

HIV/AIDS Information

What is HIV and AIDS?

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HIV is a virus that takes over certain immune system cells to make many copies of itself. HIV causes slow but constant damage to the immune system.

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. AIDS is the condition diagnosed when there are a group of related symptoms that are caused by severe HIV infection. AIDS makes the body vulnerable to life-threatening illnesses called opportunistic infections.

How is HIV transmitted?

HIV is transmitted through four body fluids: blood, semen, vaginal fluid, and breast milk. In order to pass HIV from one person to another, HIV-infected fluid from one person needs to get into the bloodstream of another person. HIV is usually transmitted through sharing needles, unprotected anal, vaginal, and sometimes oral sex, and from mother to infant before or during delivery and while breast feeding.

You can't get HIV from:

Coughing, sneezing, sharing household items, swimming in the same pool as someone with HIV, mosquito bites, toilet seats, telephones, sweat, saliva, or tears.

How can I prevent myself from contracting HIV?

Becoming educated about HIV and understanding how it is transmitted is the first, and perhaps most important way to prevent the spread of HIV. It is essential for people to make informed decisions about the level of risk they are willing to take, based on what is realistic for them.

Abstaining from sex and needle sharing is the most effective way for people to protect themselves from HIV and other sexually-transmitted diseases. However, abstinence is not a realistic option for everyone.

What should I know about HIV testing?

When thinking of getting tested for HIV, there are a few important things to consider:

Window Period: When having a HIV antibody test, there must be at least three months time between the time a person was last at risk for contracting HIV and the time that he/she gets a test done. Some people call this the "window period". The HIV test is looking for antibodies, which are the body's response to having HIV in it. For most people, it takes three months for the body to produce enough antibodies for a standard HIV antibody test to be accurate.

Anonymous vs. Confidential Tests: An anonymous test does not require an individual to provide their name at the time of testing, while a confidential test does require a name. In either case, written consent from the patient is the only way the results will be released, and otherwise will be kept private. Doctors' offices use confidential testing while the Pima County Health Department offers both confidential and anonymous testing.

Standard vs. Rapid Testing: A standard HIV test refers to a blood draw, typically done at a doctor's office. Results are usually received within 5 to 10 business days. Rapid tests (sometimes referred to as OraQuick, Unigold or Clearview) involve either a finger prick or a mouth swab. Results are given in about 10 minutes.

Cost: Depending on where you get tested, either insurance will cover the cost, pricing may be based on a sliding-scale which will depend on your income, or you may be able to get a free test.

Are the HIV tests accurate?

Yes. HIV tests detect specific antibodies your body produces if exposed to HIV. These tests are more than 99% accurate and confirmation tests are conducted to determine a positive result. HIV tests are available that use a small blood sample or saliva.

Is there a vaccine or cure for HIV?

No. There is no vaccine or cure. Scientists around the world have been working on vaccines and cures for several decades now, but the outlook for a cure or vaccination is still years away.

What if I test positive for HIV?

Although HIV can't be cured, it can be managed. This means the virus can be kept from rapidly replicating in the body so that it doesn't damage the immune system quickly. The first step you should take is to see a doctor, even if you do not feel sick. Try to find a doctor who has experience treating HIV. There are now many drugs to treat HIV infection and help you maintain your health. These drugs are called anti-retrovirals. A combination of these drugs is referred to as Combination Therapy or HAART (Highly Active Anti-Retrovirals Therapy). Many people also take prophylactic medications to prevent pneumonia.

You should also try to stop smoking cigarettes, drinking too much alcohol and using illegal drugs (such as cocaine). All of these can weaken your immune system.

How is AIDS diagnosed?

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) definition of AIDS, initially published in 1986 and revised in 1993, is based on certain clinical conditions, infections, and malignancies associated with HIV infection (called "opportunistic" infections to indicate that they arise in the setting of immune impairment). Additionally, AIDS may be defined by a T cell (CD4) count of less than 200, even in the absence of an opportunistic infection. People living with HIV who progress to having an AIDS diagnosis can continue living well and healthy by changing unhealthy behaviors and going on HIV antiretroviral treatment.

What is HIV antiretroviral treatment?

This is the main type of treatment for HIV or AIDS. It is not a cure, but it can stop people from becoming ill for many years. The treatment consists of drugs that have to be taken every day for the rest of someone's life. To understand more about treatment you need to have some basic knowledge of HIV and AIDS. Antiretroviral treatment for HIV infection consists of drugs which work against HIV infection itself by slowing down the replication of HIV in the body. Currently there are over 25 HIV medications available to treat HIV infection. HIV medications fall into several groups, or "classes." Each class attacks HIV a little differently, and has diverse risks and benefits. To maximize the impact against HIV, a treatment regimen is made up of drugs from different classes.

There are four classes of anti-HIV drugs. Each of these groups attacks HIV in a different way.

