

Need more HIV and/or Hep C information and resources?

Contact CATIE (Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange)
at **1-800-263-1638**
E-mail: info@catie.ca
www.catie.ca
www.hepcinfo.ca

In Newfoundland and Labrador, contact ACNL
(The AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador)
at **709-579-8656** or **1-800-563-1575**
E-mail: info@acnl.net
www.acnl.net



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Safer Drug Use

A Harm Reduction Pocketbook



Inject.
Swallow.
Crush.
Snort.
Cook.
Hoop.
Smoke.
Dab.

This pocketbook identifies different types of drugs, suggests safer methods of drug use, provides an overview of health concerns, and outlines withdrawal symptoms and detox resources.

This resource uses a harm reduction approach which “meets you where you are”, reduces harm, and places no pressure to stop using drugs immediately.

Any change that makes drug use safer is harm reduction. Whatever drug use method you choose, there are risks. There are different risks associated with different drugs. Choosing safer methods can reduce your risk of:

- HIV, Hep C and other viruses
- abscesses and other infections
- harmful drug combinations
- overdose and possible death

If you want to get tested for HIV, contact your provincial hotline number:

- ✦ Alberta **800-772-2437**
- ✦ British Columbia **800-661-4337**
- ✦ Manitoba **800-782-2437**
- ✦ Newfoundland & Labrador **800-563-1575**
- ✦ New Brunswick **800-561-4009**
- ✦ Northwest Territories **800-661-0844**
- ✦ Nunavut **800-661-0795**
- ✦ Nova Scotia **800-566-2437**
- ✦ Ontario English **800-668-2437**
- ✦ Ontario Français **800-267-7432**
- ✦ Prince Edward Island **800-314-2437**
- ✦ Quebec Contact your local CLSC
- ✦ Saskatchewan **800-667-6876**
- ✦ Yukon **800-661-0408 ext.8323**



Getting Help

National Resources

Need more HIV and/or Hep C Info?

Contact :

CATIE (Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange)

1-800-263-1838

www.catie.ca

www.hepcinfo.ca

CATIE Hep C Website and Toolkit

This plain-language website contains up-to-date

Information on Hep C, harm reduction and drug use.

www.hepcinfo.ca

Canadian Harm Reduction Network

www.canadianharmreduction.com

Canada Alcohol and Drug Rehab Programs

www.canadadrugrehab.ca

Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse (CCSA)

www.ccsa.ca

Centre for Addition and Mental Health (CAMH)

www.camh.net

What's inside this booklet...



Basic Safety



Methods of Drug Use



Overdose



Hep C and HIV Info



Drugs and Their Effects



Getting Help & Resources

This guide is provided for informational purposes ONLY.

The harm reduction information that follows is offered as a public health service. Its purpose is not to encourage or condone the use or possession of illegal substances. It is to help people make safer choices in their use of drugs, and to reduce the spread of Hep C and HIV. The possession of certain drugs is illegal.

Disclaimer

ACNL does not advocate the use of illegal substances and the information contained in this booklet should not be taken as an endorsement of drug use. ACNL accepts NO responsibility for the way the information here is used. It is hoped that if you cannot or will not stop using, you will have safer drug use information to reduce the health risks associated with drug use.



Basic Safety

- Pick a comfortable and safe place to use your drugs.
- Use with people you trust.
- Always use your own equipment (needles, pipes, bills, straws, alcohol swabs, cookers, sterile water, vitamin C powder, filters, tourniquets and ties).
- If injecting, don't inject half a hit and pass the needle on to someone else.
- Know your drugs and your dealer. Ask questions.
- Know the risks of using different drugs together.
- When trying a new dealer, a new drug batch, or after a break from using (e.g. while in prison or in treatment), sample the drug—do half of your regular dose.
- Know the signs of overdose and avoid taking too much at one time.
- Never pick up a used needle.
- Practise safer sex (male or female condoms and dental dams and lube) to help avoid the exchange of blood or body fluids.
- If you are getting a tattoo or piercing, make sure:
 - a. the service you choose is regulated or inspected
 - b. the needle is single-use disposable and has never been used
 - c. all other equipment is sterile (from an autoclave)
- Don't share personal items such as razors, toothbrushes, tweezers, manicure or pedicure equipment.

