caught (and remember parents search bedrooms and pockets and cannabis smoke stinks) don't expect them to understand or agree with you, but explain that you have thought about what you are doing and are aware of the risks. Don't keep on at them for money, steal from them or let your friends use your house for drug taking. If your drug use is a problem to you, **your parents can be your greatest allies and source of help.**

STIMULANT DRUGS

AMPHETAMINE ECSTASY COCAINE CRACK

Stimulant is a term used to describe a number of drugs that as the name suggests have a stimulating effect on the mind and body.

Cigarettes contain a stimulant drug (nicotine) as do tea, coffee and fizzy drinks (caffeine). But the drugs we are interested in are the illegal ones; **amphetamine, ecstasy, cocaine and crack**. Before dealing with the differences between these drugs, let's look at what they have in common.

EFFECTS

Stimulant drugs make you feel **wide awake**, raring to go and **more alert** to everything around you. You, your friends and strangers alike can seem fascinating and interesting. They enhance good feelings about yourself and give a feeling of **confidence and increased energy**. They **stop you feeling hungry and keep you awake**.

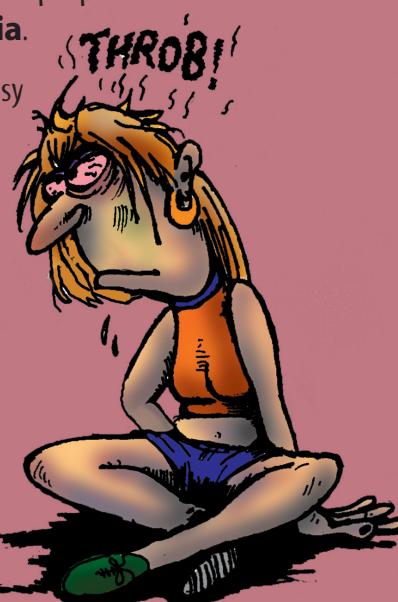
AFTER EFFECTS

Stimulants **don't** give you energy; they encourage you to use up all of the energy stored in your body. There really is no such thing as a **free 'buzz'**. The price you pay for feeling wide awake, happy, energetic and confident, is feeling **tired, depressed, exhausted, hungry and weak** the next morning or when the effects have worn off. Stimulant use often encourages heavy drinking, so you may also wake up with an almighty hangover on top of your speed come-down.

RISKS

Stimulants raise **blood pressure** and make your **heart beat faster**. With any stimulant there is a risk of a **heart failure**, particularly in people with heart conditions. Stimulants can disrupt eating patterns so that regular users **lose weight**. For some people this is an attraction in itself, but can often end up at extremes where people become ill. Stimulants can set off or make worse eating disorders like **bulimia** or **anorexia**.

In most cases the majority of young people who use stimulant drugs like amphetamine, ecstasy and cocaine, do so occasionally and do not experience major problems. Stimulants are often used together with **alcohol** and there can be an increase in **aggressive behaviour** and **violence**. If stimulants are used too often, serious problems can develop. Your thinking becomes confused and behaviour can alter. You can become paranoid thinking that people are talking about you, listening to you or bugging your phone or TV. Your friends often notice this more as you probably think you're fine. In most cases this is only temporary and a period of rest and staying off the drugs will see a return to normal. But in severe cases psychiatric treatment is needed.



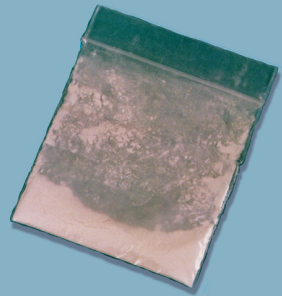
WHAT GOES UP...

...MUST COME DOWN

AMPHETAMINE

WHAT IS IT?

Amphetamine sulphate is usually known as **'whizz', 'speed' or 'sulph'**. It is a stimulant drug that among other things was given to soldiers in both World Wars to cope with tiredness and hunger. It is one of the most common of the illegal drugs available in Britain. It is made in illegal laboratories or by budding amateur pharmacists and sold on the illicit drug scene (pubs, clubs etc) usually as a powder. It is usually white though dyes or flavourings are sometimes added to make it seem more attractive. It is sometimes seen as a white paste (base), which can be about twice as strong as the standard sulphate powder. **Methamphetamine** is a more powerful stimulant, and comes in two forms: methamphetamine hydrochloride (crank) and Crystal methamphetamine (Ice).



PURITY

Most of the powder that's bought on the streets as amphetamine sulphate will contain less than **10%** of amphetamine sulphate, the rest being something else. A **'wrap'** of amphetamine will have been 'cut' (mixed with something else) once or twice times by the stage it is sold. The sorts of things it will be mixed with include **bicarbonate of soda, caffeine, glucose and paracetamol**.

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

It can be swallowed, sniffed or injected or in the case of 'ice' smoked. If it is swallowed it is usually mixed with a soft drink and known as **'whizzy water'** or wrapped in a cigarette paper and swallowed. If it is sniffed, a small amount is usually put onto a mirror and chopped with a razor blade to get rid of any lumps. Thin lines of it are then sniffed up a tube or rolled up bank note. The effect usually takes 10 to 20 minutes or so to start and can last for several hours.

The pupils of the eye become very large and it is quite common for users to **talk... and talk and talk**; quite often babbling about a range of seemingly unconnected nonsense. Using amphetamine makes you thirsty and keeps you awake, so it is not uncommon for users to drink far more alcohol than they would normally. You often feel as though you are not drunk, which can encourage you to drink more. This often leads to **'the mother of all hangovers'** the next morning, which added to all the effects of the amphetamine means you are not fit for work or school. This quite often leads people to use occasionally or at weekends, anything beyond this and problems quickly develop.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

A relatively small number of people who use amphetamine do use regularly, often on a daily basis. They often quite quickly deteriorate physically and mentally as described in the STIMULANT DRUG section. If the drug is injected or smoked the effects are more extreme as are all the side effects. Injecting amphetamine users run all the usual health risks of injecting plus they are injecting **the most impure of all the street drugs**.



ECSTASY

WHAT IS IT?



Ecstasy or '**E**'s real name is methylenedioxymethamphetamine or **MDMA** for short. It is a stimulant drug like amphetamine but works more on the mind. Ecstasy is often smuggled into the country from abroad. MDMA is usually seen as a pill or tablet often with designs printed on them, ranging from **Mitsubishis** to **Doves**. MDMA is sometimes sold as a powder. Ecstasy is much cheaper than it used to be. It is no longer a drug exclusively used at nightclubs. Sometimes pills are broken in half and consumed in a variety of different venues, often with alcohol. The average number of pills consumed in a session is 4 to 5.

Information about ecstasy is based on the assumption that a pill contains about **100mg of MDMA**. In reality your chances of finding a tablet like this are rare. Most of the pills contain lower doses of MDMA mixed with other drugs like amphetamine or caffeine; similar drugs to ecstasy such as **MDEA** or **MBDB**; completely different drugs like **ketamine** (see 'other drugs' section); or you've been ripped off and bought a tablet used to clean fish tanks; even a '**Smint**' has been bought as an 'E' (you won't 'go on one' but you'll have lovely fresh breath).

WHAT'S IT LIKE?



Real ecstasy starts to take effect somewhere between 20 and 60 minutes after taking it. The user feels a tingling all over the body. The mouth goes a bit dry and sometimes there is a stiffening in the arms, legs and jaw. Some people feel a bit sick. In most cases ecstasy can come on very quickly (**a rush**). Over the next four hours or so the user feels things much more intensely than normal-especially music and emotions of togetherness with other users., and increased energy.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Though taking a fake tablet unknowingly carries some risk, it is most likely that you will either get an unpleasant experience or none at all. By and large it is the **real ecstasy tablets that have caused the deaths**. There was a rise in the number of people who die after taking ecstasy around the turn of the century, but since then the annual number of deaths has been steady averaging about one a week. Most of the people found to have ecstasy in their blood stream when they die have taken other drugs such as heroin at the same time. As with other stimulants heart failure is a risk, but many of the deaths have been due to over-heating.