- Nucleoside/Nucleotide Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors
- Non-Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors
- Protease Inhibitors
- Fusion or Entry Inhibitors

For antiretroviral treatment to be effective for a long time, it has been found that you need to take more than one antiretroviral drug at a time. This is what is known as Combination Therapy. The term Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART) is used to describe a combination of three or more anti-HIV drugs.

When HIV replicates (makes new copies of itself) it often makes mistakes. This means that within any infected person there are many different strains of virus. Occasionally, a new strain is produced that happens to be resistant to the effects of the medications. If the person is not taking any other type of drug then the resistant strain is able to replicate quickly and the benefits of treatment are lost.

The medications often cause side effects that can range from mild to severe in some cases. Please be sure to consult your doctor about potential side effects and/or if side effects last long or are severe.

Safer-Sex Practices

When abstinence is not an option, the proper use of barrier protection such as latex or polyurethane condoms (male or female), with a water based lubricant, is the next best thing for vaginal or anal sex.

Note: Some water-based lubricants (including those already on some condoms) contain a spermicide called Nonoxynol-9. Many people are allergic to N-9 and the resulting genital irritation can increase the risk of HIV and STD transmission by providing a direct entry point. You can test for a N-9 allergy by rubbing N-9 lubricant on the inside of the elbow the day before you plan to use the product for sex. If there is no irritation, there is likely no allergy.

Oral Sex

The best way to reduce the risk of HIV transmission while performing oral sex is to maintain good oral hygiene. That, in addition to not flossing or brushing your teeth right before or after will also reduce the risk of transmission.

Performing Oral Sex on a Woman

When performing oral sex on a woman, a dental dam or common kitchen plastic wrap can be used as a barrier to protect from HIV transmission. If you do not have a dental dam, you can also use a new, unused, non-lubricated or flavored condom by stretching it out and cutting it down the side, then stretching it out in the same way you would a dental dam or plastic wrap.

Performing Oral Sex on a Man

In addition to good oral hygiene, proper use of a non-lubricated or flavored condom on a man can significantly decrease risk of HIV transmission. If a condom is not available or an option, not accepting semen into the mouth or spitting rather than swallowing will reduce the risk. You can also use the "harmonica method" by focusing on the shaft of the penis while avoiding the head.

Performing Oral Sex on the Anus (Rimming)

For oral to anal contact, or rimming, a dental dam, plastic wrap, or a condom can be used in the same way described above under the heading "Performing Oral Sex on a Woman." This can be a great barrier against not only HIV, but possible Hepatitis A exposure.

How Do I Use Male and Female Condoms?

Most male condoms are made of latex. Since some people are allergic to latex (your doctor can test for it if you've ever experienced irritation from latex) there are also polyurethane condoms available. When used properly, both latex and polyurethane condoms are effective ways of significantly reducing the risk of HIV transmission. Note: Lambskin, or "natural" condoms will not protect against HIV or other sexually transmitted infections (STI's).

When using either latex or polyurethane condoms for vaginal or anal sex, water-based lubricants on the outside of the condom will help to reduce friction that could cause the condom to tear. If desired, a small amount can be placed inside the tip of the condom as well.

Important Note: Use of oil-based lubricants such as Vaseline, can deteriorate latex condoms and significantly increase their chance of breaking; oil-based lubricants should only be used with polyurethane condoms.

When Using a Male Condom...

- Keep it fresh! Always store condoms in a cool dry place (not a wallet) and check the expiration date.
- Check it! Squeeze the package gently to make sure there are no punctures and be sure to not use your teeth to open the package (or your teeth could rip the condom)!
- Heads Up! Unroll the condom a little before putting it on and make sure it's able to roll easily down the penis. Squeeze the tip (so semen can collect) and roll the condom from the tip of the penis all the way to the base. If uncircumcised, pull the foreskin back before putting the condom on.
- Don't Double Up! Be sure to never use more than one condom at a time. Doubling up can lead to friction and possibly the condom breaking. One condom is sufficient.
- Lube it Up! Apply lots of water-based lubricant to the condom to prevent friction which could cause breakage.
- Take It Easy! After ejaculation (cumming), remove the penis from the vagina/anus/mouth while still erect and carefully unroll and remove the condom. Be careful not to spill any semen on your partner.
- Never use a condom for more than one session. Always use a new condom each time you have sex, or when you switch from oral to vaginal or anal sex. This will reduce the risk of the condom breaking.

When using a Female Condom...

Make sure to put it into place before your partner's penis comes into contact with the vagina or anus. Once in place, carefully guide the penis into the condom, making sure to enter the condom and not outside of the condom's external rim.

For Vaginal Sex...

- Press the inner ring between your fingers to narrow it and make it easier to insert.
- Hold the condom with its open end pointing down, and insert the closed end into the vagina, letting the wider end remain around the opening of the vagina (it's easier to insert if the knees are spread apart).
- Push the condom up into the vagina, until it is just past the pubic bone (you can tell where the pubic bone is by curving the index finger when it has gone a couple inches into the vagina).
- When removing the female condom, squeeze the end, twist the condom to keep the semen inside, and pull out. DO NOT FLUSH.