Nunavut

- ⇒ **NUNAVUT ALCOHOL AND DRUG INFORMATION & REFERRAL**
1-800-663-1441
www.canadadrugrehab.ca/Nunavut-Alcohol-Drug-Rehab-Programs.html

Ontario

- ⇒ **ONTARIO HARM REDUCTION DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM**
(LIST OF PROVINCIAL NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAMS)
1-866-316-2217
www.ohrdp.ca
- ⇒ **DRUG AND ALCOHOL REGISTRY OF TREATMENT (DART)**
1-800-565-8603
www.dart.on.ca
- ⇒ **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE INFORMATION ONTARIO (MHSIO)**
1-866-531-2600
www.mhsio.on.ca

P.E.I.

- ⇒ **P.E.I. NEEDLE EXCHANGE SERVICES**
1-877-637-0333
- ⇒ **CHARLOTTETOWN NEEDLE EXCHANGE**
1-902-368-5707
- ⇒ **SUMMERSIDE NEEDLE EXCHANGE**
1-902-432-2607 part-time hours

Saskatchewan

- ⇒ **SASKATCHEWAN HEALTH ALCOHOL AND DRUG RECOVERY SERVICES**
www.health.gov.sk.ca/treatment-services-directory
1-800-663-1441

Quebec

- ⇒ **DRUGS: HELP AND REFERRAL**
1-800-265-2626 (THROUGHOUT PROVINCE)
www.droguereference.qc.ca

Yukon

- ⇒ **BLOOD TIES FOUR DIRECTIONS CENTRE**
1-877-333-2437
www.bloodties.ca



Methods of Drug Use

Manitoba

- ⇒ **MANITOBA HARM REDUCTION NETWORK**
www.harmreductionnetwork.mb.ca
- ⇒ **ALCOHOL AND DRUG INFORMATION & REFERRAL SERVICE**
1-800-663-1441
- ⇒ **ADDICTIONS FOUNDATION OF MANITOBA**
1-866-638-2561 / 1-866-767-3838 / 1-866-291-7774
www.afm.mb.ca

New Brunswick

- ⇒ **AIDS NEW BRUNSWICK**
1-506-459-7519 / 1-800-561-4009
www.aidsnb.com
- ⇒ **FREDERICTON NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAM**
1-506-459-7519 / 1-800-561-4009

Newfoundland & Labrador

- ⇒ **AIDS COMMITTEE OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**
579-8656 or 1-800-563-1575
www.acnl.net
- ⇒ **MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS LINE**
737-4668 or 1-888-737-4668 (24 HR. CRISIS SERVICE)
- ⇒ **S.W.A.P. (SAFE WORKS ACCESS PROGRAM)**
757-SWAP (7927) OR 1-800-563-1575
(NEEDLE EXCHANGE SERVICE)

Nova Scotia

- ⇒ **MAINLINE NEEDLE EXCHANGE**
1-902-423-9991
www.achs.ns.ca
- ⇒ **HEALING OUR NATIONS ABORIGINAL AIDS TASK FORCE**
1-902-492-4255 / 1-800-565-4255
- ⇒ **DIRECTION 180** (HARM REDUCTION ; METHADONE ACCESS)
1-902-420-1576
www.micmaccentre.ca

Snorting Snorting drugs can damage the inside of the nose and the septum (separation between nostrils). This may increase the risk of contracting Hep C when sharing drug-snorting equipment (like bumpers, keys, bills or straws). If you have to crush your drug before snorting, take time to grind it as fine as possible. Try using a rolling pin, bottle or pill crusher. Finer grinds may reduce the damage inside the nose and can increase the high so you don't have to snort as much. It can take 5 -10 minutes to feel the drug effect.

Smoking Smoking is safer than injecting but you can hurt your lungs with smoke or burn your mouth if you use homemade pipes. You can also get Hep C if you share your smoking equipment, including pipes and mouthpieces, especially if you have burns or cuts around your mouth. It can take less than 1 minute to feel the drug effect.

Swallowing Popping pills, drinking or eating the drug is often safer than other ways of using. It usually takes longer to feel the "buzz" but keeps you safe from many of the risks of snorting, smoking or injecting. It can take 15 -60 minutes to feel the drug effect.

Hooping & Dabbing Hooping is a method of taking drugs by inserting them in your ass or vagina. This can make these areas of your body raw or irritated, which makes it easier for HIV, Hep C, and STIs to enter your body. Drugs can also be dabbled under the tongue or on the gums to be absorbed, which can cause some irritation. It can take 5 -10 minutes to feel the drug effect.



