

You may think you know all about drugs, but there are a lot of myths out there. Sometimes fiction gets in the way of fact.

the law

Illegal drugs include cannabis (pot, marijuana), ecstasy (pills, E, eccy), amphetamines (speed, ice), LSD (acid, trips), cocaine and heroin.

If you sell, use or carry illegal drugs you can be fined or jailed. A criminal record can seriously affect your future including getting a job and travelling to other countries.

Buying prescription medicines from friends or others, without a doctor's prescription, is illegal. Taking prescription drugs that aren't yours is very dangerous.

If you are under 18 it is illegal to drink or buy alcohol in pubs or clubs or take it away. If you get caught you could face a fine of up to \$2,200.

the risks

Taking drugs (even experimenting) involves risk:

- The effects of all drugs, even ones you may have taken before, are **unpredictable**.
- Drugs affect your body and mind – this is why you may feel **out of it**. But being out of it may also place you at risk of harm.
- You can never know what's in any illegal drug. Many illegal drugs have been mixed with other substances.
- Drugs can be addictive and may change your life. Doing drugs because you have to isn't like doing them occasionally.

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Mate, it's your choice.

Damien 17 **”**

- If someone offers you a drug – legal or illegal – it's your decision whether to take it or not.
- It's your right not to be pressured into doing something you don't want to.
- Other people have these rights too – so respect another person's decision not to smoke, drink or use other drugs.
- It's important to get your hands on information you can trust – like the stuff on this card.
- These sites include information on specific drugs, drug problems and services to help.

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You'd be invited, but we're sick of looking after you when you drink.

” Jess 16

- It takes time for alcohol to reach the brain. You may be **drunker than you think**. By the time you feel the effects of the first drink you could be on your second or third. Drink slowly, monitor how many drinks you've had and drink something non-alcoholic in between.
- The fun of drinking can turn **nasty** really quickly – slurred speech, blurry vision and bad coordination.
- Things you regret like unsafe sex, fights and vomiting in public can happen when you're drunk. You can also get a hangover that lasts all the next day.
- Drinking alcohol before you are 18 can affect your brain development and make it harder to learn and remember things in the future.

drink spiking

- Drink spiking is when alcohol or another substance is added to a person's drink without them knowing. As a result they could become intoxicated (drunk) unexpectedly.
- Drink spiking is a serious offence. It's no joke, even when you do it to a mate. It's **dangerous and illegal**.
- To avoid drink spiking keep an eye on your drink and don't accept drinks from strangers. If a drink tastes funny, don't finish it. If you become dizzy or feel unwell tell a friend or call home.

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I didn't realise that pot has even more cancer causing stuff than tobacco smoke.

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Tyler, 15

- Drug effects can vary from person to person. Some people say pot relaxes them while others become sleepy or confused, anxious and suspicious of others.
- Some people report that smoking pot regularly can lead to a lack of interest in other activities and losing touch with friends because you don't go out any more.
- Regular smoking can affect your physical fitness and your ability to play sport.
- For some people, smoking pot can trigger depression and other mental illnesses.
- Holding the smoke in, or sucking on a bong, increases the amount of tar and other dangerous chemicals that damage the lungs. This increases your risk of breathing disorders and throat and lung cancer.

Want to talk about it ?

These services are **anonymous** and are always ready to talk with you.

Alcohol and Drug Information Service
(02) 9361 8000 or 1800 422 599
toll-free (for regional NSW), 24 hours. If you need an interpreter call 13 14 50.

Kids Help Line 1800 55 1800
24 hours, toll free, or for details about emailing visit www.kidshelp.com.au

Reach Out www.reachout.com.au
A web-based support service that helps you through tough times.

Legal Aid hotline 1800 10 18 10
for advice on legal rights for under 18s.

Family Drug Support 1300 368 186
Call for 24 hour crisis support or visit the website at www.fds.org.au

www.yourroom.com.au
drug and alcohol information, interactive game, campaigns, resources

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My mate's an idiot - he reckons he drives better when he's stoned.

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Ryan 18

- It's really dangerous to drive after taking drugs or drinking. It's also illegal.
- About one in five fatal accidents involve alcohol or other drugs.
- Drugs affect your decision-making and ability to respond. This causes accidents and sometimes death.
- Drinking alcohol can relax you and make you feel confident, but it also reduces the skills you need to drive safely. Smoking pot can have the same effect. You underestimate dangers and think you're driving well when you're not.
- In NSW the legal blood alcohol limit for L and P plate drivers is **zero**. One drink and you are over the limit. If you are caught you will **lose your licence**.
- If you drink a lot the night before, you could still be over the limit the next day.
- It's dangerous to be a passenger in a car when the driver is affected by drugs or alcohol.

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One eccy and my head felt like it was going to burst. I broke out in a sweat and felt really sick.

” Ali 17

- Ecstasy manufacture isn't regulated, so you never **know** what you're really taking.
- Ecstasy can make people feel alert and in tune with their surroundings and other people. The 'comedown' after taking pills can leave you tired, depressed and irritable, sometimes for days.
- It can cause jaw clenching, teeth grinding, nausea, headaches and loss of appetite.
- Pills affect temperature control. You can **overheat** or dehydrate. Drink water and take breaks from dancing.
- Ecstasy hasn't been around long enough for its long-term effects to show, so ecstasy users are human 'guinea pigs'.

Mixing drugs is not safe.

- Using more than one drug at a time (including alcohol) is very dangerous. One drug can make the negative effects of the other even worse.
- Alcohol dehydrates the body and so can ecstasy, so if you take both while dancing, the dangers of dehydration are increased.
- People who get sick or die from using drugs often have more than one drug in their body at the time.

call an AMBO!

When the ambulance gets there, tell the ambulance officer exactly what the person has been taking. **This information could save your friend's life.**

Ambos don't call the police unless they're in danger themselves, someone dies, or there are other, non-drug crimes (such as violence or theft) involved.

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She was freaking out – I stayed with her and shouted for help.

” Danielle 18

Sometimes a friend may need help fast. Look after them even if they are embarrassed – never leave a friend alone if they are sick.

If you have taken drugs make sure someone knows what you have taken in case you become sick, unconscious or need an ambo.

Warning signs

If someone has the following symptoms call an ambulance – dial 000 – immediately. Emergency symptoms include:

- severe headaches
- fainting
- stomach cramps
- vomiting
- feeling hot, cold or just unwell
- becoming confused or irrational
- having trouble breathing
- falling asleep / losing consciousness
- having a convulsion (a fit).