

## MOST COMMONLY MISUSED SUBSTANCES IN THE UK

Name	How usually taken	Effects sought	Harmful effects include	Legal status
<b>Heroin</b> (smack, horse, H, scag, brown, gear, junk, stag, jack)	Injected, snorted or smoked	Drowsiness, sense of warmth and wellbeing	Physical dependence, tolerance, overdose can lead to coma and even death. Sharing injecting equipment brings risk of HIV and hepatitis infection	Class A
<b>Cocaine</b> (charlie, coke, dust, C, snow)	Snorted or injected	Sense of wellbeing, alertness and confidence	Dependence, restlessness, paranoia, damage to nasal membranes	Class A
<b>Crack</b> (freebase, rock, wash, stone)	Smokeable form of cocaine, injected	Similar to those of cocaine but initial feelings are much more intense	As for cocaine but because of the intensity of its effects, crack use can be extremely hard to control, damage to lungs	Class A
<b>Ecstasy/ MDMA</b> (E, XTC, doves, disco biscuits, echoes, Scooby-Doos, Mitsubishiis)	Swallowed, usually in tablet form	Alert and energetic but with a calmness and sense of wellbeing towards others. Heightened sense of sound and colour	Possible nausea and panic, overheating and dehydration if dancing. Use has been linked with liver and kidney problems. Long-term effects not clear but may include mental illness and depression	Class A
<b>LSD</b> (acid, trips, tabs, dots, blotters, microdots)	Swallowed on tiny squares of paper	Hallucinations, including distorted or mixed-up sense of vision, hearing and time	There is no way of stopping a bad trip which may be a very frightening experience. Increased risk of long-term mental health problems	Class A
<b>Magic Mushrooms</b> (liberties, mushies, liberty caps)	Eaten raw or dried, cooked in food or brewed in tea	Similar effects to those of LSD but the trip is often milder and shorter	As for LSD with the additional risk of sickness and poisoning	Not illegal in raw state but Class A once dried or processed in any way
<b>Amphetamines</b> (speed, whizz, uppers, billy, sulph, amp)	In powder form, dissolved in drinks, swallowed, injected, snorted	Stimulates the nervous system, wakefulness, feeling of energy and confidence	Insomnia, mood swings, irritability, panic. The comedown can be severe and last for several days	Class B Class A if prepared for injection
<b>Cannabis</b> (hash, dope, grass, blow, weed, puff, pot, marijuana, ganja)	Rolled with tobacco into a spliff, joint or reefer and smoked. Smoked in a pipe or eaten	Relaxed, talkative, heightened sense of sound and colour	Impaired co-ordination and increased risk of accidents. Poor concentration, anxiety, depression, increased risk of respiratory diseases including lung cancer	Class C
<b>Prescription drugs (tranquillisers)</b> (Valium, Rohypnol, Mogadon, Altiva, temazepam, jellies, moggies, wobbles, mazzies)	Swallowed as tablets or capsules, injected	Prescribed for the relief of anxiety and to treat insomnia. High doses cause drowsiness	Dependency and tolerance, increased risk of accidents, overdose can be fatal. Severe withdrawal symptoms	Available only on prescription (Medicines Act 1968). Supply is illegal (Class C penalties apply) but apart from temazepam, not illegal to possess without a prescription
<b>Anabolic steroids</b> (various trade names)	Injected or swallowed as tablets	With exercise can help build up muscle. Helps user recover from strenuous exercise	<b>Risks for men:</b> erection problems, breast growth, sterility, acne, increased chance of liver failure <b>For women:</b> Growth of facial hair, deepening of voice, shrinking breasts. Possible stillbirths and miscarriage	Class C
<b>Poppers</b> (alkyl nitrates with names such as ram, thrust, gold, rush, TNT)	Vapours from small bottle of liquid are breathed in through mouth or nose	Brief intense head-rush caused by sudden surge of blood through the brain	Nausea and headaches, fainting, loss of balance, skin problems around nose and mouth. Particularly dangerous for those with glaucoma, anaemia, breathing or heart problems	Not illegal to possess but supply without a prescription is illegal and can be an offence
<b>Solvents</b> (including glues, lighter fuels, aerosols)	Sniffed or breathed into the lungs	Short-lived effects similar to being drunk. Thick-headed, dizziness, possible hallucinations	Nausea, blackouts, increased risk of accidents. Risk of suffocation	Not illegal to possess but illegal for shopkeepers to sell solvents to anyone under 18 if they suspect they are intended for misuse

## DEFINITIONS

- Drug** Any substance which affects the way in which the body functions physically, emotionally or mentally and includes tobacco, alcohol, solvents, over-the-counter and prescribed medicines as well as illicit substances
- Drug use** Drug-taking by a person that does not cause any perceived immediate harm, even though it may carry some risk of harm
- Drug misuse** Drug use that harms health or social functioning – either dependent use (physical or psychological) or use as part of a wider spectrum of problematic or harmful behaviour
- Dependence** A compulsion to continue taking a drug in order to feel good or to avoid feeling bad
- Tolerance** When a substance is used on a regular basis, a 'tolerance' can develop when the body becomes accustomed to it. This usually means that higher doses are needed to maintain the same effect
- Paraphernalia** The equipment used for drug-taking, eg foil, needles etc
- Stimulants** Drugs which increase the activity to those regions of the brain which make us more awake, more alert and more confident  
*Cocaine, caffeine, amphetamine and nicotine are all stimulants*
- Depressants** The general effect of depressants is to depress or slow down the activity of the nervous system. They do this by preventing messages being passed to the brain  
*Alcohol, tranquillisers, solvents and sleeping tablets are all depressants*
- Painkillers** These reduce a person's sensitivity to pain and cause sleepiness. Typically a sense of wellbeing is produced and pain, anxiety and depression disappear  
*Heroin, morphine and codeine are all painkillers*
- Hallucinogens** Hallucinogens change the way the brain interprets the information it gets from the sense organs. Colours may seem brighter, objects may seem larger or smaller and sound may appear purer and louder  
*LSD, magic mushrooms, ecstasy and cannabis are all hallucinogens*