

## Drugs of Abuse

**T**here are many illegal substances abused today. There are other substances, such as over-the-counter medications, household products, and legitimate pharmaceuticals (medicines) that are also abused.

This brief guide provides information on the most commonly abused drugs. Here are some facts which will help you understand the facts about illegal drugs.

The Controlled Substances Act (CSA) categorizes drugs into five categories (Schedules I-V) according to their medical use, potential for abuse, and safety. The most addictive drugs, and drugs which have no medical use, are in Schedule I.

Federal penalties for manufacturing and/or distributing illegal drugs are based on the danger each drug poses to individuals and to the public.

There are several classes of drugs; each class has different properties and effects on the user.

**Narcotics:** Narcotics (such as heroin, morphine, OxyContin, etc.) are used to dull the senses and reduce pain. Narcotics can be made from opium (from the opium poppy) or created in a laboratory (synthetic and semi-synthetic narcotics).

**Stimulants:** Stimulants reverse the effects of fatigue on the body and brain.

Sometimes they are referred to as "uppers." Cocaine, amphetamines, methamphetamine and Ritalin™ are stimulant drugs. Cocaine is derived from the coca plant grown in South America. Nicotine (found in tobacco) is also a stimulant.

**Depressants:** Substances included in this category are tranquilizers, sedatives, hypnotics, anti-anxiety medications and alcohol.

**Cannabis:** Marijuana and hashish are substances referred to as cannabis and THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) is the ingredient in cannabis which makes the user feel "high."

**Hallucinogens:** These substances alter the perceptions and moods of users. LSD, Ecstasy, PCP and Ketamine are made in laboratories, some of which are clandestine; non-manufactured hallucinogens include peyote and mescaline.

**Inhalants:** Many common items such as glue, lighter fluid, paint products, cleaning fluids, gasoline, and propellants in aerosol cans contain chemicals that produce intoxicating effects similar to alcohol. Inhalant abuse is the deliberate inhaling or sniffing of these products to get high.

**Steroids:** Anabolic steroids are defined as any drug or hormonal substance that is chemically and pharmacologically related to testosterone and promotes muscle growth. Some steroids are used for legitimate medical reasons, but many are illegally manufactured and distributed.

### Drug

#### Effects:Cannabis

**Effects:** Euphoria, relaxed inhibitions, increased appetite, disorientation, impaired motor skills and concentration. • **Overdose Effects:** Fatigue, paranoia, and possible psychosis. • **CSA Schedule:** Schedule I: Marijuana has no medical use. Schedule II: Marinol™ is a synthetic form of THC which can be prescribed for patients with particular medical conditions. • **Street Names:** Pot, Grass, Sinsemilla, Blunts, Mota, Yerba, Grifa, Aunt Mary, Boom, Chronic (marijuana alone or marijuana with crack), Dope Ganja, Gang-



## Specific Drugs

### Cannabis

#### Cannabis Sativa L.

Marijuana is grown in the United States, Mexico, Canada, South America, Asia, and other parts of the world. It can be cultivated outdoors and in indoor settings. Marijuana is usually smoked and the effects are felt within minutes. Depending on the dosage and other variables, users can feel relaxed and have altered senses of smell, sight, taste and hearing, distorted senses of time, shifting sensory imagery, rapidly fluctuating emotions, fragmentary thoughts, impaired memory and dulling of attention.

THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) is the psychoactive ingredient found in the marijuana plant. In the 1970's, the average THC content of illicit marijuana was less than one percent. Today most commercial grade marijuana from Mexico/Colombia and domestic outdoor cultivated marijuana has an average THC content of 4 to 6 percent, although some samples have tested as high as 25 percent THC.

High doses of marijuana can result in hallucinations. Marijuana smokers experience the same health problems as tobacco smokers: bronchitis, emphysema, and bronchial asthma. Extended use is associated with anti-motivational syndrome, lung damage, and risk to reproductive systems.