For Anal Sex...

- Remove the internal ring (for Reality condom) and place the condom on the partner's erect penis or a dildo.
- Use the penis/dildo to carefully insert the condom into the anus of the receptive partner.
- To remove, squeeze the end of the condom, twist to hold the semen inside and remove.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases Information

Hepatitis Information

Hepatitis A:

Source of the virus: Hepatitis A Virus (HAV) is found in the stool (feces) of persons with hepatitis A.

Transmission:

HAV is usually spread from person to person by putting something in the mouth (even though it may look clean) that has been contaminated with the stool of a person with hepatitis A.

Prevention:

- Hepatitis A vaccine is the best protection.
- Short-term protection against hepatitis A is available from immune globulin. It can be given before and within 2 weeks after coming in contact with HAV.
- Always wash your hands with soap and water after using the bathroom, changing a diaper, and before preparing and eating food.

Hepatitis B:

Source of the virus: Occurs when blood from an infected person enters the body of a person who is not infected.

Transmission- Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) is spread through:

- having sex with an infected person without using a condom (the efficacy of latex condoms in preventing infection with HBV is unknown, but their proper use may reduce transmission),
- by sharing drugs, needles, or "works" when "shooting" drugs,
- through needle sticks or sharps exposures on the job,
- or from an infected mother to her baby during birth.

Prevention:

- Hepatitis B vaccine is the best protection.
- If you are having sex, but not with one steady partner, use latex condoms correctly and every time you have sex. The efficacy of latex condoms in preventing infection with HBV is unknown, but their proper use may reduce transmission.

Hepatitis C:

Source of the virus: Occurs when blood from an infected person enters the body of a person who is not infected.

Transmission:

Hepatitis C (HCV) is spread through sharing needles or "works" when "shooting" drugs, through needle sticks or sharps exposures on the job, or from an infected mother to her baby during birth.

Prevention:

- There is no vaccine to prevent Hepatitis C.
- Do not shoot drugs; if you shoot drugs, stop and get into a treatment program; if you can't stop, never share needles, syringes, water, or "works", and get vaccinated against Hepatitis A & B.
- Do not share personal care items that might have blood on them (razors, toothbrushes).
- If you are a health care or public safety worker, always follow routine barrier precautions and safely handle needles and other sharps; get vaccinated against Hepatitis B.

- Consider the risks if you are thinking about getting a tattoo or body piercing. You might get infected if the tools have someone else's blood on them or if the artist or piercer does not follow good health practices.
- For more information on hepatitis education and prevention, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention web site: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/>.

Recreational Drug Information

Marijuana (Cannabis)

What is cannabis?

- Cannabis, or marijuana, comes from a plant.
- The dried buds of the female plant contain the highest concentration of psychoactive compounds. These buds are usually what are sold and consumed as marijuana.
- Cannabis usually costs about \$10-\$20 a gram.

How is cannabis used?

- Cannabis is usually smoked, although it can be eaten.
- Joints are the most common method of smoking but a wide range of pipes, bongs, hookahs, and devices are also used.
- Cannabis can be prepared in butter or cooked directly into foods for ingestion.
- Often people will cook with the leaves of the plant rather than the buds.

What are the effects?

- In small quantities, many users find cannabis both relaxing and stimulating.
- The senses are enhanced, as well as the appetite.
- In larger quantities (or with stronger strains) the effects may feel similar to LSD or mushrooms. Users may experience nausea, mild hallucinations, anxiety, or paranoia.
- Cannabis tends to cause an increase in heart rate, reddening of the eyes and dryness in the mouth.
- Cannabis is used medicinally to treat the symptoms of a number of diseases such as cancer, glaucoma, and AIDS.

Is cannabis addictive?

While some people use cannabis regularly, cannabis does not create a physical dependence and users do not experience withdrawal symptoms.

What are the drawbacks of using cannabis?

- Smoking anything, including cannabis, can damage the lungs, throat, and mouth.
- Cannabis is a Schedule I narcotic, and getting caught with it can lead to serious consequences.
- Cannabis slows down reaction time and impairs driving.
- Some people feel uncomfortable, nauseous, or paranoid after using cannabis.

Heroin (Diacetylmorphine)

What is heroin?

- Heroin ("smack", "junk", "dope") is made from the opium poppy. It belongs to the class of drugs known as opiates, along with opium and morphine.
- Heroin can come in a white or brownish powder (sometimes grainy) or a dark brown substance (sometimes sticky) known as tar.

- Heroin bought on the street almost always contains “cuts” (adulterants), and is rarely pure. Because heroin has a street value of its own, it is not used as a “cut” for Ecstasy pills.

How is heroin used?