Ecstasy like other stimulants raises the body's temperature. If you then go and dance for long periods in hot night clubs the body's temperature gets to a point where you die from **heat stroke (or heat exhaustion)**. It is possible to avoid heat stroke, by taking a regular break from dancing (chilling out) and by sipping water, sports drinks or fruit juice at regular intervals. Compulsively drinking vast amounts of water has also killed several people so no more than about a pint an hour is recommended. Alcohol does not help; it makes it worse by dehydrating the body.

Another problem concerns the long-term effects of taking too much too often. Depression is common among long term users. There is no cast-iron evidence but long-term use may cause permanent brain damage. Ecstasy can damage the liver and can cause problems with memory. If you are going to use ecstasy it is safer to use small amounts on an occasional basis. The only way of avoiding all the problems is not taking the drug at all.



COCAINE

WHAT IS IT?

Charlie, coke etc. are all nicknames for **cocaine hydrochloride**. Cocaine is a drug no longer exclusively used by ageing rock stars. Since the turn of the century it has become the 2nd most popular drug in Britain (after cannabis). It is a white powder that is usually snorted like amphetamine, though it can be smoked or injected.



WHAT'S IT LIKE?

Pretending that cocaine is unpleasant is foolish; it is a very seductive drug. The effects of cocaine are similar to amphetamine but it is thought by many users to be a subtler, smoother more pleasurable high. The effect is of an overwhelming sense of well being and **confidence**. You get the **ego of a movie star**, the **front of a gangster** and feel capable of doing anything you want, like chatting up that person you have always fancied. You feel fantastic. Unfortunately the effects of cocaine don't last very long; a single dose lasts about **20 to 30 minutes** before it wears off. Pretty soon you have used all you bought and want more, usually until you run out of money. Although the price of cocaine has fallen, **even using it occasionally is very expensive and it is very easy to get into debt**.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Users of cocaine often try to repeat that **'first high'** but never quite get there. Heavy, regular users of cocaine find that there is little else in life that will now satisfy them. That is because cocaine uses up **dopamine** (a chemical in the brain that makes things you enjoy seem pleasurable). With a shortage of dopamine you can no longer appreciate even simple pleasures in life. Everything seems boring and meaningless.

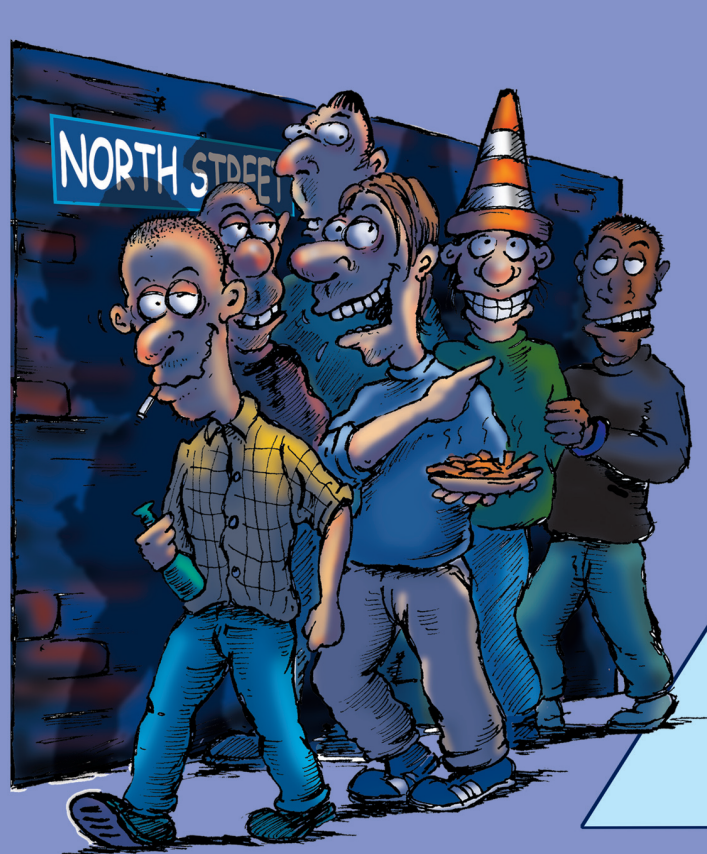
Cocaine also stimulates the part of your brain used to protect you from danger (**the fight or flight mechanism**). This is an ancient mechanism in your body that would have protected cave-men and women from being eaten by wild animals. Your body becomes hyper alert and ready to run or fight. Heavy, regular cocaine users find that this mechanism can be constantly activated (known as being **'wired'**). **You become mentally exhausted, paranoid and prone to violent outbursts**, particularly if drinking alcohol. Taking alcohol and cocaine together produces another, more toxic drug in the brain (cocaethylene).