#### Hashish and Hashish Oil (smoked, ingested)

Hashish consists of the THC-rich resinous material of the cannabis plant which is collected, dried, and then compressed into a variety of forms, such as balls, cakes, or cookie-like sheets. Pieces are then broken off, placed in pipes, and smoked. The Middle East, North Africa, Pakistan, and

Afghanistan are the main sources of hashish.

Hash oil is produced by extracting the cannabinoids from plant material with a solvent. The color and odor of the resulting extract will vary, depending on the type of solvent used. Current samples of hash oil, a viscous liquid ranging from amber to dark brown in color, average about 15 percent THC.

### Heroin

Heroin is a narcotic which can be injected, smoked or snorted. It comes from the opium poppy grown in Southeast Asia (Thailand, Laos and Myanmar—Burma); Southwest Asia (Afghanistan and Pakistan), Mexico and Colombia. It comes in several forms, the main ones being "black tar" from Mexico (found primarily in the western United States) and white heroin from Colombia (primarily sold on the East Coast).

In the past, heroin was mainly injected. Because of the high purity of the Colombian heroin, many users now snort or smoke heroin. All of the methods of use can lead to addiction, and the use of intravenous needles can result in the transmission of HIV.

### Cocaine

Cocaine is a powerful stimulant derived from coca leaves grown in Bolivia, Peru and Colombia. The most common method of use is snorting the cocaine powder (Cocaine HCl). Its crack form is smoked (freebased). Cocaine is usually distributed as white powder, often diluted ("cut") with a variety of sub-



#### Drug Effects: Heroin

**Effects:** Euphoria, drowsiness, respiratory depression, constricted pupils, and nausea.

**Overdose Effects:** Slow and shallow breathing, clammy skin, convulsions, coma, and possible death. **CSA Schedule:** Heroin has no legitimate medical use: Schedule I. **Street Names:** Horse, Smack, Black Tar, Chiva, and Negra (black tar).



#### Drug Effects: Cocaine

**Effects:** Increased alertness, excitation, euphoria (sometimes followed by a "crash"), increased pulse rate and blood pressure, insomnia and loss of appetite. **Overdose Effects:** Agitation, increased body temperature, hallucinations, convulsions, possible death. **CSA Schedule:** Approved for use as an anesthetic for ear, eye and throat surgeries: Schedule II. **Street Names:** Coke, Flake, Snow, Crack, Coca, and Blanca.



## Drug Effects:

### Methamphetamine

**Effects:** Increased alertness, excitation, euphoria, increased pulse rate and blood pressure, insomnia and loss of appetite.

**Overdose Effects:** Agitation, increased body temperature, hallucinations, convulsions, possible death.

**CSA Schedule:** Methamphetamine hydrochloride is prescribed for appetite suppression: Schedule II. **Street Names:** Crank, Ice, Crystal, Krystal, Meth, Speed, and Tina.

stances, the most common being sugars and local anesthetics. This is done to stretch the amount of the product and increase profits for dealers.

Crack is sold in small, inexpensive doses that are smoked. Its effects are felt immediately and are very intense and short-lived. The intensity of the psychological effects of cocaine depends on the dose and rate of entry to the brain. Cocaine reaches the brain through the snorting method in three to five minutes. Intravenous injection of cocaine produces a rush in 15-30 seconds, and smoking produces an almost immediate intense experience. These intense effects can be followed by a "crash."

The cocaine manufacturing process takes place in remote jungle labs where the raw product undergoes a series of chemical transformations.

## Methamphetamine

Methamphetamine is a stimulant which is generally produced in large laboratories in Mexico, the United States and Asia, or in "small toxic labs" in the United States. It can be injected or smoked. "Ice" is the crystallized form of methamphetamine and it is generally smoked. In all its forms, methamphetamine is highly addictive and toxic.