- Heroin is snorted, “chased” (smoked), or injected.
- When injected, all of the heroin enters the blood stream at once, increasing the risk of overdose. Snorting and “chasing” can also lead to overdose.

What are the risks?

- Addiction is a risk of heroin use, whether you are snorting, “chasing”, or injecting.
- Because purity and individual tolerance vary, overdose is a risk.
- Sharing injection equipment runs the risk of HIV and hepatitis infection.
- Heroin injectors also run the risk of bacterial infections.
- Possession and sale of heroin can carry stiff penalties including incarceration.

What are the effects?

- Heroin users often report feelings of warmth, well-being, euphoria, and contentment.
- Since opiates are painkillers, heroin can reduce or eliminate pain. It can also lead to unconsciousness.
- Negative side effects include nausea, vomiting, constipation, itchiness, and slowed breathing.

Heroin harm-reduction tips:

- It is possible to overdose on heroin by itself, although most drug overdoses occur when a person is using more than one substance or using after a break. If you are using from a new bag or if you have not used in a while, use a small test amount before using more.
- If someone stops breathing, has no pulse, or turns blue call 911 immediately. Tell the 911 operator – “someone has stopped breathing” and begin artificial breathing. Because there are antidotes to opiate overdoses, when the paramedics arrive tell them exactly what the person used.
- It is important to use a sterile syringe and clean injecting equipment. Use clean water when preparing to inject, and a clean surface to prepare your shot on. Clean the injection site with an alcohol pad or anti-bacterial soap. Do not share needles, cookers, cotton filters, water, or alcohol pads.
- Clean injection supplies can be obtained from a Needle Exchange Program and sometimes at a pharmacy. Information is available from the local health department.

Special K (Ketamine)

What is Ketamine?

- Ketamine hydrochloride (“Special K” or “K”) was originally created for use as a human anesthetic, and is still used as a general anesthetic for children, persons of poor health, and by veterinarians.
- Ketamine belongs to a class of drugs called “dissociative anesthetics”, which separates perception from sensation. Other drugs in this category include PCP, DXM and nitrous oxide (laughing gas).
- Ketamine is usually cooked into a white powder for snorting.

What are the effects?

- At lower doses it creates a mild, dreamy feeling similar to nitrous oxide. Users report feeling floaty and slightly outside their body. Numbness in the extremities is also common.
- Higher doses produce a hallucinogenic (trippy) effect, and may cause the user to feel very far away from their body.

- This experience is often referred to as entering the “K-hole” and has been compared to a near-death experience with sensations of rising above one’s body. Many users find the experience spiritually significant, while others find it frightening.
- While in a K-hole it is difficult to move. People usually remain seated or lying down during the experience.

What is the dosage?

- Most people snort small lines or “bumps” for a mild dreamy effect. The effect comes on within about 5 to 10 minutes.
- 100mg is usually enough to enter a K-hole.
- If liquid is injected into the muscle, less is needed to enter a K-hole. Effects can be felt within four minutes (Ketamine is never injected into the vein).
- If swallowed, the effects come on in 10 – 20 minutes.
- Some people become nauseous after taking Ketamine.
- Occasionally Ketamine has been sold in a capsule as “Ecstasy”, although it is nothing like MDMA (real ecstasy). An ecstasy testing kit can be used to screen against fake ecstasy tablets.

BE CAREFUL

- While low doses of Ketamine can increase heart rate, at higher doses it depresses consciousness and breathing and is extremely dangerous to combine with downers like alcohol, Valium or GHB.
- Frequent use can cause disruptions in consciousness and lead to neuroses or other mental disorders.
- Ketamine can cause a tremendous psychological dependence. The dissociation from one’s consciousness experienced with Ketamine can be highly seductive to some people, and there are many cases of Ketamine addiction.
- Ketamine is illegal and possession can result in long term prison terms.

SPEED (Crystal Meth)

What is speed?

- Speed (amphetamine or meth-amphetamine) is a stimulant drug.
- It produces alertness, confidence and raises levels of energy and stamina.
- It reduces appetite and lessens the desire and ability to sleep.

Is speed addictive?

- Regular use can produce a need to increase the dose to get the same effect, and can lead to physical dependence on the drug.
- Speed can produce a powerful craving for more of the drug.
- Long-term use can result in serious mental and physical problems.

How is speed used?

- Speed can be swallowed, snorted, smoked, or injected.
- Swallowing is the safest method of using speed. The effects come on gradually and last longer than with other methods.
- Snorting speed takes effect faster than swallowing but it can damage the nose.
- Smoking speed takes effect immediately and can more easily lead to addiction.
- Injecting is the riskiest method of using speed.

What are the risks of injecting?

- The dose reaches the brain almost immediately, increasing the possibility of overdose.
- Impurities are introduced directly into the bloodstream and can cause septicemia and other infections.

- Repeated injections damage the veins, leading to thrombosis and abscesses.
- Sharing syringes can cause hepatitis and HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

BE CAREFUL

- The “comedown” off speed can make you feel tired, lethargic and depressed. This may tempt users to take more, and can lead to dependency.
- Speed users are at higher HIV and hepatitis risk through unsafe sex and needle sharing.
- Although rare, speed can cause seizures, heart attacks, strokes and death from overdose.
- Many users become physically run down, which leaves them susceptible to a wide range of illnesses.
- Extended use of speed can cause psychosis. The user may think that everybody is out to get them, or that they are being followed or watched.
- Mixing speed with other drugs, particularly other stimulants, can increase the risk of adverse reactions.
- Speed is illegal. Possession can result in long prison terms.

Mushrooms (Psilocybin)

What are magic mushrooms?

- Magic mushrooms are mushrooms that contain psilocybin. Psilocybin is a psychedelic drug with effects similar to those of LSD.
- Psilocybin mushrooms have been used by many indigenous cultures to induce altered states of consciousness during religious rituals.

How are they used?

- Magic mushrooms are either eaten raw, mixed with food, or brewed into a tea. They can be eaten fresh or dried for later use.
- There is no predictable way of estimating the amount of psilocybin in each mushroom. The amount is determined by the strain, size and age of the mushroom.
- Starting with a small amount before deciding to take more can prevent having too strong a trip, and minimize the chance of being poisoned from the wrong type of mushroom.

What are the effects?

- At low doses, magic mushrooms produce feelings of relaxation, not dissimilar to those of cannabis.
- Users often report laughing a lot and finding things funnier than they would normally.
- At higher doses, the experience is closer to that of LSD, intensifying colors and producing visual hallucinations and feelings of euphoria.
- A mushroom “trip” tends to last about four to five hours.
- Users often report the mushroom experience to be more “earthy” than other psychedelics, increasing emotional awareness and causing less psychological confusion.
- Many users find the mushroom experience to be spiritually significant while others find it frightening.

BE CAREFUL

- The biggest danger associated with magic mushrooms is misidentification. Some mushrooms are poisonous and cause stomach pains, vomiting, diarrhea and even death.
- Some users report getting sick even after ingesting real psilocybin varieties.
- Magic mushrooms can impair judgment. Driving while under the influence of mushrooms is dangerous.
- Magic mushrooms, like all hallucinogens can trigger underlying mental disorders and cause schizophrenic-type symptoms.

- Users sometimes have “bad trips”, which can include confusion, anxiety and panic. In rare occasions, users can experience recurring episodes of anxiety and panic (flashbacks), days, weeks or even months after a bad trip.
- Magic mushrooms are illegal. Possession can result in long prison terms. Supplying mushrooms to someone else (whether or not money was exchanged) carries even longer sentences.

G (GHB, GBL & B)

What are GHB, GBL & B?

The liquid commonly referred to as “G” may be one of three (or more) chemicals: GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyrate), originally developed as a sedative-hypnotic, or sleep aid, GBL (gamma-butyrolactone), an industrial solvent that is also converted into GHB in the bloodstream, B, BD, or BDO (1,4-butanediol), an industrial chemical that is also converted into GHB when ingested. GHB has a distinctive salty-soapy taste. GBL and B taste more “industrial”, bitter and unpleasant. Undiluted GHB is syrupy. GBL is slightly thinner. B has the consistency of water. In a household freezer, B easily freezes, while GHB and GBL remain liquid.

What are the effects?

- All three substances are central nervous system depressants and their effects are similar to alcohol, making users feel relaxed and sociable.
- At higher doses they can cause dizziness or sleepiness, nausea and vomiting, muscle spasms, and loss of consciousness during which breathing can be slowed to a dangerously low rate.
- GHB and GBL may be felt within 30 minutes, but peak effects can take up to 2 hours. Many overdoses have occurred from people not waiting long enough before taking more. Effects continue for about 2 hours from onset. B takes longer to feel, and its effects can last longer.

BE CAREFUL

- Combining GHB, GBL and B with alcohol or sleeping pills, tranquilizers or sedatives is dangerous, even if taken several hours apart.
- IT IS EASY TO OVERDOSE WITH GHB, GBL, or B. A teaspoon is a typical dose, while two teaspoons can cause unconsciousness. Doses of undiluted GHB or GBL should be ½ teaspoon or less.
- The bottle caps used to measure doses vary from less than 1 teaspoon to 1½ teaspoons. Using a measuring spoon or syringe to accurately measure doses can reduce the risk of accidental overdose.
- Diluted GHB or GBL settles in the bottle and need to be shaken before use.
- Reactions to all three drugs vary depending on body weight and whether or not the user has eaten or is sleepy. Also, strength may vary greatly from one batch to the next. The right amount one time can cause an overdose another time.
- Additional doses increase the risk of overdose – a rule of thumb is to wait two hours between doses and take ½ the amount of the first dose.
- Because B takes longer to metabolize, more time should be allowed to feel its effects and between doses.
- Do not drive – the effects of these drugs can come on very fast and, unlike alcohol cannot be controlled.
- Frequent (daily) use of these substances can lead to physical addiction. Withdrawal requires medical assistance.
- Some people can dye their G blue with food coloring in order to distinguish it from regular water and help prevent accidental dosing.
- GHB and GBL are illegal drugs under federal and state laws. B is banned under analogue laws in several states.

