

Legal drugs

Legal drugs include alcohol, tobacco, caffeine (found in 'high energy' soft drinks) and medicines you buy from a chemist without a prescription.

Herbal medicines

Herbal medicines usually contain plant extracts and are generally bought from a health food store or naturopath. Most people think that because they come from a plant they are safe. This is not necessarily true. Cannabis and heroin come from plants and can have very harmful effects. Always check with your doctor before taking any herbal medicines, especially if you are already on other prescribed medication.

Prescribed medications

Benzodiazepines (also known as Benzo's, serries, moggies, vals, 'V', normies) are depressants, which means they slow down the activity of the brain and central nervous system.

They are usually prescribed by a doctor to treat sleep problems and anxiety. It is very dangerous to use these if they are not prescribed for you. Mixed with alcohol or other drugs, they can cause an overdose. Injecting these capsules can also cause severe problems to veins and may lead to loss of limbs from poor circulation, organ damage or stroke.

Inhalants

Inhalants (also known as glue, gas, sniff, huff, chroming and poppers) are a range of products usually found around the house or at the local supermarket. Inhalants act as depressants and if inhaled may cause the user to feel 'high'. Inhalants are very dangerous and have been known to cause death from heart failure.

Illegal drugs

Anabolic steroids are also very dangerous to use if they are not prescribed for you. Short-term side effects include liver damage, increased blood pressure, changes to sex drive, increased cholesterol, acne, mood swings, depression, increased aggression and risk of contracting HIV or the Hepatitis virus through unsafe injecting practices.

Cannabis is also known as marijuana, hash, dope, mull, grass, pot, weed, ganja, and skunk. It is the most common illegal drug used in Australia. Cannabis is a depressant and can have some hallucinogenic effects if taken in large quantities. Long term use can lead to problems with memory, concentration and motivation.

Amphetamines are also known as speed, crystal meth, base, ice or shbu. These are manufactured stimulant drugs, which speed up the brain and nervous system. Although a doctor can prescribe amphetamines for Attention Deficit Disorder, they are mostly used illegally. Long term effects include depression, psychosis and aggression.

LSD (acid or trips) causes some people to experience strong feelings of anxiety, fear, paranoia or panic. They may feel that they are losing control and may injure themselves or behave in a risky manner as a result.

Ecstasy is also known as E, XTC and ecy. It is a manufactured drug and, like cannabis, it can have hallucinogenic effects if taken in large quantities. A popular dance party drug it is extremely dangerous. People have been known to die from related heart attacks, overheating from dancing in extremely hot conditions, and drinking too much water. Water needs to be sipped regularly.

Heroin is also known as smack, skag, hammer, h, or horse. It is one of a group of very strong pain-killing drugs called narcotic analgesics or opioids. Heroin is an illegal depressant. Its long term use can cause heart and lung problems, tetanus and damaged veins from injecting. The unknown quality of heroin puts users at a high risk of overdose.

Signs of a drug problem

A person may have a drug problem if they experience:

- Constant fatigue and repeated health problems
- Sudden mood changes and general lack of interest
- Problems with family and friends
- Problems at school or work
- Trouble with the police

Some of these signs can also be an indicator of other health problems. If a person experiences any of these, it is important they talk to a General Practitioner (GP). A GP can also help with withdrawal and treatment programs including methadone, and can refer someone to a specialist drug and alcohol service.

Harm reduction

All drugs have dangers associated with them. Be aware of the dangers and be prepared.

- Do not use drugs which have not been prescribed for you.
- Use clean injecting kits.
- Do not share fits (needles or syringes), spoons, water, filters, alcohol swabs or tourniquets.
- Do not mix drugs.
- Do not drive or operate machinery while under the influence of drugs.
- Be prepared to call the ambulance for help.

Overdose

For drugs like heroin and speed, small amounts may cause an overdose. An overdose on drugs such as benzodiazepines usually occurs when they are used with other drugs like alcohol or mehadone.

Symptoms of overdose:

- Unable to be woken or comatose
- Very slow breathing (or fast and irregular)
- Lips, fingertips or toenails may become blue from lack of oxygen
- High fever or feeling faint

If someone overdoses

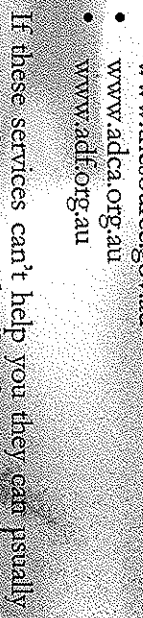
- DONOT PANIC.
- Call an ambulance on 000. Tell the operator the person has overdosed (in most states, the police will not come unless someone dies or becomes violent).
- Stay with the person, and try to keep the person awake.
- If the person is unconscious lay them on their side in the 'recovery' position.
- Clear their airway and check their breathing.
- If they stop breathing do mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and full CPR if needed.

More information

- Talk to a GP - Doctors will not judge someone.
- Call Lifeline on 131 114.
- Call Kids Help Line on 1800 55 1800.
- Call the Alcohol and Drug Information Service (02) 9361 2111 or 1800 422599 (24hrs).
- www.reachout.nsw.gov.au
- www.thesource.gov.au
- www.adca.org.au
- www.adf.org.au

If these services can't help you they can usually give you the contact details of a service in your area that can.

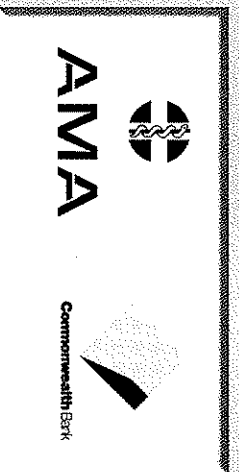
We Acknowledge the assistance of the NSW Health Department.



DRUGS



Make Informed Choices



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