The onset of meth effects is about the same as cocaine, but they last longer. Meth remains in the central nervous system longer than cocaine, and chronic abuse produces a psychosis that resembles schizophrenia. Other signs of meth use include paranoia, picking at the skin, preoccupation with

one's thoughts, and auditory and visual hallucinations. These effects can last for months and even years after using methamphetamine, and violent and erratic behavior is often seen among chronic users.

## Prescription Drugs

### Pain Killers

Vicodin™ is hydrocodone mixed with acetaminophen. Hydrocodone is a semi-synthetic opioid similar in effects to morphine. Hydrocodone products, when abused, can lead to dependence, tolerance, and addiction. Vicodin™ is one of the most frequently prescribed medications for pain. Other products include Vicoprophen™, Tussionex™, and Lortab™.

Oxycodone is used as an analgesic and is formulated into numerous pharmaceuticals including OxyContin™ (a controlled-release product) and with aspirin (Percodan™) or with acetaminophen (Percoset™). These drugs are prescribed for pain relief. They all require a doctor's prescription and are prescribed for moderate to severe pain.

Fentanyl is extensively used for anesthesia and analgesia. Duragesic™ is a fentanyl transdermal (through the skin) patch used in chronic pain management, and Actiq™ is a solid formulation of fentanyl citrate on a stick that dissolves slowly in the mouth for absorption through mucous membranes.

Illicit use of pharmaceutical fentanyl first appeared in the mid-1970's in the medical community. To date, over 12 different analogues of fentanyl have been produced clandestinely and identified in the U.S. drug traffic.

The biological effects are indistinguishable from those of heroin, with the exception that the fentanyl may be hundreds of times more potent. Fentanyl is most commonly used by intravenous administration, but like heroin, it may



## Drug Effects:

### Pain Killers

**Effects:** Euphoria, drowsiness, respiratory depression, constricted pupils, and nausea.

**Overdose Effects:** Slow and shallow breathing, clammy skin, convulsions, coma, and possible death. **CSA**

**Schedule:** Pure hydrocodone and oxycodone are in Schedule II. Hydrocodone products fall into schedules III and V.

also be smoked or snorted.

Ultram™ (tramadol hydrochloride) and Ultracet™ (tramadol with acetaminophen) are prescription medications indicated for the management of moderate to moderately severe pain.

## Depressants

Xanax™ (alprazolam) is from the benzodiazepine family of depressants. It is used to treat anxiety and panic disorders.

Valium™ (diazepam) is also from the benzodiazepine family of depressants. It is usually used to treat anxiety, alcohol withdrawal, muscle spasms, and seizures. Valium™ is among the most widely prescribed medications in the United States. Concurrent use of alcohol or other depressants with Valium™ can be life-threatening.

Alprazolam and diazepam are the two most frequently encountered benzodiazepines on the illicit market. Abuse is frequently associated with adolescents and young adults who take the drug to get high. Abuse of benzodiazepines is particularly high among heroin and cocaine abusers.

## Stimulants

Methylphenidate (Ritalin™, Concerta™) is a stimulant which is prescribed for attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. It has a high potential for abuse and produces many of the same effects as cocaine and amphetamines. Binge use, psychotic episodes, cardiovascular complications, and severe psychological addiction have all been associated with methylphenidate abuse. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, methylphenidate is a valuable medicine for adults as well as children with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder. Research shows that individuals with ADHD do not become addicted

to stimulant medications when taken in the form and dosage prescribed by doctors. In fact, it has been reported that stimulant therapy in childhood is associated with a reduction in the risk for subsequent drug and alcohol use disorders.

Adderall™ is an amphetamine which is used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children 6 years of age and older and in adults.

## GHB

There are three kinds of GHB abusers: those who take the drug to get high, those who use it in bodybuilding, and those who commit sexual assault after drugging their victims. GHB is also frequently used in combination with MDMA (Ecstasy) to counter over-stimulation. It is frequently taken with alcohol and is often found at bars, parties, nightclubs, raves and gyms.