Used occasionally cocaine carries the same health warnings as any other stimulants (like amphetamine). But cocaine is not like amphetamine in that you burn out so quickly physically; it is subtler and gives the impression that you can stay in control of it. Groups of cocaine users often find the social side of cocaine taking soon dries up. The chit chat and conversation soon goes as they focus on the lines going round in silence in case anybody gets any more than them. If ecstasy is a drug that is associated with a togetherness and appreciation of other people, cocaine is the opposite bringing out the **selfish side** of you.

CRACK ROCK, STONE

Cocaine can be prepared in a way so that it can be smoked: **crack is a form of smokable cocaine**. The effect of smoking cocaine is similar to an injection; it is far more intense than snorting powdered cocaine. The effect is also shorter, lasting for about **10 minutes**. All the warnings of using cocaine can be multiplied tenfold, plus the added bonus of crack smoke damaging the lungs. It is incredibly difficult to stay in control once you start smoking cocaine. Some crack users have started to inject heroin just to try to stabilise themselves. Crack is a sure-fire way of losing control of your life.





LOOKING AFTER YOUR MATES

Taking drugs on your own is more risky than taking them with your mates, because if anything goes wrong there's nobody to look after you.

DRUGGED & DISORDERLY

When you are drunk or stoned, it is difficult to pass by a traffic cone without sticking it on your head in the hope of amusing your mates. Acting like a prat is OK provided you are not harming yourself or other people, but things can go too far. If your mates are doing something dangerous or likely to get you or them into trouble, **stop them**. Don't let them drink or take any more drugs. Take them home or somewhere safe to sober up, before they go home to face their parents. **Never drive** when intoxicated or get into a car with someone who is.

SEX & DRUGS

Many drugs including alcohol lower your inhibitions and encourage you to behave in a way that you wouldn't when sober.



Drink and drugs are also often taken in settings where there is the strong possibility of social interaction (copping off). Apart from non-penetrative sex, the only way of avoiding pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases is to **carry and use condoms**. If your mate is sucking the fillings out of somebody, it is difficult to A: tell them that the person they are with really looks like a '**bulldog chewing a wasp**' and B: to stop them doing anything silly (but a real mate would try). Try to stay with them if they get invited back to a strange party or stranger's house. At the very least make sure they let you know where they are going.

ON A BAD ONE

Although true **hallucinations** are rare, distortions in the way you feel and see things are fairly common and can be very frightening. If your friend is experiencing scary effects, take them to a place that is quiet and safe (not a dance floor in a nightclub). Try to calm and reassure them. **This can take hours**, so be prepared to be patient or take it in shifts. If they become **panicky** and you notice them breathing very fast, get them to control their breathing by slowing it down or breathing into a paper bag for a short period.