Methods of Drug Use

Injecting When drugs are injected, traces of blood may be left on needles or in syringes and then transferred to other injecting equipment (like cookers, filters, water, swabs and ties). Sharing works means sharing this blood which may have HIV or Hep C in it. Reusing equipment, even if it's only yours, can lead to other infections, like abscesses or blood infections. It can take less than 1 minute to feel the drug effect.

Safer Injecting Tips

Location: Try and pick a safe place to use - someplace with light and running water and where you won't have to rush.

Wash Up: Wash your hands and clean the work surface with soap and water; clean the vein site with an alcohol swab or soap and water.

New Equipment, Every Time: Always use a new needle and drug-use equipment (alcohol swabs, cookers, sterile water, filters, vitamin C, tourniquets and ties).

Fixing Your Drug: Filter your drug before you inject – it avoids getting tiny chunks or pieces into your body that could mess up your veins and lungs. If crushing it first, grind it as fine as possible.

Vein Care: Decide which vein you want to use for your injection. The best sites are on the arm. Veins in the neck or groin are too close to arteries. Using veins close to the head make it easier to overdose (OD) and abscesses are more dangerous here. Keep changing the spot where you inject on your body (rotating sites) to give your veins a chance to heal between injections.



Getting Help

Recovering from drug dependency requires a safe and supportive environment. Strategies necessary for recovery can be learned and utilized. Of course, the most appropriate treatment will be based on the specific needs of the individual. Sometimes people enter detox before going into treatment to help manage withdrawal before going into treatment. Detox may be required when the decision for treatment is made. Times needed for detox will vary depending on what drugs and how long the drugs have been in the system.

Whether you are trying drugs for the first time, experimenting, using regularly, dependent, or wanting to know more, the following organizations and contacts can assist you to make wise, informed choices, help reduce the harms that come with unsafe drug use and provide access to drug treatment and detox programs.

Alberta

- ⇒ **ALBERTA ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE COMMISSION (AADAC)**
866-332-2322
www.aadac.ca
- ⇒ **ALBERTA MENTAL HEALTH BOARD / MENTAL HEALTH HOTLINE**
877-303-2642
www.amhb.ab.ca
- ⇒ **STREET WORKS BOLYE STREET COMMUNITY SERVICES**
780-424-4106
www.streetworks.ca

British Columbia

- ⇒ **ALCOHOL AND DRUG INFORMATION & REFERRAL SERVICE**
1-800-663-1441
www.communityinfo.bc.ca
- ⇒ **VANCOUVER COASTAL HEALTH**
1-866-884-0888 (toll free for residents outside the Lower Mainland)
www.vch.ca

“Crystal meth” is a powerful stimulant that speeds up the central nervous system. It is a long-lasting drug. An initial high can last for several hours, and if you continue to use, you can be up for several days.

crystal, meth, crank

Crystal Meth

Potential Risks

Crystal meth can have harmful effects on your health as a result of “binge and crash” patterns that can lead to dependence. The “crash” of “coming down” brings significant depression and fatigue. Minimize your hits during a binge.

With long-term use, psychosis can develop including paranoia, mood disturbances, delusions and hallucinations.

Drink water and eat light high carb-protein meals to avoid dehydration and potential wasting.

Many users report lowered inhibitions while high which may result in unprotected sex and higher risk of HIV, Hep C, and STIs.

Mixing crystal meth with other drugs such as cocaine or ecstasy will increase toxicity and put strain on the heart.

Be careful if you mix with Viagra (If you do mix, take only half a dose of each). If you get an erection that lasts for more than 4 hours, go to a hospital emergency room.

Injecting

Injecting can increase the risk of HIV infection and other sexually transmitted infections if needles are shared.

Bringing up the Vein: Tie a tourniquet about 6 inches or so above the place where you’ll inject. Untie it before you start to inject to protect your veins from blowing (or bursting).

Bevel Up: Always insert the needle at a shallow angle (about 35 degrees) with the bevel up (the bevel is the sliced angle at the end of the needle) and in the direction of the blood flow (towards the heart).

Flagging: Flagging is important to make sure the needle is in the vein. If you miss the vein when you inject you can get an abscess or other infection. When the needle disappears into the skin, pull the plunger back until blood rushes into the syringe. If you didn’t get the needle into a vein, slowly take it out and loosen the tourniquet. Calm yourself and try again.

Never Shoot into an Artery: Hitting an artery hurts, bleeds and dilutes the hit. If you hit an artery (you’ll know because of the pain and the pushback on the syringe), take the needle out right away. Press down hard on the site until it stops bleeding. If it doesn’t stop in 5 minutes, go to the hospital.

Works Care: Dispose of used needles and works by storing them in a container that the needle can’t poke through (hard plastic bottles or sharps containers) and taking them back to your local needle exchange program.



Overdose

An overdose is what happens when you take more drugs than your body can handle. **It doesn't mean you will die, if you get the right help.**

Avoiding An Overdose

Sample the drug, especially if it's from a new source or if you haven't used in awhile. For example, do a half hit or quarter dose. The same dose you used before may cause an overdose if you've stopped using for awhile.

ODs from uppers **Signs**

shortness of breath / nausea, sweating, anxiety / can't speak or foaming at the mouth / pain, pressure, tightness or numbness in chest, arms, or neck / racing pulse, seizure (uncontrollable twitching) or rapid breathing and eye movements / limp body or passing out

to look for

ODs from downers **Signs**

slow pulse or no pulse / pale skin or face turning blue / hardly breathing / limp body or passing out

to look for

The stimulation of the central nervous system leads to an increase in heart rate, blood pressure, and body temperature. You may feel alert, energetic, more sociable, confident, and in control or you may feel withdrawn or anxious.

Potential Risks

Cocaine can dehydrate you and increase your body temperature. In a crowded, hot dance party this can increase your risk for dehydration or overheating. Drink water and wear breathable clothing.

Cocaine is a short-acting drug. This means the high is about 15-30 minutes for powder cocaine and 5-10 minutes for crack cocaine. Avoid too many hits or lines in short periods of time.

Because of the intensity of the experience, and the discomfort that can accompany the "crash" or coming down, you may quickly crave more of the drug to maintain the high.

Be careful if you mix with Viagra (If you do mix, take only half a dose of each). If you get an erection that lasts for more than 4 hours, go to a hospital emergency room.

In high doses cocaine can lead to seizures, strokes, heart attacks or difficulty breathing (even in experienced users).

Come-downs or after-effects can include depression, agitation, anxiety and paranoia. Accept your come-down and rough it out.

Many users can become compulsive in their use of cocaine which can lead to physical or psychological dependence.

Getting and keeping an erection may be difficult.

Cocaine Powder & Crack

charlie, blow

Cocaine speeds up your central nervous system, and it numbs whatever tissue it touches - like an anaesthetic.

Cocaine is a fine, white to off-white powder typically sold as ½ gram, 1 gram, or an “8 ball” (3.5 grams) and is snorted.

Crack is a condensed, more potent form and is sold as hard crystals or “rocks” for smoking or injecting.

Snorting Cocaine

Snorting coke can damage the lining and cartilage in your nose. This can also put you at an increased risk of HIV or Hepatitis transmission if you share bumpers, bills, or straws.

Dabbing Cocaine

Cocaine can be dabbed under the tongue or rubbed on to the gums. Gum disease and cavities can result.

Injecting Crack

See safer injecting tips at front of this booklet.

Smoking Crack

When smoked in the form of “crack”, the effects come on immediately but wear off much more quickly. You can become dependent on crack very easily. After first use, you feel a craving for the next dose and may end up using many times a day. Furthermore crack is very harmful to your health and can lead to severe psychological problems.



overdoses

What to do if someone

Call 911 immediately if someone:

- won't wake up
- has trouble breathing
- has chest pains
- has a seizure that lasts longer than a few minutes

Tell the police that someone has overdosed (sometimes it's better to tell them that the person has stopped breathing) Try to keep them breathing deeply to get enough oxygen into their heart muscles.

Lean their body forward (or in the recovery position on their side) so they don't choke on their own vomit. Apply CPR if you know how. Learning CPR is probably the single most important thing you can do to help someone survive an overdose.

If convulsing, clear a space so the person doesn't bang into something and hurt themselves.

Never try to hold a person down.

Do not put them in a cold shower or try to counteract the effect with other substances or home remedies — it won't help and could make matters worse.

Stay with them until help comes (if you can) or at least leave the door open and a note with what they took, to help the paramedics.