GHB is often called the “date-rape” drug. Because of its effect on memory, GHB may cause users to forget details surrounding a sexual assault. GHB is quickly eliminated from the body, and it is sometimes hard to confirm its presence during rape investigations.

## Ecstasy (MDMA)

Ecstasy is a synthetic drug that produces both stimulation and hallucinatory effects and is associated with increased energy, sensual arousal



### Drug Effects:

#### Depressants

**Effects:** Xanax™ and Valium™ misuse is associated with amnesia, hostility, irritability, and vivid or disturbing dreams, as well as tolerance and physical dependence.

- **Overdose Effects:** Concurrent use of alcohol or other depressants with Valium™ or Xanax™ can be life-threatening.
- **CSA Schedule:** Xanax™ and Valium™ are in Schedule IV.



### Drug Effects:

#### Stimulants

**Effects:** Misuse of Ritalin™ and Adderall™ may cause short, intense periods of high energy.

- **Overdose Effects:** High doses of Ritalin™ or Adderall™ can produce agitation, tremors, euphoria, palpitations, and high blood pressure. Psychotic episodes, paranoid delusions, hallucinations, and bizarre behavior have been associated with stimulant abuse.
- **CSA Schedule:** Ritalin™ and Adderall™ are in Schedule II.



### Drug Effects: GHB

**Effects:** Slurred speech, disorientation, drunken behavior without the odor of alcohol, impaired memory of events, and interaction with alcohol.

- **Overdose Effects:** Shallow respiration, clammy skin, dilated pupils, weak and rapid pulse, coma and possible death.
- **CSA Schedule:** GHB in its illegal form is schedule I; a prescription drug, Xyrem™, formulated from components of GHB, is Schedule III.
- **Street Names:** GHB, Georgia Home Boy, Grievous Bodily Harm, Liquid Ecstasy, Liquid X, Sodium Oxybate, and Xyrem™.

## Drug

### Effects: Ecstasy

**Effects:** Heightened senses, teeth grinding and dehydration. • **Over-**

**dose Effects:** Increased body temperature, electrolyte imbalance, cardiac arrest, possible death. • **CSA**

**Schedule:** Schedule I. • **Street**

**Names:** Ecstasy, XTC, Adam, Love Drug, Eve, Hug, and Beans.



and enhanced tactile sensations. The effects of MDMA are felt within 30-45 minutes, peaking at 60-90 minutes, and lasting 4-6 hours.

It produces nerve cell damage that can result in psychiatric disturbances, muscle tension, tremors, blurred vision, and increased body temperature which can result in organ failure and death.

The majority of MDMA is produced in laboratories in Europe and then smuggled into the United States. MDMA is usually distributed in tablet form and many of these tablets are imprinted with pop culture designs or commercial logos.

## Drug

### Effects: LSD

**Effects:** Illusions and hallucinations, altered perception of time and distance, impaired judgment leading to possible personal injury. • **CSA**

**Schedule:** No recognized medi-

cal use: Schedule I. • **Street Names:** Acid, Microdot, Sunshine, and Boomers.



## LSD

For years, LSD has been produced in laboratories in the United States. It is generally sold in the form of impregnated paper typically imprinted with colorful graphic designs. It has also been found in tablets (microdots), thin squares of gelatin (window panes), in sugar cubes, and (rarely) in liquid form.

During the first hour after ingestion, users may experience visual changes with extreme changes in mood. While hallucinating, the user may suffer impaired depth and time perception accompanied by distorted perception of the shape and size of objects, movements, colors, sound, touch and the user's own body image.

The ability to make sound judgments and see common dangers is impaired, making the user susceptible to personal injury. It is possible for users to suffer acute anxiety and depression after an LSD "trip" and flashbacks have been reported days, even months, after taking the last dose.

