

EDUCATE YOURSELF: DRUGS

Aside from the health risks of alcohol, drugs (legal or illegal) carry their own risks. Here are a few realities to consider

- Since everyone's brain and body chemistry is different and tolerance for drugs is different, you cannot predict the effect that a drug can have on you—especially if it's the first time you try it, and even if it's a small amount or dose.
- Using drugs can lead to abuse, addiction, serious health problems, and even death.
- Drugs that are legal—prescription and over-the counter (OTC) medications—can be just as dangerous as illegal drugs.



Content adapted from information found on: <http://www.justice.gov/dea/druginfo/factsheets.shtml>

Narcotics

Narcotics or opiates (including heroin, morphine, hydrocodone, oxycodone, codeine, clonidine, diphenoxylate and others) have a very high potential for both physical and psychological dependence as well as resulting in increased tolerance. The possible effects of using narcotics include euphoria, drowsiness, respiratory depression, pinpoint pupils, and nausea. Overdose may result in slowed breathing, slowed heart rate, clammy skin, convulsions, coma, and death. Withdrawal may include irritability, restlessness, muscle and bone pain, tremors, panic, nausea, chills, and sweating.

Sedatives and Tranquilizers

Other depressants (including GHB or liquid ecstasy, valium, xanax, ambien, and barbituates) have a potential for both physical and psychological dependence as well as resulting in increased tolerance. The possible side effects include slurred speech, difficulty walking or standing, disorientation and impaired memory. Overdose may result in slowed breathing, clammy skin, dilated pupils, weak and rapid pulse, shock, coma and possible death. Withdrawal may include anxiety, insomnia, tremors, delirium, convulsions, and possible death.

Stimulants

Stimulants (including cocaine, methamphetamine, Adderall, Dexedrine, and Ritalin) have a possible risk of physical dependence and high risk for psychological dependence. Tolerance can develop in all stimulants. The possible side effects include increased alertness, euphoria, increased pulse rate and blood pressure, insomnia, and decreased appetite. Overdose may result in agitation, hallucinations, paranoia, convulsions, increased body temperature, and possible death. Withdrawal may result in apathy, long periods of sleep, irritability, depression, and disorientation.

Hallucinogens

Hallucinogens (including MDMA, LSD, Phencyclidine, and others) are less likely to result in physical dependence, with the exception of phencyclidines and analogs, and vary in terms of psychological

dependence, ranging from none to moderate (MDMA) to high (phencyclidine and analogs). Tolerance can develop. Possible effects include heightened senses, teeth grinding, and dehydration (MDMA and analogs) and hallucinations, altered perception of time and distance in other types of hallucinogens. Overdose may result in increased body temperature and cardiac arrest for MDMA and more intense episodes for LSD. Some hallucinogens may result in muscle aches and depression when in withdrawal (MDMA) or may result in drug seeking behavior.

Cannabis

Cannabis includes marijuana, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), and hashish or hashish oil. All may result in moderate psychological dependence with THC resulting in physical dependence. Tolerance can develop in all forms. Possible effects include euphoria, relaxed inhibitions, increased appetite, and disorientation. Overdose may result in fatigue, paranoia, and possible psychosis. Withdrawal may occasionally result in insomnia, hyperactivity, and decreased appetite.

Anabolic Steroids

Anabolic Steroids (including testosterone and others) may result in psychological dependence. Less is known as to their potential for physical dependence and increased tolerance levels. Possible effects may include virilization, edema, testicular atrophy, gynecomastia, acne, and aggressive behavior. Effects of overdose are unknown. Withdrawal may possibly include depression.

Inhalants



Inhalants (including amyl and butyl nitrite, nitrous oxide, and others) vary in their level of psychological dependence, with less known about their potential for physical dependence and tolerance. Possible effects may include flushing, low blood pressure, and headache, impaired memory, slurred speech, drunken behavior, slow onset, vitamin deficiency, and organ damage. Overdose may result in vomiting, respiratory depression, hearing loss, loss of consciousness, and possible death. Withdrawal may result in agitation, trembling, anxiety, insomnia, vitamin deficiency, confusion, hallucinations, and convulsions.

Content adapted from information found on Delgado CC Drug and Alcohol Prevention and <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts>