

**FRANK**

**THE TRUTH  
ABOUT DRUGS.  
KNOW THE  
SCORE**

0800 77 66 00 [TALKTOFRANK.COM](http://TALKTOFRANK.COM)  
FRIENDLY, CONFIDENTIAL DRUGS ADVICE

## Drugs – lots of them – lots to know about them

<b>Acid</b> (LSD)	<b>Junk</b> (Heroin)
<b>Base</b> (Speed)	<b>Legal Highs</b>
<b>Bhang</b> (Cannabis)	<b>Liberties</b> (Magic mushrooms)
<b>Billy</b> (Speed)	<b>Liquid Gold</b> (Poppers)
<b>Black</b> (Cannabis)	<b>Lucy</b> (LSD)
<b>Blow</b> (Cannabis)	<b>Marijuana</b> (Cannabis)
<b>Brown</b> (Heroin)	<b>MDMA</b> (Ecstasy)
<b>Charlie</b> (Cocaine)	<b>Mephedrone Meth</b> (Speed)
<b>Christine</b> (Methylamphetamine)	<b>Mushies</b> (Magic mushrooms)
<b>Coke</b> (Cocaine)	<b>Percy</b> (Cocaine)
<b>Crazy medicine</b> (Methylamphetamine)	<b>Pills</b> (Ecstasy)
<b>Crystal Meth</b> (Methylamphetamine)	<b>Puff</b> (Cannabis)
<b>Dope</b> (Cannabis)	<b>Resin</b> (Cannabis)
<b>Draw</b> (Cannabis)	<b>Rock</b> (Crack cocaine)
<b>Drone</b> (Mephedrone)	<b>Shrooms</b> (Magic mushrooms)
<b>Dust</b> (Cocaine)	<b>Skag</b> (Heroin)
<b>E</b> (Ecstasy)	<b>Skunk</b> (Cannabis)
<b>Flash</b> (LSD)	<b>Smilies</b> (LSD)
<b>Freebase</b> (Crack cocaine)	<b>Snow</b> (Cocaine)
<b>Ganja</b> (Cannabis)	<b>Spliff</b> (Cannabis)
<b>Gear</b> (Cannabis and Heroin)	<b>Tab</b> (LSD)
<b>Glass</b> (Methylamphetamine)	<b>Tina</b> (Methylamphetamine)
<b>Grass</b> (Cannabis)	<b>Toot</b> (Cocaine)
<b>H</b> (Heroin)	<b>Trips</b> (LSD)
<b>Hash</b> (Cannabis)	<b>Wash</b> (Crack cocaine)
<b>Herb</b> (Cannabis)	<b>Weed</b> (Cannabis)
<b>Ice</b> (Methylamphetamine)	<b>White</b> (Cocaine)
	<b>Whizz</b> (Speed)
	<b>Yaba</b> (Methylamphetamine)

# THINK EVERYONE TAKES DRUGS? MOST PEOPLE DON'T.

In fact, 60% of 16–24 year olds have never taken an illegal drug. So how do you know what's fact and what's fiction?

**This A-Z booklet gives the lowdown on lots legal and illegal drugs.**

It tells you about their risks as well as their effects and other information that is useful to know. Like what to do if you're worried about a mate. Or what happens when you mix drugs.

There are also stories from people who've been there, done that. And details on where to go for help and advice so that, when it comes to drugs, **you know the score.**

# alcohol

**Looks like:** Beer, lager, alcopops, cider, wine, spirits and shots.

**Highs:** In small amounts alcohol can help you relax and feel more sociable. It can make your emotions more intense, which might be ok if you're in a good mood, but not so great if you're feeling low.

**Lows:** Too much alcohol and you'll start slurring your words and get clumsy or fall over. You might start crying or getting angry - or do something you regret. Mixing with other drugs can be dangerous, and drinking too much in one go can lead to alcohol poisoning which can make you unconscious



or even kill you. If you drink alcohol a lot, you can end up feeling depressed. A long-term drinking habit can cause liver, heart and stomach problems. You can also get addicted and become an alcoholic.

If you're under 18, it is illegal for someone to sell you alcohol. And illegal for someone else to buy it on your behalf.

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FACT**

# anabolic steroids (class C)

**Looks like:** Tablets that are swallowed or a liquid that is injected.

**Highs:** Steroids help build up muscles if you take them as part of a strenuous exercise programme. They might also help people recover faster from such exercise.

**Lows:** Steroids can make you aggressive, even if you are normally calm. They can also stop you growing properly.

- blokes - you can get erection problems, grow breasts, develop acne or your testicles could shrink



- girls - you can get extra facial hair, a deep voice and your breasts could shrink

You might start getting paranoid, confused or have trouble sleeping. Longer term, they can give you high blood pressure and liver or heart problems. After you stop taking them, you might feel tired or low for a while. There's a risk of damaging your veins or muscles if you inject.

# Ben

“When I think of dealers I think of big time gangsters or people outside clubs. Not me. All I did was try to sort a few friends out with some pills and a bit of whizz. The police haven't told me what's going to happen yet. I could get a reprimand or a formal warning. I might even have to appear in court. Mum was in a state of shock when she turned up at the police station. She's said she'll stand by me but I know she feels let down.

**Ben, 15**

”

See **THE LAW** (page 25) for more info on what could happen if you supply drugs to friends – even if you give them for free.

# buzz

It's the way you feel after taking a drug. It depends on what the drug is and how much you've taken. And it depends on how you are feeling, where you are taking it and who you're with. But you might...

## 1. Get high

Some drugs make you feel more alert and energetic = cocaine; crack; ecstasy; poppers; speed, mephedrone

## 2. Calm down

Some drugs slow you down. They can make you feel calm and sleepy = alcohol; cannabis; gases, glues and aerosols (also known as volatile substances); GHB; tranquillisers, heroin

## 3. Trip out

Some drugs affect your mind. They distort the way you see, hear, feel and smell things = cannabis; ecstasy; ketamine; LSD; magic mushrooms

## 4. Get knocked out

Some drugs block out physical and emotional pain = heroin

**But if the high was the only thing that happened, wouldn't everyone be taking drugs?**

See **COMEDOWN** (page 11) and check out the **LOWS** throughout this leaflet.

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# cannabis (class B)

## Looks like:

- hash = blacky-brown lump made from resin
- grass or weed = the dried, chopped leaves. Often called 'herbal'
- skunk = a type of herbal cannabis. On average, it is 2-4 times stronger than other varieties

Usually mixed with tobacco and smoked as a spliff or joint. Can also be used to make tea or can be baked in 'hash cakes' and cookies.

**Highs:** Smoking a spliff makes a lot of people happy and relaxed and the effects can last a few hours. Some people have one puff and get



the giggles. It can make colours and sounds seem brighter and sharper.

**Lows:** Some people go pale and feel sick, especially if they've been drinking. Some people get anxious or paranoid. Smoking it increases your chances of getting diseases like lung cancer and bronchitis.

Regular users have an increased risk of mental health problems, including schizophrenia. This could be worse if you smoke a lot, are young and smoke strong cannabis like skunk. Cannabis is particularly risky if you've a history of mental health problems, depression or paranoia.

Long-term use may affect memory and concentration levels, which can hinder performance in school, college or work – in some cases causing people to give up or drop out. Cannabis has also been associated with draining people of energy, leaving users tired and lazy and more likely to sit around than get on with things.

Just because cannabis is natural doesn't mean it won't harm you. And don't forget, cannabis is illegal.

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FACT**

# cash

**Drugs cost.** If you take pills every weekend, you could easily end up spending quite a chunk of cash in a year just on the drugs. Stealing to pay for drugs can land you with a conviction.

“It was getting crazy. Each time I did it, I just wanted more. I was blowing all my cash on it – and always looking out for a chance to score. My girlfriend was getting fed up with me having no money so I decided I had to face up to what drugs were costing me. **Sean, 18**”

And there are other costs too:

- to your health
- to your safety
- to your goals

**Drugs can cost you even more.**

**Check out THE LAW on page 25.**

The costs are not just financial. Socially and environmentally, drugs take their toll. Because drugs don't just affect the people who use them: they impact on the lives of people who become victims of drug-related crime, and on those who have to live with the mess that drug users leave behind.

They also affect workers in other countries who grow the raw materials, and the people who are involved in smuggling and transportation.

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FACT**

# comedown

With drugs like cocaine, speed and ecstasy the high is followed by a comedown where you might feel tired, depressed or physically low.

With ecstasy, the comedown following weekend clubbing can last a few days, and some clubbers call it “mid-week flu”. With crack cocaine the comedown is more of a crash and you might crave more of the drug. When they crash, some people can get irritable or aggressive.

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# cocaine (class A)

**Looks like:** A white powder. It can be snorted, smoked or injected.

**Highs:** Makes you feel wide awake and confident. It can give your ego a real boost, so you might end up thinking you're the world's greatest flirt, dancer or comedian (although usually you're not!).

**Lows:** Because cocaine is really addictive, a habit can be expensive. Snorting it can destroy the inside of your nose and high doses can stop you breathing. Even young people can have a fit or heart attack after taking too much and people have died from overdose.



The hit is quite short-lived – 20-30 minutes – so people are often tempted to take more. After a big night on coke you might feel like you've got flu.

Using it regularly can make you feel run-down, panicky and reduce your sex drive.

# crack cocaine (class A)



**Looks like:** Small lumps or rocks about the size of a raisin.. It's called crack because it makes a crackling sound when it's being burnt. Usually smoked or it can also be injected.

**Highs:** Same short-lived effects as snorting cocaine, but much stronger and a more intense high.

**Lows:** Crack cocaine is extremely addictive and it's an expensive habit because the effects wear off so quickly. It can cause mood swings and massive paranoia. High doses can raise your temperature and stop you breathing and, if you overdose, it can lead to a heart attack and can be fatal. Heavy users often get anxious and paranoid, have trouble sleeping and feel sick quite a lot.

## crystal meth

 See page 34

# depression

Feeling a bit low or moody the day after – or sometimes even longer – is part of the deal with most drugs.

Sometimes it gets more serious. If things don't make sense any more and you want to curl up and hide, you probably need to talk to someone who can help, such as your GP.

“After a while I didn't feel like myself anymore. I didn't know where the old me had gone to.”  
**Sammi, 18**

# drug-impaired driving

You know that drink-driving is illegal. What you might not know is that driving when high is also illegal – and you can still be unfit to drive the day after using a drug. You can get a heavy fine, be disqualified from driving or even go to prison.

You need co-ordination, anticipation, concentration and good judgement to drive safely. And all of these things can go out of the window if you're on drugs.

The police use roadside tests to find out whether motorists are unfit to drive because of alcohol or drugs.

# ecstasy (class A)



**Looks like:** Pure ecstasy is a white crystal powder which scientists call 'MDMA'. Ecstasy sold on the street usually comes in tablets and is unlikely to be pure MDMA. It also comes in all sorts of colours and designs, and can sometimes be sold as powder.

**Highs:** You have loads of energy. Sounds, colours and emotions feel more intense – you might feel like you love everyone around you.

**Lows:** Ecstasy can cause anxiety, panic attacks and confusion. It raises your temperature and makes your heart beat faster. Be careful though,

as drinking too quickly interferes with your body's salt balance, which can be as deadly as not drinking enough water. Reduce the risks by sipping no more than a pint of water or non-alcoholic fluid every hour. There have been over 200 reported ecstasy-related deaths in the UK since 1990.

In some cases E stops the body producing urine, so if you drink too much liquid too quickly, it can interfere badly with your body's salt balance, which >>>



>>> can be as deadly as not drinking enough water. You never know what you're getting with an E or how you'll react.

See **HARM** (page 19)  
What's in your E?  
See **X - the 'unknown'**  
(page 49)

## FRANK

**FRANK is here to give you friendly, confidential advice on any subject related to drugs:**

- what they are and what they do
- pressure from your mates
- looking after yourself
- what to do if things go wrong
- where to get help locally

FRANK is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Calls are free from landlines and some mobiles. You can talk to FRANK confidentially:

- on **0800 77 66 00**
- by **textphone** (for the hard of hearing)  
**0800 917 8765**
- by going to **www.talktofrank.com**
- by emailing **frank@talktofrank.com**

# gases, glues and aerosols and other volatile substances

**Looks like:** Gas lighter refills, cans of hairspray, deodorants, air fresheners, tins or tubes of glue and nail varnish.

**Highs:** Makes you feel dizzy and lose your inhibitions.

**Lows:** Volatile substances can lead to coma and heart problems and can kill you instantly. People have died the first time they've used them. Squirting gas products into your mouth is particularly dangerous and deadly. It makes your throat swell so you can't breathe and makes your heart slow down. It's important not to

scare or chase someone who is high on a volatile substance as a sudden shock can be fatal.

They can seriously affect your judgment so you might try something stupid. At the very least, you could get a red rash around your mouth, be sick or pass out.

It is against the law for a shopkeeper to sell ANY product to someone under 18 if they suspect they might use it to get high.

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FACT**

# GHB and GBL (class C)

**Looks like:** They are clear liquids with no smell, which taste slightly salty. They come in small bottles or capsules. Sometimes comes in powder form. GHB and GBL have much the same effect, because GBL is turned into GHB by the body.



**Highs:** Can make you feel euphoric, sensual and uninhibited. Effects can last up to a whole day.

**Lows:** You might feel sick, you can get muscle tremors and you might lose consciousness. It can be fatal if it's mixed with alcohol or other drugs. Take too much and you'll start to feel sleepy and out of it. We don't know what the long-term effects of GHB are but you can become physically dependent on high doses with dangerous withdrawals in some people.

# harm

## FRANK ADVICE

**Substances are not safe and can cause long-term harm.** The safest option is not to use drugs.

Anyone who does take drugs should:

- avoid mixing drugs – see **MIXING IT** (page 35) for more info
- pace themselves – it can take a while for substances to kick in
- take a break – if they're dancing, they should take regular breaks to cool down, drink water and check how they're feeling
- keep hydrated (especially if taking ecstasy and speed while clubbing). It's best to sip fruit juice or isotonic sports drinks regularly (no more than a pint an hour)
- keep track of the amount they're using – to avoid an overdose
- stay with other people – especially if they start to feel ill
- take it easy the morning after – to help their body recover. That means simple, healthy stuff like water, toast and orange juice

# Haylee

“The first time I took coke I was at a party and up for a good time. I felt like I was IT after I’d done it. After a while, coke was ruling my social life. But the highs weren’t as good as they used to be, so when someone suggested crack I decided to try it. Before long, that was what I’d choose if I could get my hands on it. The only thing was, I always felt really ill afterwards. One night, a couple of guys I was with were smoking heroin to get through the crash. They said I should take some. I’d always seen myself as someone who took drugs to have a laugh. This made me realise I was in too deep. Getting into heroin was never part of the plan. **Haylee, 17**”

## heroin (class A)



**Looks like:** Pure heroin is white and is rarely seen on the streets. Street heroin is more likely to vary in colour from dark brown to yellowish off-white. It can be smoked, snorted or dissolved in water and injected or heated and inhaled (called ‘chasing the dragon’).

**Highs:** Heroin slows your body down and stops pain. Most people get a big rush or buzz a few minutes after taking it, which can make them feel good about themselves.

**Lows:** Heroin is very addictive and your body gets used to it very quickly so you have to take more and more just to feel ‘normal’ and avoid severe withdrawals. You can get sleepy, dizzy or vomit; too much can put you in a coma or even kill you, especially if taken with alcohol. If you take it with other drugs – including alcohol – you are more likely to overdose.

See page 23 for info on **INJECTING**

Also see **UNCONSCIOUS**

# holidays

## Wish you were here?

**Weather is hot** – so there's more chance of getting dehydrated if you're taking ecstasy or speed. Putting alcohol into the mix can make things even worse.

**Loads to do** – but don't get off your head so you can't find your way back to your hotel or end up doing something you regret.

**New experiences** – different food, scenery, clubs and people. Is it wise to experiment with something like drugs when you're in an unfamiliar place? And that's without the risks you face if you get caught (see FRANK fact).

**Friendly locals** – and you'll be treated like a local if you get caught with drugs.

Some countries have much stricter laws than in the UK – there's a death sentence for some drug offences in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Iran and Algeria. Some countries will not let you in in the first place if you have a drug conviction.

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FACT**

# injecting

**Cocaine, crack cocaine, heroin and speed are sometimes injected.**

It takes the drug straight into the bloodstream so it gives people a quicker, bigger high.

Injecting can massively increase the risk of an overdose, cause vein damage, ulcers and gangrene and spread HIV and viral hepatitis. Injecting a 'speedball' – cocaine and heroin – can be deadly.

**FRANK  
FACT**

# jobs

**Drugs can make a job – or school or college – really hard work.**

They can mess up the way you act, how well you can focus, what you remember and how you deal with people. And a drug conviction might stop you getting your dream job or lose the one you have.

# ketamine (class C)

**Looks like:** Usually comes as a grainy white powder which is snorted or bought as a tablet.

**Highs:** Ketamine makes you hallucinate (see and hear things that aren't there). You can experience the effects for up to 3 hours (depending on the dose) and you might have an 'out of body' experience.

**Lows:** It's an anaesthetic and stops you feeling pain, so you're in danger of injuring yourself badly without knowing you've done it. Sometimes people are physically incapable of moving. It can cause panic attacks, depression and, in large doses, can make mental health problems like schizophrenia worse. Large doses can make it difficult to breathe and can cause heart failure. If you're sick, there's a risk you could choke on your vomit.

See **SAFETY** (page 40)



# the law

**There are two offences police can charge you with if you are caught with drugs:**

## Possession

If you are caught with drugs the police will always take action, even if it's only a small amount. What happens depends on the circumstances. You might get a warning and have the drug confiscated or, if it's more serious, you will be arrested. The police will think it's more serious if:

- you've been caught with class A drugs

- this isn't the first time you've been caught

## Dealing

**(which includes the offences Possession With Intent to Supply, Offer to Supply and Supply)**

Dealing is much more serious and includes being caught with drugs that you were going to share with your mates.

**A drug dealer could end up in jail for a long time (see maximum penalties on page 26).**

A criminal record could affect your chances of getting a job or going on holiday abroad. Remember – drug-driving is as illegal as drink-driving and carries the same penalties.

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## The three Classes of illegal drugs

Illegal drugs are put into three categories: Class A, B and C. Class A are the most harmful and have the biggest penalties.

Drug	Maximum penalties
<b>Class A</b> – cocaine and crack cocaine, crystal meth, ecstasy, heroin, LSD and magic mushrooms (raw or processed)	<b>Possession</b> – 7 years in prison and an unlimited fine <b>Possession With Intent to Supply or Supply</b> – Life in prison and an unlimited fine
<b>Class B</b> – cannabis, speed (speed is Class A if prepared for injection), mephedrone	<b>Possession</b> – 5 years in prison and an unlimited fine <b>Possession With Intent to Supply or Supply</b> – 14 years in prison and an unlimited fine
<b>Class C</b> – anabolic steroids, ketamine and tranquillisers	<b>Possession</b> – 2 years in prison and an unlimited fine <b>Possession With Intent to Supply or Supply</b> – 14 years in prison and an unlimited fine

## ‘legal highs’

### Looks like/used:

- there are many different ‘legal highs’ but most come as pills or powders
- under current medicines legislation it’s illegal to sell, supply or advertise ‘legal highs’ for human consumption. In an attempt to get round this sellers refer to them as research chemicals, plant food or bath crystals.

### Feels like:

- mimics the effects of illegal drugs, such as cocaine and ecstasy

### Possible side effects and risks:

- there has been very little or no useful research into the effects of many ‘legal highs’
- It is becoming increasingly clear that ‘legal highs’ are far from harmless and have similar health risks to illegal drugs
- reduced inhibitions, drowsiness, excited or paranoid states, seizures, coma and even death are possible side effects
- Using with alcohol or other drugs can increase the risk

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It is likely that drugs sold as a **'legal high'** may actually contain one or more substances that are actually illegal to possess. Some websites selling "legal highs" are actually selling substances which contain illegal substances.

Just because a substance is called a 'legal high' doesn't mean that it is either safe to use or legal to possess and supply.

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FACT**

## looks

One E or a few spliffs will make you look a bit out of it. But long-term drug use can affect your appearance including your skin, hair and weight. And your personal hygiene might end up taking a back seat too.

“I couldn't bear to look in the mirror any more – I looked really old, my skin was pasty and spotty, my eyes were black and I hadn't even bothered to keep my clothes clean. **Stacey, 17**”

## LSD (class A)



**Looks like:** Tiny squares of paper called 'tabs', usually with pictures on them.

**Highs:** The experience or "a trip" makes you hallucinate (see or hear things that aren't there) and feeds off your imagination for up to 12 hours. Colours and sounds can be more intense, and objects, time and movement are often distorted.

**Lows:** If you panic on a trip it can be scary and confusing. A bad trip can be your worst nightmare come to life – you could harm yourself while having a bad trip and you might also get flashbacks days or months after the event.

There's no evidence to suggest LSD does any long-term physical damage, but if you have mental health problems, it can make them worse. If you have a history of serious mental health problems in your family, LSD may accentuate any vulnerability to mental health problems.

# magic mushrooms (class A)

**Looks like:** Raw or dried mushrooms. There are two types; the 'Liberty Cap' is small and tan coloured. The 'fly agaric' looks like a red and white toadstool.



**Highs:** Like LSD, but the trip is often milder and shorter and typically lasts about 4 hours. People feel giggly and confident. Taking lots of mushrooms can distort colour, sound, objects, time and movement.

**Lows:** Mushrooms make some people dizzy, sick or have diarrhoea. They can make you hallucinate (which means you could see or hear things that aren't really there) and this can be frightening. You could get flashbacks where you re-live part of the trip and, as with LSD, bad trips can be terrifying. If you have a mental health problem, magic mushrooms might complicate it. And there's always the risk of taking a poisonous mushroom by mistake as they look quite similar.