## PCP

PCP is generally produced in clandestine laboratories in the United States. It was originally used as a veterinary anesthetic and is illegally produced for human consumption in powder, capsule and liquid form, and is frequently sprinkled on parsley, mint, oregano or marijuana and smoked.

PCP use often causes a user to feel detached from his surroundings. Numbness, slurred speech, and loss of coordination can be accompanied by a sense of strength and invulnerability. Auditory hallucinations and severe mood disorders can occur. In some users, acute anxiety, paranoia, hostility, and psychosis can occur.

## Ketamine

Ketamine is a fast-acting anesthetic and can be used on both humans and animals.

As a drug of abuse, it can be taken orally, snorted, or injected, and can be sprinkled on marijuana or tobacco and smoked. If used intravenously, effects can be felt immediately, and if snorted or taken orally, effects are evident in 10-15 minutes.

Ketamine can act as a depressant or a psychedelic and low doses can produce vertigo, slurred speech, slow reaction time and euphoria. In higher doses, Ketamine produces amnesia and coma.

## Drug Effects:

### PCP

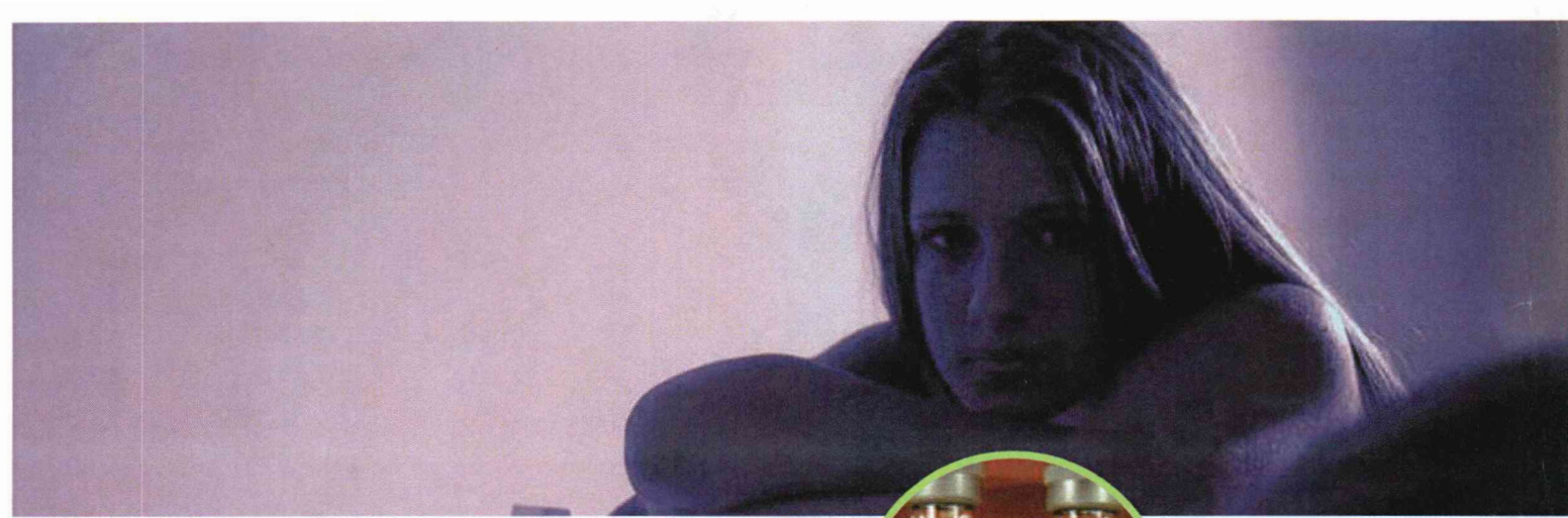
**Effects:** Illusions and hallucinations, altered perceptions of space and time. • **Overdose**

**Effects:** Suicidal and hostile behavior, coma, convulsions, and possible death from respiratory arrest. • **CSA Schedule:** Was

used in 1950's as intravenous anesthetic and discontinued for human use in 1965: Schedule I. • **Street**

**Names:** PCP, Angel Dust, Killer Weed, and Supergrass.





## Anabolic Steroids

Anabolic steroids are synthetically produced variants of the naturally occurring male hormone testosterone. The two main effects of these drugs are androgenic (developing male characteristics) and anabolic (building muscles).