What if someone overdoses?

- If you feel dizzy or sick, get help immediately – unconsciousness can happen very fast. Sit down or lay on your side.
- If someone falls unconscious and cannot be aroused or has a seizure, call an ambulance.
- Keep persons on their side or sitting up so they do not choke if they vomit. Make sure their air passage is clear and their chin is not pressed against their chest.

POPPERS (Nitrites)

What are poppers?

- “Poppers” is the popular name for various alkyl nitrates, including isobutyl nitrite, butyl nitrite, and amyl nitrite.
- Doctors used to prescribe amyl nitrite for heart patients in capsules that were broken or “popped” to release vapors.
- Amyl nitrite is made and sold illegally, but most poppers are isobutyl nitrite sold in small brown bottles as “video head cleaner”, “room deodorizer”, or “leather cleaner”.
- The exact contents of these products are not known, and they are not safety tested.

What are the effects?

- Poppers are used by sniffing the vapors from an open bottle. The effects are felt within a few seconds and last for 1-2 minutes.
- Poppers cause muscles around blood vessels to relax, making your heart speed up to pump more blood. Oxygen-rich blood reaching the brain produces a “rush” sensation.
- Because poppers cause muscles in the anus and vagina to relax, they are often used during sex.

BE CAREFUL

- If swallowed call 911 or Poison Control.
- Contact with the skin causes irritation and rashes. Extensive use can damage the nose and lungs.
- Some people experience headaches, sensations of spinning or falling and loss of erection.
- Poppers are highly flammable. Keep away from cigarettes, candles, and lighters.
- Studies show that poppers reduce the function of the immune system for several days after use.
- Because poppers cause blood vessels to open, it is easier to get an infection, including sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV.
- Poppers pose extra risks for people who have suppressed immune systems, heart problems, low or high blood pressure, a history of cerebral hemorrhaging, anemia, or are pregnant.
- Combining poppers with stimulants like speed and cocaine increases risks. Combining poppers with Viagra is dangerous because they both cause blood pressure to drop.
- Poppers can affect your judgment. If you are planning on being intimate, put on a condom before you use them.
- To prevent spilling and evaporation, pour a small amount in a separate bottle filled with cotton and store tightly sealed in a refrigerator or freezer.
- Possession of amyl nitrite without a doctor’s prescription is illegal. Federal law bans the manufacture and distribution of butyl nitrite and related substances, although these provisions have not been enforced.

Cocaine (Cocaine Hydrochloride)

What is cocaine?

- Cocaine hydrochloride (“coke”, “blow”) is a white powder derived from the leaves of the cocoa plant, which grows mainly in South America.
- Coca Cola used to contain cocaine (hence the name), and so did many other over-the-counter food and medicine products.
- Cocaine is usually sold in small baggies by the gram.
- Crack cocaine is made by chemically altering cocaine powder into crystals or “rocks” which are easily smoked.

How is cocaine used?

- The leaves of the cocoa plant can be chewed directly or made into a tea and drunk. Cocoa leaves are used in this way legally in many countries as a mild stimulant similar to caffeine.
- Most often cocaine is snorted in small lines. The effects come on gradually and peak after about 15-30 minutes.
- When smoked in the form of “crack”, the effects come on immediately but wear off much more quickly.
- When injected, the effects are felt immediately and much more intensely.

What are the effects of cocaine?

- Cocaine is a stimulant drug like speed, but much shorter acting.
- It causes a sudden increase in heart rate, blood pressure and breathing.
- It also leads to feelings of confidence, alertness and euphoria.

BE CAREFUL

- Cocaine and crack are very short-acting. This can lead to using too much too often.
- Many users become compulsive in their use of cocaine, which can lead to physical or psychological addiction.
- The after-effects can include depression, agitation, anxiety and paranoia.
- The intensity of these effects depends on how much and how often cocaine is used, and are more intense when cocaine is smoked as crack.
- High or frequent doses have caused seizures, strokes or heart attacks in some people.
- Repeated snorting can damage the membranes of the nose.
- Cocaine is illegal and getting caught with it in your possession can result in long prison sentences. Giving cocaine to someone else, even if no money is exchanged, can result in even longer sentences.

ALCOHOL (C₂H₅OH)

What is alcohol?

- Beverage alcohol is ethyl alcohol, or ethanol. It is a depressant drug.
- Alcohol is a natural product of fermenting sugars. It is usually made from grains such as hops, barley, or rice and/or fruits, but it can also be made from plants.
- The concentration of alcohol in drinks varies widely. Wine and beers have between 5% and 15%, white “hard” liquor usually has up to 40%, and sometimes more.