# mates

## Got a mate taking drugs?

Is it doing your head in as well as theirs? You could try talking to them. Check out the tips below:

**1. Decide what you want to say** before you begin. What do you think the problem is and what do you want them to do?

**2. Pick your moment.** Talk to them when you're calm and when they are not high.

**3. Avoid asking 'why?'** Instead, ask questions that start with how, when, what or where.

**4. Focus on them, not the drugs.** The drugs aren't doing anything to you – your mate is. You need to explain how their behaviour affects you. Are they unreliable? Moody? Broke?

**5. Listen to them.** If they go for help, offer to go with them.

At the end of the day, if you can't accept their choices, you need to decide whether you want to carry on being mates.

If they need help (or you need help to deal with them), FRANK can help.



# mephedrone (class B)

**And not to be confused with Methadone!**

**Looks like:** A fine white, off-white or yellowish powder which is snorted like cocaine or wrapped in paper and swallowed ('bombed' is the slang name for this). It can also be smoked and in some rare cases people inject it. It also comes in capsules and pills.



**Highs:** Users feel alert, confident, euphoric and talkative, and some feel greater empathy with people nearby.

**Lows:** Mephedrone can cause anxiety and paranoia and can overstimulate the nervous system which can cause fits, agitation and hallucinations. It can also overstimulate the heart and circulation. It has also been linked to a number of deaths in the UK.

# methadone (class A)

Methadone (not be confused with Mephedrone) is a manufactured drug that has similar effects to heroin, although it doesn't give the same degree of high. It is used as a substitute for heroin in the treatment of heroin addiction.



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# methamphetamine (class A)

aka Methylamphetamine -  
Crystal Meth

**Looks like:** It's a type of amphetamine that comes as a tablet, powder or crystals.

**Highs:** Gives a very intense rush similar to crack cocaine but lasting between 4 and 12 hours. It suppresses the appetite and keeps you awake.

**Lows:** Crystal meth is very addictive and people often end up bingeing on it. It can cause mental health problems and affect your appearance. Your teeth and gums could rot away (known as 'meth mouth') and you could get nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. Some people get skin ulcers through picking at bugs they imagine are crawling under their skin. While on the drug, users often indulge in risky sexual behaviour.



# mixing it

All drugs carry risks. But mixing them can make things a lot more dangerous.

## heroin or tranquillisers and alcohol

'Downer' drugs like this slow down your heart rate and breathing. Overdose is much more likely when these drugs are combined, as they make the 'downer' effect even stronger and can have fatal consequences.

## heroin + cocaine

Known as a 'speedball', this can be deadly.

## cocaine + alcohol

Produces a highly toxic substance in the body called cocaethylene which affects your heart and stays in your system longer than cocaine alone.

## stimulants (like cocaine and speed) + alcohol

These both put pressure on the heart, increasing the risk of heart attack.

## stimulants + stimulants

Sometimes the effects of one stimulant don't kick in straight away so people take something else. This can give an unpleasant effect and can put a serious strain on the heart.

## ecstasy + cannabis

Sometimes people take cannabis to take the edge off an ecstasy trip. But instead of calming you down, it could make you anxious and paranoid.

# Nick

“We’d been hanging out, having a few drinks and then went back to my friend Paul’s house. His brother and a couple of other mates had been clubbing and had all taken some Es. I don’t know what else they’d had but they were all off their heads. His brother rolled a spliff and it started doing the rounds. Paul took a puff and passed it to me. I’d never done cannabis before so I tried it – I didn’t want my mates to think I couldn’t handle it. **Nick, 16**

”

# overdose

There’s no such thing as a safe amount to take. And you don’t know how you might react differently to other people. But an overdose is when you take so much your body can’t cope. **If this happens you’ll need urgent medical attention.**

With some drugs like cocaine and heroin, your tolerance can build up very quickly, so you need more and more to get the same high. If you then take a break your tolerance goes down. It’s easy to take too much.

# panic

When someone’s on ecstasy, LSD, mushrooms or speed there’s a risk they might panic. So how do you deal with it?

- calm them down and be reassuring
- steer them clear of crowds, noisy music and bright lights
- tell them to take long slow breaths
- if someone’s high (especially on volatile substances), don’t scare them – it could kill them

# poppers

**Looks like:** Poppers come in small bottles filled with liquid chemicals called alkyl nitrites. They are sold in sex shops, clubs and gay bars.



**Highs:** You get a head rush that lasts a couple of minutes.

Sniffing poppers during sex can make sexual organs feel bigger and make orgasms feel like they last longer.

