

Student Health Services

Health Risks Of Illicit Drugs & Alcohol

MDMA (Ecstasy): XTC, X, Adam, Lover

Ecstasy, one of the most commonly abused “club drugs,” is a drug that can produce both stimulant and psychedelic effects. It is taken orally usually in a tablet or capsule. The stimulant effects may lead to dehydration, hypertension, and heart or kidney failure.

Health Hazards:

Confusion, depression, sleep problems, dehydration, paranoia, hypothermia, heart or kidney failure, and death.

Forms:

Tablets, capsule, powder and sometimes injected (rarely).

Marijuana: Pot, Dope, Weed, Grass, Herb, Reefer, Joint, Roach, Cannabis

Marijuana is a mind-altering drug that affects many skills, including abstract thinking, concentration, driving, etc. The amount of THC in marijuana determines how strong it will be.

Health Hazards:

Memory and learning loss, distorted perception, difficulty in thinking and problem solving, anxiety, panic attacks, increased heart rate and lung damage.

Forms:

Dried tops and leaves of marijuana plant ranging in color from grey-green to green-brown; smoke in hand rolled cigarettes, special pipes or cigar paper.

GHB: G, Liquid Ecstasy, Georgia HomeBoy

GHB is a “club drug” that is a central nervous system depressant. It was once largely purchased by body builders to aid fat reduction and muscle building. It is very difficult to distinguish from water. Coma and seizures can occur following use of GHB.

Health Hazards:

Seizures, nausea, difficulty breathing, tremors, sweating, anxiety, insomnia, and possible death. Combined with use of other drugs such as alcohol can result in nausea and difficulty breathing, and possible death.

Forms:

Liquid

Nicotine: Cigarettes, Cigars, Pipes, Chew, Dip

Nicotine, one of more than 4000 chemicals found in the smoke from tobacco products such as pipes, cigarettes, and cigars, is the primary component in tobacco that acts on the brain. Cigarette smoking is the most prevalent form of nicotine addiction in the United States. Though inhaling smoke, the average smoker takes one to two mg of nicotine per cigarette.

Health Hazards:

Cancer, addictions, coronary heart disease, chronic lung disease, peripheral vascular disease, and stroke, which all lead to death.

Forms:

Found in tobacco smoke and leaves.

Steroids (Anabolic-Androgenic):

Anabolic-androgenic steroids are man-made substances related to male sex hormones. Today, athletes and others abuse anabolic steroids to enhance performance and also to improve physical appearance. It can be taken orally or injected, typically in cycles of weeks or months (referred to as “cycling”), rather than continuously.

Forms:

Tablets, Liquid

Health Hazards:

Liver tumors, cancer, jaundice (yellowish pigmentation of skin, tissues, and body fluids), fluid retention, high blood pressure, kidney tumors, severe acne, and trembling. Gender-specific side effects:

- For men- -shrinking testicles, reduced sperm count, infertility, baldness, development of breast, and increased risk of prostate cancer.
- For women- -growth of facial hair, male-pattern baldness, change in or cessation of menstrual cycle, enlargement of clitoris, and deepened voice.

Oxycodone: Oxycontin or Percodan

Oxycontin is a narcotic that is listed in the opioid family. Opioids are attached to opioid receptors in the brain and spinal cord, blocking the transmission of pain messages to the brain. This drug is usually prescribed by physicians to manage acute or chronic pain. It is a long-lasting painkiller that’s without a doubt, the strongest on the market. Percodan and Oxycontin are both narcotics. Percodan is oxycodone with aspirin.

Forms:

Tablets, Liquid

Health Hazards:

Severe respiratory depression or death following a large dose. Drowsiness, constipation, blocked pain messages, and potential for tolerance, physical dependence, withdrawal, and /or addiction.

Alcohol: Booze, Beer, Wine, Liquor, Brew

Alcohol, the most commonly abused mind-altering drug, is a sedative that can change the way a person thinks, feels, and acts. Repeat use of alcohol can lead to dependence. Even low doses significantly impair the judgement and coordination of the person using. Low to moderate doses of alcohol also increases the incidence of a variety of aggressive acts. Moderate to high doses of alcohol cause marked impairments in higher mental functions, severely altering a person’s ability to learn and remember information. Very high doses (alcohol poisoning) cause respiratory depression and **death**. Alcohol poisoning can result in unconsciousness and death if not treated. The only thing that can get alcohol out of the system is time- - about 1 hour for each drink.

A drink is defined as:

- 12oz- beer
- 5oz- glass of wine
- 1oz-spirit (shot)

Health Hazards:

Liver damage, heart disease, addiction, accidents resulting from impaired ability, and possible death.

Forms:

Alcohol beverages.

FYI:

On sample college campuses in 1994, alcohol was involved in 67% of student suicides, 90% of rapes, and 95% of violent

crimes. Alcohol is involved in nearly 1/3 of all drownings, 1/2 of all deaths caused by fire, 1/2 of all homicides, and 2/3 of all assaults. Alcohol abuse contributes to almost half of all motor vehicle fatalities. Alcohol is most frequent cause of death (28%) among young Americans ages 5-24.

Ketamine: Special K, Vitamin K, K, Cat Valiums

Ketamine is an anesthetic that has been approved for both human and animal use in medical settings. It can be injected or snorted. 90% of ketamine legally sold today is intended for veterinary use. This drug has been used as a date rape drug and is very common in club and rave scenes.

Health Hazards:

Delirium, amnesia, impaired motor function, high blood pressure, depression, fatal respiratory problems, and death.

Forms:

Liquid, Powder

Methylphenidate (Ritalin): R-balls

Ritalin is a central nervous system stimulant. It has effects similar to, but more potent than, caffeine and less potent than amphetamines. This drug is prescribed for people with ADHD (Attention-deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). When abused, this drug is often used orally or crushed and used intranasally (snorted).

Forms:

Tablets, Powder (crushed tablets), Some abusers dissolve the tablets in water and inject the mixture.

Health Hazards:

Elevated blood pressure, increased heart rate, increased respiration, sleep deprivation, seizures, paranoia, heart palpitations, digestive problems, weight loss, diminished or decreased appetite.

Cocaine: Crack, Coke, Rock, Base, Powder

Cocaine is a white powdery substance that acts as a central nervous system stimulant. Cocaine, at one time used as a local anesthetic, is now prohibited under drug abuse laws. It is generally sniffed but it can be injected intravenously or smoked in a “free-based” form called crack

Health Hazards:

Seizures, heart attack, stroke, severe depression, paranoia, lung damage and sudden death.

Forms:

Powder, rock-like chips

Rohypnol: Roofies, Roche, Forget-me Pill

Rohypnol belongs to a class of drugs known as benzodiazepines (Valium, Xanax). Rohypnol is “the forget-me pill” and it has been reportedly used in sexual assaults. The drug can cause profound anterograde amnesia; individuals won’t remember events they experienced while under the effects of the drug.

Forms:

Tablets (dissolves easily in carbonated beverages)

Health Hazards:

Decreased blood pressures, drowsiness, visual disturbances, dizziness, confusion, gastrointestinal disturbances, urinary retention, and possible death.

October 14, 2008