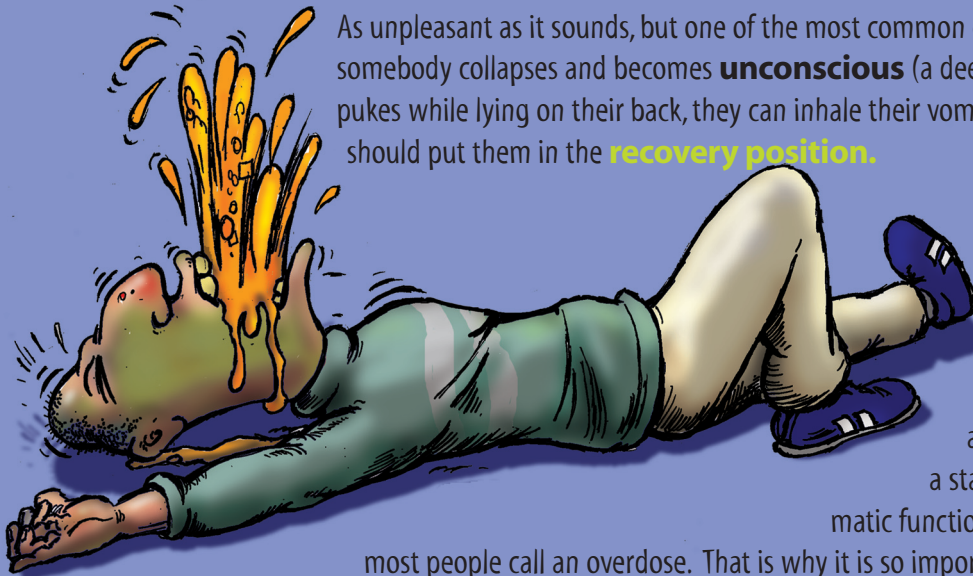
Paranoia is an irrational fear that something or someone is out to do you harm or monitor your behaviour e.g., "my phone is tapped", "the police are watching me". If a friend continues to experience paranoia when the effect of the drug has worn off, they may need to see a doctor or drug service. At the very least they need to lay off the drugs until the paranoia has gone.

CHUCKING UUUUUUUURP!

Vomiting down the toilet or 'Talking to God on the big white telephone' is an occupational hazard among drug users. Vomiting is usually nature's way of telling you you've had enough. If somebody is unwell, **don't** give them anything to eat and advise them to drink **water** only (never force them to drink anything). If after vomiting your mate wants to sleep, let them but keep your eye on them. Make sure they are lying on their side and breathing.

DROWNING IN VOMIT

As unpleasant as it sounds, but one of the most common causes of death from drink or drugs. If somebody collapses and becomes **unconscious** (a deep sleep they can't be woken from) and then pukes while lying on their back, they can inhale their vomit and literally drown in it. That is why you should put them in the **recovery position**.



most people call an overdose. That is why it is so important to ring for an **ambulance** if somebody is unconscious and you can't wake them.

THE RECOVERY POSITION

If your friend is unconscious put them in the **recovery position** – lying on their side with one knee out and their hands positioned as in the diagram. This is a position designed to stop them rolling on to their backs. If you know **first aid** stay with them and call for help, shout! If there is more than one of you get someone to call an ambulance while one of you stays with the unconscious person. When you call the ambulance you don't have to mention drugs, but tell them that the person is unconscious. When the ambulance arrives, it is important that you tell the ambulance crew what they have taken, as this information could save their life.