What is a standard dose?

- A standard drink is defined as 12oz (341ml) of beer, 5oz (142ml) of table wine, or 1.5oz (85ml) of liquor.
- It's the amount of alcohol you drink, not the type of drink that affects you. It is always good to know the alcohol content of whatever you are drinking.
- Alcohol affects some people more or less strongly than others, and can affect the same person differently at different times. This depends on body weight, metabolism, tolerance from prior use, food in the stomach, and other factors.

- There really is not a standard dose of alcohol. Know your own limits and pace yourself. A standard drink is metabolized out of your system in approximately 1.5 hours.

What are the effects of drinking alcohol?

- Low to moderate amounts can produce feelings of relaxation, lowered inhibitions, and increased sociability.
- Larger amounts can cause dizziness, nausea, slurred speech, slower reflexes, sleepiness, impaired judgment, dehydration and a hangover the next day.
- Overdoses can cause loss of motor control, black-outs, temporary coma (passing out), and death.

BE CAREFUL

- For some people, alcohol is addictive. Tolerance can develop and withdrawal symptoms may include nervousness, tremors, seizures and hallucinations.
- Long-term abuse can damage the liver, brain and other organs, and can result in severe mental and physical problems.
- Consuming too much alcohol at once can cause death through acute alcohol toxicity. "Drinking games" are especially dangerous as they can easily lead to overdoses.
- Alcohol impairs vision and motor coordination. Driving drunk is illegal and endangers yourself and others.
- If a woman drinks too much during pregnancy, her baby can develop fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS).
- In the United States, it is illegal to purchase alcohol if you are under 21 years of age.
- Mixing alcohol with other over-the-counter medications, prescription medications, or illegal drugs is dangerous and can lead to medical emergencies.

TOBACCO (Nicotine)

What is tobacco?

- Tobacco comes from a plant and contains the stimulant drug, nicotine.
- It is usually smoked in cigarettes, cigars and pipes, but it is also found in a powdered form called snuff (to be sniffed up the nose) and as dip and chewing tobacco.

What are the side effects of smoking?

- Nicotine increases pulse rate and blood pressure.
- The effects can usually be felt immediately, and can last up to 30 minutes from one cigarette.
- First time users often feel dizzy or nauseous, even after just a few puffs or "drags" from a cigarette.
- Regular users often report that smoking reduces their anxiety and helps them relax.
- Some smokers say nicotine reduces their appetite, so they eat less.

Is tobacco addictive?

- Tobacco is highly addictive. Regular use can result in physical dependency with long-lasting withdrawal symptoms.
- Depression, irritability, restlessness and anxiety are some of the symptoms experienced by smokers who have not had a cigarette in a while.
- These symptoms produce a strong craving for another cigarette.

What other problems can result from smoking?

- Coughing, as well as other chest and breathing problems afflict some smokers.
- Bad breath and discolored teeth are also common among people who smoke regularly.
- Regular smokers have a much greater risk of developing lung cancer and other forms of cancer, as well as heart disease, circulatory problems and bronchitis.

- Smoking during pregnancy can harm an unborn child, resulting in low birth weight and other complications.
- Second-hand smoke can also be hazardous to one's health, especially to children and people with asthma or other chest problems.

If you smoke and want to quit:

- Stay away from places where lots of people smoke.
- Tell your friends and family that you are trying to quit, and get their support.
- Try acupuncture, nicotine chewing gum, patches and other popular remedies.

ACID (LSD)

What is LSD?

- Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD) is a hallucinogenic or psychedelic drug.
- It is usually found absorbed into tiny pieces of paper called "blotter", but it is sometimes found as a pure liquid or absorbed into a sugar cube. It is almost always swallowed.
- LSD costs about \$5 for a "hit".

What are the effects?

The LSD experience is usually described as a "trip" because it is like a journey to another place. The experience may be broken up into four 'phases':

- The Onset – Approximately 30 minutes after being taken, colors appear sharper, moving objects leave "trails" behind them, and flat surfaces may appear to "breathe".
- The Plateau – Over the second hour, the effects become more intense. Imaginary visions appear from nowhere – from shapes in smoke, to lines on the palms of the hand.
- The Peak – Time is slowed almost to a standstill. Users may feel like they are in a different world, or a movie. For some this is profound and mystical, but it can be frightening for others.
- The Comedown – 5 or 6 hours after taking the drug sensations begin to subside. After 8 hours, the trip is usually over, although residual effects may last until after sleep.

What if somebody is having a bad trip?

- Take the person to quiet surroundings where they feel comfortable.
- Find a friend who can reassure them.
- Stress to them that their panic is caused by the drug, and will wear off in a few hours, if not sooner.
- If they become uncontrollable or hysterical and you cannot calm them down, you may want to call your local poison control center. They can provide you with "triage" information to help you decide whether the person needs to be hospitalized.