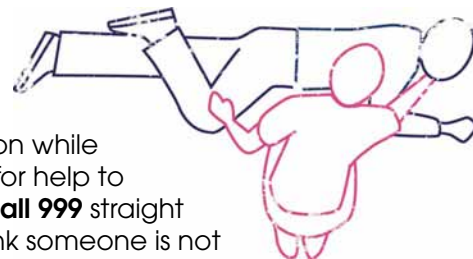
**Lows:** The effects don't last long and can leave people feeling sick, faint and weak. They can give you a severe headache, or a rash around your nose and mouth. They can burn your skin if you spill them or kill you if you swallow them. Taking poppers is a bad idea for anyone with chest or heart problems, or if you are anaemic or have glaucoma (an eye disorder). Some men say they have trouble getting an erection after sniffing poppers. Poppers are not addictive but they are toxic. Using Viagra and poppers together can affect your heart.

# questions?

Don't keep them bottled up. FRANK can give you friendly, confidential help and advice on **0800 77 66 00** or at **talktofrank.com** or by email **frank@talktofrank.com**. FRANK is available 24 hours

# recovery position

If someone's in a bad way on drugs, put them in the recovery position while you're waiting for help to arrive. Always **call 999** straight away if you think someone is not breathing properly or is unconscious.



# risks

**No drug is completely safe. There are lots of different risks:**

- **HARM** – see page 19
- **SAFETY** – see page 40
- **LOWS** – these are different for each drug. See their individual pages for more info.

# safety

## You are at risk when you are on drugs:

- **being reckless** – some drugs can make you feel invincible, putting yourself or others at risk of injury.
- **making bad decisions** – some drugs can cloud your judgement so you might do something you regret.
- **being attacked** – make sure your drinks aren't tampered with so you're not at risk of drug-assisted sexual assault.
- **getting in with the wrong crowd** – you might end up getting involved in crime.

# sex

## Some drugs make you less choosy

Volatile substances (which include gases, glues and aerosols), GHB and alcohol make you less inhibited, so you might pull someone you wouldn't usually look twice at.

## Some drugs let you down

Alcohol, tranquillisers and heroin can turn a big night of passion into a big night of nothing. Regular heroin users can lose their sex drive altogether. You could end up taking more risks and do things you wouldn't normally do, like forgetting to use a condom.

## Some drugs can be deceptive

Lots of people think cocaine, speed and ecstasy are good for sex. They might make you feel horny, but you might not be able to follow through.

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# skunk (class B)

Skunk is a very strong form of cannabis that is usually produced using special growing techniques. On average it is 2-4 times stronger than hash. It was called "skunk" because some forms have a powerful smell.

If you inhale just as much as you would for hash or traditional herbal cannabis it can have a much stronger effect. It has become more common in recent years than the less potent forms of cannabis.

You need to watch out for skunk, as it contains much more THC (the



stuff that gets you high) than ordinary cannabis. So be aware: skunk can really mess you up.

## Mental health

If you smoke cannabis regularly, you have an increased risk of developing serious mental health problems, including schizophrenia. Smoking skunk might increase these risks even more. You just don't know how it will affect your mental health in the future.

# speed (class B)

(but Class A if prepared for injection)



**Looks like:** Usually sold in wraps like cocaine. The powder is off-white or pink and sometimes looks like small crystals. Base speed is pinky-grey and feels like putty. Speed is dabbed on the gums or sniffed in lines. It can also be rolled up in cigarette paper and swallowed, mixed in drinks or injected.

**Highs:** Speed makes you feel wide awake, excited, chatty and full of energy and stops you feeling hungry. It can cause hallucinations if you sniff a lot in a short space of time.

**Lows:** Speed puts a strain on your heart and taking it with anti-depressants or alcohol can be fatal. It can make you anxious, low, irritable or aggressive and too much sniffing of it can damage your nose. If you use it a lot, you could get more colds, flu and sore throats. Injecting carries the usual risks associated with needle use. The high is followed by a long, slow comedown which makes you feel irritable and can last for one or two days.

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# tobacco

**Looks like:** A brown, flaky mixture of dried and rubbed leaves of the tobacco plant, which is smoked or sometimes chewed. Sometimes cannabis is added to make a 'spliff' or joint.



**Highs:** Regular smokers say it helps them relax and feel less hungry.

**Lows:** Nicotine is a highly addictive drug. It speeds up the heart rate and increases your blood pressure. Smokers get hooked very quickly and it can take years and a huge effort to kick the habit. **(For friendly advice on giving up, call the NHS smokefree line on 0800 022 4332 or log on at [www.smokefree.nhs.uk/](http://www.smokefree.nhs.uk/)).**

Long-term addiction can lead to cancer and serious lung and heart problems. Smoking has been linked to 2,000 amputations and 106,000 premature deaths a year in the UK. Smoking when pregnant can put your baby at risk.