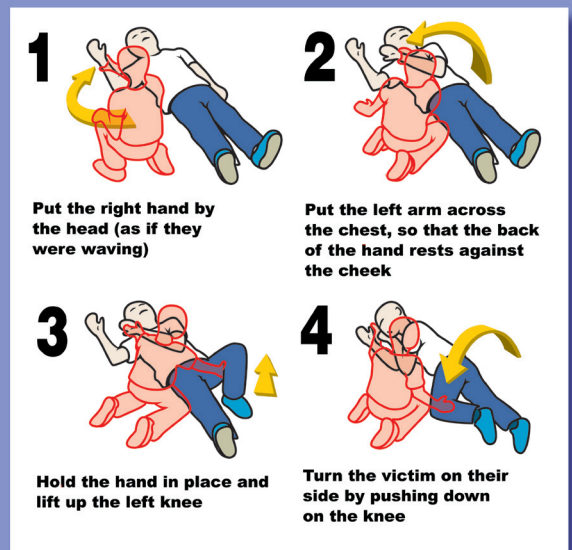
PHONING FOR HELP

When somebody is unconscious and you may well have taken drugs yourself, **panicking** is a natural reaction. There is a temptation to run off and leave them in case you get into trouble. **WRONG!** What if it were you lying there unconscious, what kind of mate would leave you there? It is best to talk this through with your mates before you use drugs; make some rules about what you would do in an emergency. It's a bit like a hit and run driver. Running somebody over is serious, but driving away and leaving the injured person gets you into far more trouble with the police, will be seen as cowardly by your friends and will haunt you for the rest of your life.