The three main patterns of abuse include: cycling (alternating periods of use); stacking (using two or more at the same time); and pyramiding (progressively increasing and then decreasing doses and types of steroids).

Besides the short-term effects on both men and women, long-term use can lead to adverse cardiovascular effects, liver dysfunction, liver tumors, liver cancer, and cancer of the prostate in men. Among the most prevalent side-effects of steroids is the development of female characteristics in males (developing breasts) and the masculinization of women.

## Inhalants

Inhalants are a diverse group of substances that are sniffed, snorted, huffed, or placed in bags and inhaled to produce intoxication. Common household products such as aerosol propellants, glue, lighter fluid, cleaning fluids, and paint are the most abused inhalants. Inhalant users experience headache, nausea, slurred speech and loss of motor coordination. They sniff or "huff" ordinary household products like

nail polish remover, cleaning fluid, gasoline, and spray paint.

## Over The Counter (OTCs)

DXM (dextromethorphan) is a cough suppressant available in a variety of over-the-counter cough and cold medications. DXM is abused because, when taken in doses that dramatically exceed those recommended by physicians and pharmacists, it produces hallucinations and a sense of dissociation. As an over-the-counter medication, DXM is available in various forms including liquids, lozenges, tablets, capsules, and gel caps.

Individuals who abuse DXM consume much higher doses (typically more than 360 milligrams), which produce hallucinations and dissociative effects similar to those experienced with PCP (phencyclidine) or ketamine. While under the influence of the drug,



### Drug Effects: Ketamine

**Effects:** Illusions and hallucinations, altered perceptions of space and time.

**Overdose Effects:** Unable to direct movement, feel pain, or remember. **CSA Schedule:** Used as veterinary anesthetic: Schedule III. **Street Names:** Special K.



### Drug Effects: Anabolic Steroids

**Effects:** Virilization, edema, testicular atrophy, gynecomastia, acne, aggressive behavior, and mood changes.

**CSA Schedule:** Anabolic steroids are used medically to treat hormonal imbalances and other medical conditions. **Street Names:** Depo Testosterone, Juice.



### Drug Effects: Inhalants

**Effects:** Flushing, hypotension, and headache.

**Overdose Effect:** Can include damage to the heart, liver, kidneys, lungs, and brain; death can occur from a single use or after prolonged use. **CSA Schedule:** Inhalants are not scheduled under CSA. **Street Names:** Poppers, Rush, Snappers, Whippets, Kick, Bang and Amys.



**Drug Effects:**  
Over the  
Counter Drugs  
(OTCs)

**Effects:** Dissociation and hallucinations. • **Overdose Effects:** Loss of consciousness, seizures, brain damage, death. • **CSA Schedule:** OTCs are not scheduled under the CSA. • **Street Names:** Dex, DM, Drex, Robo, Rojo, Skittles, Triple C, and Velvet.

which can last for as long as 6 hours, DXM abusers risk injuring themselves and others because of the drug's effects on visual perception and cognitive processes.

In addition, individuals who ingest high doses of DXM risk hyperthermia (exceptionally high fever), particularly if they use the drug in a hot environ-

ment or while physically exerting themselves—such as at a rave or dance club. Other risks associated with DXM abuse include nausea, abdominal pain, vomiting, irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, headache, numbness of fingers and toes, loss of consciousness, seizures, brain damage, and death. Over-the-counter medications containing DXM frequently contain other ingredients that can cause additional health problems.