Hep C and HIV

The Hep C virus (HCV) and the Human Immunodeficiency virus (HIV) are both carried in the blood. Some ways of getting infected are the same for Hep C and HIV; for instance, sharing drug-using equipment. If you are concerned that you may have been exposed by sharing syringes, needles or other equipment, talk to your health care provider or your local needle exchange program about testing for Hep C, as well as HIV.

Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by a virus carried in the blood. The liver is one of the most important organs in the body and you cannot live without it. It does more than 500 things to keep you healthy, including filtering our blood of toxins and chemicals.

Without treatment, over 80% of people infected with Hep C will have it for life -called chronic Hep C (a disease that puts your liver at risk for developing scarring). After 10 - 20 years, chronic Hep C can cause cirrhosis (heavy scarring). After 20 - 40 years it can cause liver cancer. Hep C may eventually cause your liver to shut down.

You can get Hep C when blood containing the Hep C virus gets in your blood. The highest-risk activity for getting Hep C is sharing drug-use equipment that has already been used by someone else (including needles, syringes, pipes, straws, swabs, cookers, filters, spoons and water).



Ecstasy can lead to an intense, energetic, spiritual high with feelings of openness, connection and euphoria, primarily affecting serotonin transmission.

Potential Risks

In high doses "E" can lead to seizures, strokes, heart attacks or difficulty breathing. Ecstasy can also lead to overheating if in a hot environment. Drink enough water and wear breathable clothing. You can have serious problems if you drink too much water and do not pee (or sweat if you dance). Drink about 500ml each hour if you are perspiring heavily.

Many users report feeling "down" for a couple of days after using 'E' leading to depression, agitation, anxiety, panic attacks and paranoia. This will pass with rest and good food. If these signs persist, seek medical attention.

Using 'E' causes tooth grinding and jaw clenching.

'E' is unregulated. Ecstasy is often cut with other substances, some of which can be very harmful. Know your dealer and the supply.

Mixing with other stimulants or depressants can increase your risk of negative effects. Avoid taking E if you are on anti-depressants.

Be careful if you mix with Viagra (If you do mix, take only half a dose of each). If you get an erection that

Ectasy (E)

Pure **ecstasy** is MDMA (methylenedioxyamphetamine).

E

This can be sold as white or tanned coloured powder crystals in a capsule or as pills. **E** can be mixed with different ingredients (including K, meth, and caffeine) and some **E** pills have no MDMA at all. Pure MDMA will keep you high for about 4-6 hours but **E** pills depend on the make-up.



Almost always swallowed as a pill or capsule but can be snorted, injected or hooped.

Swallowing

Onset time for effects is 15-45 minutes. Nausea or an upset stomach may occur. Swallowing your drugs is also the safest, less damaging way to take them.

Hooping

Onset time is 5-10 minutes. Hooping can do damage to the tissues around your anus or vagina. The inflammation associated with this damage can increase your risk of HIV, hep C and other STIs. If you use something to hoop your drugs with, don't share it.



In Canada, about 250,000 people are living with Hep C. Roughly 1 in 3 people do not know they have it because Hep C doesn't usually show signs for many years.

There is no vaccine or cure for Hep C but Hep C treatment can clear the virus from people's bodies about 50-80% of the time. Talk to your needle exchange program, community health centre or doctor for more information.

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)

HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). HIV attacks the immune system (the part of you that fights off infection and sickness) and makes it weak. The only way to tell if you have HIV is to get tested.

HIV is passed through blood, semen (cum and pre-cum), vaginal and anal fluids, and breast milk. To get HIV, the virus in one of those fluids must come into direct contact with your bloodstream or the moist lining of your vagina, ass or gut. This can happen through unprotected (vaginal or anal) sex, sharing needles or other drug-using equipment, unsterilized tattooing and piercing equipment and sharing personal items (such as razors).



HIV and HEP C

There is no vaccine or cure for HIV but treatments are available to control the virus. Contact your family doctor, health care provider, or local AIDS Service Organization for more information.

You can lower your risk of getting Hep C and HIV by following some easy steps:

- Always use latex condoms for sex.
- Use your own works—use new equipment every time.
- Avoid contact with bodily fluids: blood, semen, pre-cum, vaginal fluids, anal fluids and breast milk.
- Get tested for HIV and Hep C. If you know your status, you can take extra steps to be safer and healthier in your use.
- Contact your community health centre or family doctor to get tested and get free condoms and water-based lube.
- Visit your local harm reduction program, needle exchange, or community health centre for harm reduction kits.

Need more Hep C and/or HIV information and resources?
Contact CATIE (Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange)
at 1-800-263-1638 Email: info@catie.ca
HIV website: www.catie.ca
Hep C website: www.hepCinfo.ca

Ritalin



Ritalin comes in a pill but is often crushed into a powder, then snorted, or dissolved and injected.

Ritalin is methylphenidate, which is a medication prescribed for children with an abnormally high level of activity or with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). It has similar properties to amphetamine-type drugs like speed.

Injected

Ritalin tablets are dissolved in water and "cooked" for intravenous injection. Other ingredients are added to Ritalin tablets to increase their size. While these ingredients are "inert" when taken by mouth, they can cause serious problems when injected.

Potential Risks

Snorting causes nasal damage including clogging the arteries in the nose and can cause bleeding, similar to coke.

Sometimes several pills are combined which makes for a larger, more potent, and more dangerous hit. Be careful with doses.

High doses of stimulants can produce loss of appetite or malnutrition, muscle twitching, fevers, headaches, anxiety, restlessness, paranoia, and hallucinations.

People who use Ritalin for a long time can become dependent.

Speed

Speed can be snorted or dabbled in powder form and also may be dissolved and injected.



Speed is a potent amphetamine stimulant similar but different from methamphetamines that wakes you up, gets your heart rate going, suppresses your appetite and provides a burst of energy.

Injecting

Use a new needle each time you inject and don't share works (including syringes, water, spoons) to avoid the transmission of HIV, hepatitis, and other infectious diseases. Speed is cut with other powders making it particularly dangerous.

Potential Risks

Speed can cause irritability, anxiousness, lack of sleep, depression, and possible hallucinations.

Some people find this drug highly addictive. The more often you use this, the more you need to get the same high.

Coming down can take a couple of days, sometimes longer, and long-term use can lead to problems with mental illness. With constant use, a person's immune system can also wear down causing flus, colds and sore throats.

An overdose of amphetamines can be fatal and mixing amphetamines with other drugs (especially anti-depressants and alcohol) increases the danger significantly. Large doses of Speed used in short periods of time may cause strain on the heart.

Eat, sleep and drink plenty of water and juice, even if you are not hungry and especially if you've been on a binge.



Drugs and their Effects

Getting high. Escaping. Feeling Good. Whatever your target, without using harm reduction methods, you may miss the mark and contract viruses, infections, or potentially overdose.

Know your drugs, understand how to use them safely, and consider all the risks.

Cannabis

GHB

OxyContin

Heroin

Ketamine

Speed

Ritalin

Ecstasy

Cocaine and Crack

Crystal Meth

Cannabis

**marijuana, pot,
weed, hash**

Cannabis is a plant that has psychoactive properties that can lead to a relaxing high, intense laughter, increased appetite, and heightened sense of sound, taste and touch. Your eyes get red and your mouth gets dry.

Smoked

Pot can be smoked using rolled joints, pipes, bong, hoo-kahs, and other equipment.

Eaten

Pot can be prepared in butter or oil, and cooked in food .

Potential Risks

Impairs coordination – avoid driving and complex tasks.

Dependence can result with long-term daily use.

By inhaling more deeply, and holding smoke in lungs, there is the danger of lung damage.

Higher doses may lead to mild hallucinations, anxiety or paranoia.

Possible interactions with heart and blood pressure medications increases heart rate.

Signs of an overdose include nausea, dizziness, anxiety, panic, paranoia, rapid heart beat, unpleasant hallucinations and the general feeling of being unwell. There has never been a recorded fatality from cannabis.

Ketamine

special K, K

An anaesthetic, known as **special K**, that is typically snorted, but can be injected, swallowed or smoked. Ketamine is typically sold as a white powder, looks similar to table salt.

In small doses , K can cause relaxation and tingling sensations in the hands and feet. In higher amounts you may go on an intense trip. You may hear or see things, feel detached from your body, or feel unaware of who you are. Sometimes this is known as a K-hole. This can last up to an hour.

Snorting

Small doses (bumps) or larger doses (lines) are made from the powder and snorted. There is a risk of HIV or hep C transmission if you share bumpers, bills or straws.

Potential Risks

While in a K-hole you may not be able to move or speak. If this happens, you cannot defend yourself from physical or sexual assault or being robbed.

K numbs you from feeling pain or discomfort. If you harm yourself while on 'K' you may not be aware of it, causing further damage or injury.

Nausea may result and if you are in a k-hole you could choke on your own vomit. Do not eat before you use. Avoid mixing with alcohol.

Ketamine dissolves in liquids, and can be used as a "date rape" drug. Watch your drink at raves, parties and bars.

Heroin

horse, smack, brown

Heroin, an opioid, is often sold as brown or white powder. It is typically cut with other drugs or substances and can be highly addictive. It causes a rush of general well-being.

Smoking

Many of the health risks associated with injecting are reduced with smoking, although this method may cause problems for people with asthma, TB, pneumonia, and other respiratory problems.

Injecting

Heroin, once injected, crosses the brain-blood barrier quickly. This may result in a warm flushing of the skin, a dry mouth, and a heavy feeling in the extremities, which may be accompanied by nausea, vomiting, and severe itching.

Skin popping or muscling is not advisable but if you do, immediately apply hot water with a wash cloth or compress to prevent an abscess and infection.

Potential Risks

You can be at risk of overdose or death especially if you don't know the actual strength of the drug or its true contents.

Chances of overdose may increase if you mix heroin and other downers such as alcohol, barbiturates (Seconal, Tuinal), and benzodiazepines (Valium, Ativan, Xanax).

Mixing a shot of heroin with cocaine or speed is also more dangerous than using either by itself.

Tolerance to heroin decreases when you stop using for awhile - so a dose that would have been fine in the past may now harm or kill you. Try half your normal hit.

Withdrawal symptoms are very difficult and hard to manage. Prepare for a rough come down.

GHB



GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyrate) is typically sold by the vial as a clear liquid and is typically swallowed.

Ingesting

The drug is colorless, odourless and may have a mild chemical taste. It can be slipped into a drink without anyone knowing it. The effects can usually be felt 15-20 minutes after taking it and negative side effects may include nausea, dizziness and confusion.

Potential Risks

It is easy to lose consciousness or to overdose when using 'G'. There can be a small difference between a dose that gives you a good high and a dose that can make you pass out. G slows down your breathing, you may not get enough oxygen into your lungs and slip into a coma. It is easier to OD on G when using other downer drugs, particularly when mixed with alcohol.

Dependence on G may cause difficult withdrawal symptoms and can cause side effects like anxiety, tremors, inability to sleep, paranoia, and high blood pressure.

GHB has been labelled as a "date rape" drug. There is an increased risk of sexual assault, and the associated transmission of HIV, Hep C and other STIs .

GHB can create feelings of happiness, sexual arousal, pleasure and relaxation. Some people enjoy having G because of possible heightened sense of touch, lowered inhibitions, enhanced erection, and an increased intensity of orgasm.

OxyContin

Oxy, OC



Oxycontin is a prescription painkiller in the opiate family that contains oxycodone.

When used without prescription, "Oxy" or "OC" is used to get high, reduce pain, relieve anxiety, depression, sadness and other undiagnosed or untreated mental health issues.

Injecting

Most people start by swallowing the pill. However, the desire for a better high may lead you to eventually try crushing it for snorting or injecting.

Injecting Oxy can cause blockages in the veins and arteries, as little particles can get into the syringe and then into your bloodstream. Use general safer injection tips every time (refer to Basic Safety and Methods of Drug Use sections at front of booklet).

Snorting

Snorting causes damage in the nose. Long-term use may eat a hole through your septum (the cartilage in between the nostrils).

Potential Risks

Pain killers in the opiate family can cause physical dependence. When coming off or quitting these drugs, your body will react with cold tremors, nausea, diarrhoea and headaches.

Using Oxycontin with downers like alcohol, valium or barbiturates (sedatives) can lead to overdose. You may go into shock and pass out.

The more you use Oxy, the more your body gets used to it, and it may be hard to get the same high you got the first time.

Side effects may include nausea, sweating, itchiness, sexual problems, constipation and sleepiness.

Signs of an overdose include difficulty breathing and extreme sleepiness. Overdose risk increases when Oxy is mixed with other opiates, alcohol or tranquilizers. Brain damage or death may result from overdose.