**FRANK  
FACT**

# tranquillisers (class C)

**Looks like:** Tranquillisers are prescribed by doctors to treat anxiety and insomnia. They can come as tablets, capsules, injections and suppositories (tablets you put up your bum).

**Highs:** Tranquillisers calm people down. Some people have them on prescription. They make you feel more relaxed and less anxious but big doses can make you sleepy and forgetful. They're used as chill-out drugs on the club scene.



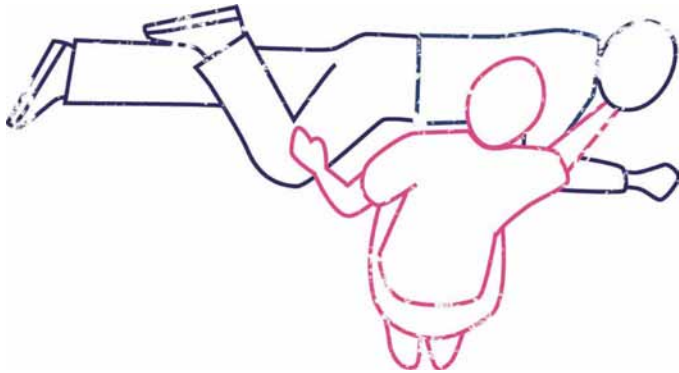
**Lows:** Some cause shortterm memory loss. If you take tranquillisers with other 'downer' drugs like alcohol you might accidentally overdose. Injecting crushed tablets or melted-down capsules can block veins and may kill you. You can become dependent quite quickly – some people get addicted after using them for just four weeks – and withdrawal can cause pounding headaches, sickness and confusion.

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# unconscious

If someone's gone overboard with alcohol, volatile substances, heroin or poppers, there's a risk they might lose consciousness.

**Call 999** immediately and place them in the **RECOVERY POSITION**



# Vicky

“ We were celebrating Becky’s birthday and ended up at a club. We’d all been so into the music and dancing that, at first, we didn’t notice that Danni was missing. We found her slumped on a sofa – completely out of it and not breathing properly. We got someone from the club to help. While we were waiting for the ambulance, they gave her mouth-to-mouth and put her on her side so she wouldn’t choke if she was sick. She’s OK now but we were so lucky we found someone who knew what to do. **Vicky, 18** ”



# warning signs

If you or your mates take drugs regularly or over a long period, look out for signs that suggest the drug use is becoming a problem.

Such as:

- losing interest in things you used to enjoy
- things not going so well at home
- not being able to concentrate
- skipping school, college or work
- not caring how you look
- feeling depressed
- feeling jittery
- becoming a drug bore
- losing touch with your true friends
- only going out somewhere if there's a chance you will score drugs

# X – 'the unknown'

**There's always an element of the unknown with drugs.**

**What's in it:**

- with cocaine you might get a wrap padded out with sugar or talcum powder
- you won't know for sure what an E's got in it. It's often mixed with caffeine, speed or other chemicals
- most heroin bought on the street is impure. Some people have overdosed on pure heroin because their body is only used to an impure dose
- batches of skunk have been found that contain very tiny glass beads which you

can't see. Inhaling hot glass is not a good idea

**How you react to it:**

- lots of drugs affect the heart and body temperature. The way that your body 'takes the strain' will affect how you are feeling

**What happens that night:**

- you may do something that you'll regret in the morning
- if you're on LSD and you're not in a good mood or something strange happens, the trip could turn into a nightmare

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# your life, your future

## FRANK ADVICE

It's up to you to set your own limits when it comes to drinking and drugs.

Take it easy and make sure you know what the risks are. And don't be persuaded by other people to do things you're not sure about.

But remember, most people don't do drugs.

It's your life – shouldn't you be in control?

# ZZZZZZZZZZ

## Zoned out...zonked...zombie...

Drugs might make you high. But they can also make you tired...and boring...and help you achieve a big fat **zero**.

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# FRANK

0800 77 66 00

**TALKTOFRANK.COM**

FRANK is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.  
Calls are free from landlines and some mobiles.

You can talk to FRANK confidentially:  
on 0800 77 66 00

by textphone (for the hard of hearing)  
0800 917 8765

by emailing [frank@talktofrank.com](mailto:frank@talktofrank.com)

FRANK can also tell you what services are  
available in your area.

0800 77 66 00 **TALKTOFRANK.COM**  
FRIENDLY, CONFIDENTIAL DRUGS ADVICE