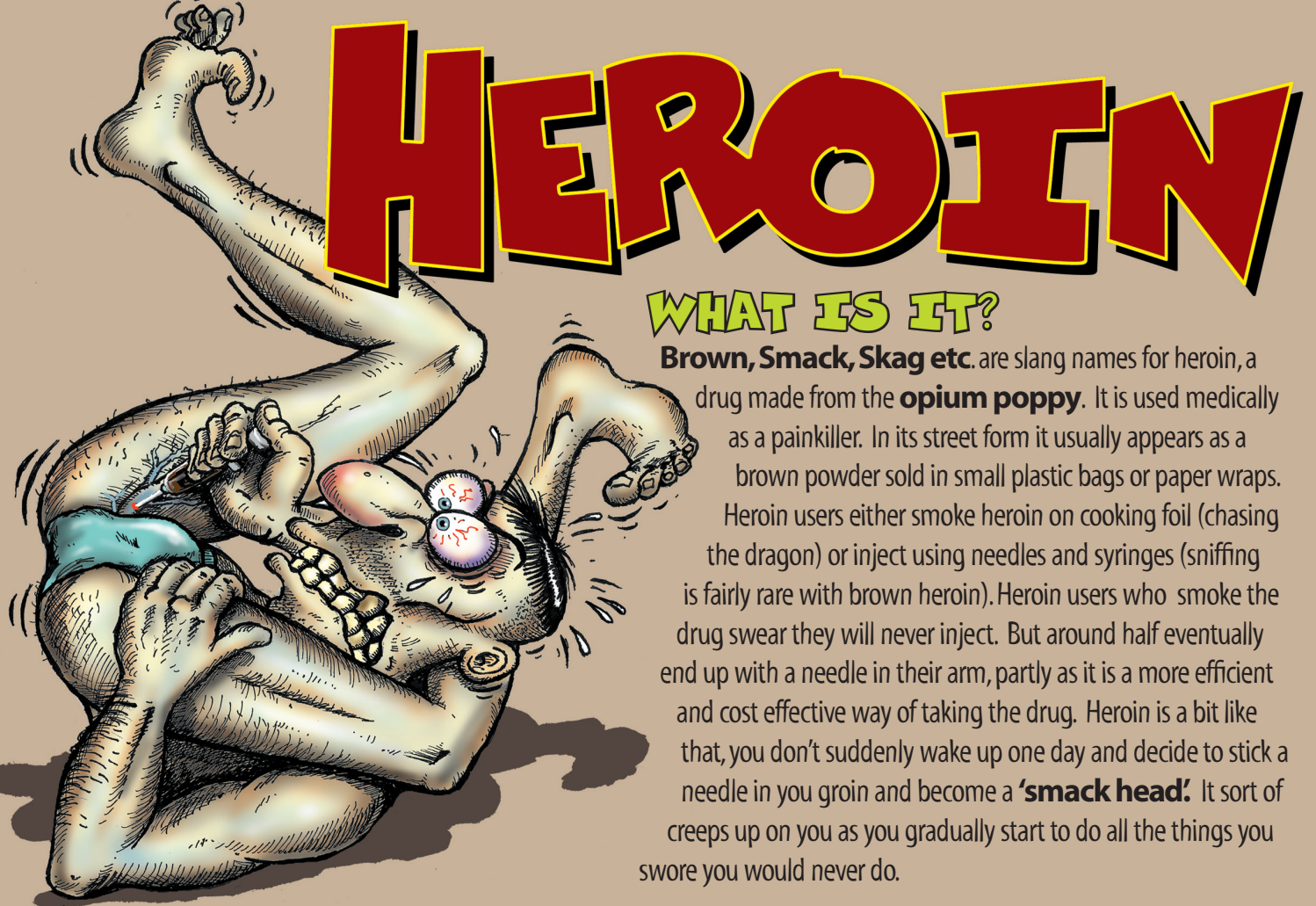


OVERDOSE

If somebody is unconscious it is **very dangerous**. Your body performs lots of functions automatically without you having to think about them, like breathing and making your heart beat. If you slip into a state of deep unconsciousness, these automatic functions may stop and you could die. This is what



REMEMBER TO LOOK AFTER YOUR MATES THE SAME WAY YOU WOULD WANT THEM TO LOOK AFTER YOU.



HEROIN

WHAT IS IT?

Brown, Smack, Skag etc. are slang names for heroin, a drug made from the **opium poppy**. It is used medically as a painkiller. In its street form it usually appears as a brown powder sold in small plastic bags or paper wraps. Heroin users either smoke heroin on cooking foil (chasing the dragon) or inject using needles and syringes (sniffing is fairly rare with brown heroin). Heroin users who smoke the drug swear they will never inject. But around half eventually end up with a needle in their arm, partly as it is a more efficient and cost effective way of taking the drug. Heroin is a bit like that, you don't suddenly wake up one day and decide to stick a needle in you groin and become a '**smack head**'. It sort of creeps up on you as you gradually start to do all the things you swore you would never do.

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

Injecting heroin produces a powerful 'rush'. Most people who take heroin at first feel warm. Their skin itches and they throw up a lot. The most desired effect (known as 'gouching') makes users look like they are asleep. Many say it takes a number of uses to appreciate its full effect. Heroin is a painkiller; it kills both physical and emotional pain. Regular users say it is a bit like being wrapped in cotton wool. Your problems don't seem to matter, you have a sense of detachment and extreme well being. **That is why heroin is often used by people who are unhappy or deeply troubled.**

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

If you use heroin regularly you will probably become **addicted**. This means that unless you continue taking it every day you will become physically ill (**called withdrawal**). Withdrawal from heroin is a bit like having proper full blown flu for a fortnight - but unlike having the flu, you can't sleep at all. This makes it hard to stop particularly as it is often taken by people who have little to satisfy them in the world outside of their drug use. This often leads to a life where the moment you get out of bed your body starts demanding the drug and your whole life is spent trying to get money to buy and use the drug. Regular users build up a **tolerance** to the drug so they have to use more to get the same effect. This means they need more money to pay for it, which usually means they resort to crime.

Heroin kills people if they take too much of it in one go, this is called an **overdose**. This is much more likely if they inject. If heroin is injected it can cause all sorts of health problems and infections. **HIV** (the virus responsible for AIDS), **Hepatitis B** and **Hepatitis C** (diseases of the liver) can be spread by sharing syringes and needles.