BE CAREFUL

- LSD can trigger underlying mental problems and produce delusions, paranoia and schizophrenia-like symptoms.
- It can also produce extreme anxiety states or panic attacks, not only while under the influence of the drug, but for some time after (flashbacks).
- In rare instances, LSD has caused a long-lasting perceptual disorder known as Post Hallucinogenic Perceptual Disorder (PHPD).
- LSD can impair judgment. Users should not drive or operate machinery while under the influence of LSD.
- LSD is illegal and possession can result in long prison terms. Supplying LSD to someone else (whether or not money was exchanged) carries even longer sentences.

NITROUS OXIDE (N₂O)

What is nitrous oxide?

- Nitrous Oxide (laughing gas) is a gas that has been safely used as a mild anesthetic in combination with oxygen for over a century.
- It is classified as a “dissociative anesthetic”.
- Nitrous Oxide is legally available for over-the-counter sale, although in many states it is illegal to sell nitrous oxide to a minor. Some states also have laws against inhaling nitrous oxide for intoxication purposes.
- Nitrous Oxide is most commonly sold in small canisters for use in making whipped cream (“whippits”), although it can also be purchased in large tanks.

How is nitrous used?

- A lungful of nitrous oxide results in temporary loss of motor control and a “dissociative” psychological effect, where sensations and perceptions become disconnected.
- Users report a dreamy mental state, and may experience mild audio and visual hallucinations.
- The effects come on immediately and usually last less than a minute. Repeated inhalations of nitrous oxide can extend and intensify the experience.

BE CAREFUL

- Nitrous Oxide can produce an immediate loss of motor control. Stay seated if you are going to inhale nitrous oxide. There have been many injuries and a few deaths from people who have fallen down after inhaling nitrous oxide.
- Your brain needs oxygen! Brain damage and suffocation can result from inhaling pure nitrous oxide for an extended period of time.
- Nitrous Oxide can be extremely cold when it comes out of the tank. Cold gas can burn the skin as well as the lips and throat.
- Dispensing the gas into a balloon and allowing it to warm up before inhaling it can reduce this risk.
- High pressure levels in the tank can shoot the gas out at a dangerously fast speed and damage the lungs. Again, it is safer to inhale from a balloon than from a tank.
- Nitrous Oxide can be psychologically addictive.
- The regular use of nitrous oxide can cause long-lasting numbness in the extremities and other neurological problems.

ECSTASY (MDMA or E)

What is ecstasy?

- Ecstasy is MDMA, or 3,4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine. It belongs to a family of drugs called “entactogens”, which literally means “touching within”. Other drugs in this category include MDA, MDE and MBDB.
- Before it was made illegal in 1985, MDMA was used by psychiatrists as a therapeutic tool. Studies are currently underway in Spain and Israel assessing MDMA’s effectiveness in the treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

What are the effects?

- MDMA is a “mood elevator” that produces a relaxed, euphoric state. It does not produce hallucinations.
- MDMA takes effect 20 to 40 minutes after taking a tablet, with little rushes of exhilaration which can be accompanied by nausea. 60 to 90 minutes after taking the drug, the user feels the peak effects.
- Sensations are enhanced and the user experiences heightening feelings of empathy, emotional warmth, and self-acceptance.

- The effects of "real" ecstasy subside after about 3-5 hours.
- Users report that the experience is very pleasant and highly controllable. Even at the peak of the effect, people can usually deal with important matters.
- The effect that makes MDMA different from other drugs is empathy, the sensation of understanding and accepting others.

What is the dosage?

- E is almost always swallowed as a tablet or capsule. A normal dose is around 100-125mg.
- Black market "Ecstasy" tablets vary widely in strength, and often contain other drugs.

Is Ecstasy addictive?

- Ecstasy is not physically addictive. However, the drug can often take on great importance in people's lives, and some people become rather compulsive in their use. Taken too frequently, however, MDMA loses its special effect.
- MDMA releases the brain chemical serotonin, elevating mood and acting as a short-term antidepressant. Compulsive users may be unconsciously trying to self-medicate for depression. Effective treatments for depression are available with the proper diagnosis by a qualified physician.

BE CAREFUL

- Ecstasy is illegal and conviction for possession can carry long prison sentences.
- Frequent or high doses have been linked to neurotoxic damage in laboratory animals. It is still unknown whether such damage occurs in humans or, if it does, whether this has any long-term negative consequences.
- Some people experience depression after taking MDMA. This is caused by MDMA's action on certain brain chemicals.
- There have been some deaths associated with MDMA. Usually these have been a result of heat stroke from dancing for long periods of time in hot clubs without replenishing lost body fluids.
- Much of what is sold as "Ecstasy" on the black market actually contains other drugs, some of which can be more dangerous than MDMA, like PMA, speed, DXM and PCP.
- Mixing Ecstasy with alcohol or other drugs increases the risk of adverse reactions.