

# **ILLICIT DRUGS**

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**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.<sup>1</sup>

## **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

- Impaired sexual performance

- Convulsions
- Kidney failure



**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 help<sup>1</sup>.





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](http://www.australia.gov.au/drugs)

### Australian Drug Foundation

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

[www.adf.org.au](http://www.adf.org.au)