USING ANY DRUG CAN CAUSE PROBLEMS. If you want to avoid these problems don't use drugs. If you want to dodge really big problems at least avoid ADDICTION. There are no golden rules for avoiding addiction. But here are three top tips:

- 1 **NEVER INJECT**
- 2 **NEVER USE HEROIN**
- 3 **NEVER SMOKE CRACK (ROCK COCAINE, STONE)**

OTHER DRUGS

Our favourite drug is **alcohol**. It is not included in this book as it has a book of its own '**The Big Blue Book of Booze**'. Any risk from using drugs is usually made worse by mixing them with alcohol. Some of the other drugs used by young people include:

METHADONE

Is a drug similar to and just as addictive as heroin. It is often given to heroin users by doctors to try to stabilise their life and health, and to reduce their need to commit crime. By this stage the use of the drug is just to stop you feeling ill, you probably don't even get a high from it. **Um, sounds like fun... NOT**

POPPERS

Amyl nitrite and **butyl nitrite** are commonly known as '**poppers**'. It is a clear liquid that smells a bit like cat pee. Poppers are **sold legally** in small bottles in sex shops and some nightclubs under a variety of brand names such as 'Rush' or 'Locker Room'. The liquid is sniffed which gives a short intense disorientating 'rush'. Some people get dizzy or faint. Poppers raise blood pressure and increase heart rate so the risk to people with heart or blood pressure problems is obvious. Poppers are '**caustic**' which means they burn the skin and are therefore **very dangerous to swallow**.

KETAMINE

Ketamine (Special K, Tekno Smack) is a '**dissociative anaesthetic**' used in some surgical procedures. In its 'street' form it is usually a powder or a pill. In the past it was mainly used by devoted '**psychonauts**' but is becoming increasingly popular. In low doses you lose control of your movement and 'wobble about' (it's not recommended as a dance drug). In high doses you become unaware of your body and either walk about like a zombie or sit unable to move. Your brain inhabits a dream world; descriptions often include floating away from your body and travelling down a tunnel into a light. This has led to this experience ('**K-holing**') being described as a **near death experience**. If sniffed the effects are fairly short; 20 minutes to an hour. If taken as a pill the effects last much longer. Ketamine is a very powerful psychedelic drug, particularly dangerous for people who may have a history of mental illness. Ketamine is now a class C drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act.

GHB/GBL

Gammahydroxybutyrate or **GHB** (known as GBH) and its near relative GBL is sold as a clear liquid. Its effect is a bit like being drunk, but it can have effects similar to mild doses of ecstasy. It is sometimes wrongly described as 'liquid E' but it is not even chemically similar. GHB reacts with stimulant drugs like ecstasy to enhance the effects. The main danger with GHB is getting the **dose wrong**. If you take too much, particularly if you have mixed it with alcohol it is common to **collapse**. This is not like falling asleep because if you were taken to hospital they would say you were in a **coma**. In this condition you are vulnerable and can easily choke on vomit. GHB has also been known to cause **breathing and heart problems**. GHB is now included in the Misuse of Drugs Act (Class C) and will be joined by GBL in December 2009.

SLEEPING PILLS

Sleeping pills and minor tranquillizers come from a family of drugs called **benzodiazepines**. They include drugs like **diazepam (Valium)**. They are prescribed by doctors to help people sleep or to relax and calm them. The most commonly used benzodiazepine was a gel filled capsule called **temazepam** which is no longer prescribed but still produced illegally. Prescribed temazepam now comes in tablet form. The effect of benzodiazepines can seem a bit like being drunk. They are sometimes mixed with alcohol for a completely 'off your face' effect which carries a high risk of overdose. Benzodiazepines are physically addictive, and come under class C of the Misuse of Drugs Act - meaning that supply or possession them without a prescription is an offence.

STEROIDS

Anabolic steroids are man made versions of the male hormone **testosterone**. There are hundreds of different sorts and many fakes that are sold. They are used by '**body builders**' to help them build muscles and by many people just to look buff. Taking them without body-building doesn't give you muscles; it just makes you fat. Some steroids have to be injected, some swallowed as tablets. There are numerous side effects to taking them, but young people who are still growing should not use them at all as they can badly affect **bone growth**. There is a list of steroids and other 'body building' drugs that are covered under class C of the Misuse of Drugs Act. Possession is **not** in itself an offence (unless the steroids were illegally made), but giving or selling them to somebody else is.