

# Other Drugs



## Introduction

The realm of substance use covers a wide array of drugs beyond common ones like alcohol and tobacco. This topic delves into the various other drugs, understanding their potential impacts, and the importance of awareness and safe practices. It provides resources and guidance on how to navigate situations involving drug use, ensuring informed decisions for one's health and well-being.

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## What are the risks and impacts?

It's important to know the risks to your mind and body so that you can make an informed decision about drugs.

People might choose to take drugs for different reasons:

- Being pressured by friends
- To deal with stress and emotional troubles
- To fit in with friends
- Or they may have seen their family or adults around them use drugs.

*While drugs may give people short term feelings of fun and release from stress, they can have negative impacts on your body and mind.*

The impacts of drugs are more severe for young people because your body and mind are still developing until the age of 25.

Illegal drugs are not controlled substances, and the quality and strength may be different from one batch to another so you never really know what you are getting or what it will do to you.

Drugs can have significant short and long-term impacts on your mind and body, including [psychosis](#), [mental health issues](#), liver disease and heart problems. [Your Room](#) has information on how different drugs affect your brain.

If you are deciding whether or not to take a drug, make sure you understand what you are taking and consider the risks. It's important to make an informed decision.

### **You should find out:**

- What effect the drug has on the mind and body
- The signs of an overdose
- What to do if you or someone around you needs help
- And how you could reduce the possibility of harm if you do choose to take it. Visit [Your Room](#) for the A - Z of drugs.

### **More information:**

- [Your Room](#) and the Alcohol and Drug Foundation's (ADF) [Drug Facts Wheel](#) have great information on drugs and their effects and the impacts on your mind and body.
- [Text the Effects](#) is an ADF information service that texts you drug information. Just text 0439 835 563 (0439 tell me) with the name of the

drug you want to know more about and they will text you back with information on the effects and impacts.

- [Youth Law Australia](#) have information on the laws around drugs in Australia.
- [Dance Wize](#) have information and support for drug questions.
- The [State Library of NSW](#) has free information about drugs and alcohol and the law in NSW.

## Reduce the risks

Remember you can have a good time without taking drugs.

It's always good to be prepared and to reduce the risks when using drugs:

- **Plan ahead.** Think about how you will respond if you or someone else runs into trouble. This will help you to reduce the risk of anyone coming to harm if someone has a bad reaction or overdoses.
- **Know what you are taking.** Research the types of drugs commonly used to understand their effects and what signs to look out for if you or someone else is in trouble. **Always call Triple Zero (000) if things get bad.**
- **Take a little bit of the drug first** to know how strong it is.
- **Use clean drug utensils.**
- **Don't mix drugs.** Mixing different drugs can lead to dangerous reactions.
- **Avoid using drugs alone** or in an isolated environment.
- **Ask for help** from a friend or a medical professional if you start to feel mentally or physically unwell or if you start to crave the drug.
- **Don't drive** or do anything dangerous while you're under the influence of drugs. Keep enough money for a taxi or another way home safely.
- **Remember to stay hydrated.** Sip at water and eat healthy foods.
- **Look after your mates.** If it looks like someone's getting into trouble call Triple Zero (000).

*If you find yourself regularly needing a drug to feel good, you might be becoming dependent. Take a break from using the drug so you don't form an addiction.*

The [ADF](#) have more information about reducing the risks when taking drugs. [Headspace](#) have information for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people on reducing risks and seeking help.

[Prescription medicine](#) can only be prescribed by a doctor or psychiatrist. It is illegal to share the prescription medicine your doctor or psychiatrist prescribe to you.

For example, if someone you know has been prescribed a specific drug and they give it to you, it is both illegal for them to give it to you and for you to take it.

## **What are the signs of drug dependence?**

If you're concerned that you might be developing a dependence, there are some general signs you can look out for.

People with a drug dependence may:

- Crave the drug and need to take it even when it's starting to interfere with their normal daily life
- Avoid people who don't take drugs
- Avoid places where it's not possible to take drugs
- Feel distressed and overwhelmed if they don't take the drug regularly
- Be dishonest with friends and family to hide their drug use
- Sometimes take dangerous risks, such as driving under the influence of drugs, or stealing to pay for drugs
- Have a pattern of using drugs to deal with emotional or stressful situations.

Recovering from drug dependence can be hard. You will likely experience withdrawals.

You might only be experiencing some of these signs of drug dependence and want to get help to quit early. It's important to have support around you to help you through the difficult phases. You can ask a youth worker, a doctor, a mental health service, or a friend that you trust for help and support.

There are also online resources available to support you with recovery:

- [ReachOut NextStep](#): an anonymous online tool that recommends relevant support options based on the help that you want.
- [Your Room](#): How can I stop or cut down my alcohol or drug use?
- [Counselling Online](#): Free Drug & Alcohol counselling 24/7.
- [NSW Users and Aids Association](#) have PeerLine phone hotline, a peer to peer drug help hotline where you can get non-judgemental advice and referrals. Call from 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday 1800 644 413 (a free call on landlines and most mobile providers).
- [Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre \(DAMEC\)](#): have alcohol and other drug support for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in NSW.
- [Ted Noffs](#): have a residential treatment program for young people aged 13-17 to address serious drug and alcohol related difficulties.
- [Strong Spirit, Strong Mind](#): have resources and support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- [WellMob](#): have resources for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## Overdose

An overdose is when someone takes too much of a drug or combination of drugs and the body can't cope with the effects. Overdoses can be life-threatening. Anyone experiencing an overdose needs immediate help from medical professionals.

*Prepare yourself and know how to respond when someone is overdosing. Encourage your friends to learn about what to do in an emergency as well.*

There are a lot of signs that someone might be in trouble or experiencing an overdose. The signs of an overdose depend on the types of drugs that have been taken. Make sure you know the signs for the drug you, or someone around you, might be using. That way you know when you need to seek help. [Your Room](#) have more information on how to spot different types of overdoses.

[Video: Signs of a stimulant overdose](#)

[Video: Signs of an opiate overdose](#)

## *What to do when someone is showing signs of having an overdose*

- Get help fast – call an ambulance on Triple Zero (000).
- If someone is upset or agitated, try to calm them and move them to a quieter area while you get help.
- If someone is unconscious, try to get a response from them by calling their name. If they don't respond, put them in the [recovery position](#) and ask someone to go get help.
- Stay with them and check that they are breathing and try to cool them down while you wait for help.

*If you know which drugs have been taken and the person is not in immediate danger, you can call the Stimulant Treatment Line on [02 9361 8088](#). If you live in a regional area, call [1800 10 11 88](#). The Stimulant Line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.*

Police will not be called to a drug overdose unless there is a threat of danger to ambulance officers or if the overdose becomes fatal and the person dies. Hospitals and doctors also DO NOT notify the police if you request medical attention for a suspected overdose. Visit the [Calling Triple Zero \(000\)](#) topic for more tips on contacting emergency services.

## **What if I'm worried about a friend or family members drug use?**

A person who is using drugs may not display any signs of use. Possible signs of drug use may include:

- altered mood or behaviour
- changes to appetite
- changes in energy levels or libido
- issues managing work, finances and relationships.

These behaviours might not necessarily mean they are using drugs. Your loved one

may be stressed, experiencing problems with school or work, or having difficulties sleeping.

In your teen years you are likely to display some of these behaviours, as a result of the changes you experience during adolescence.

If you are concerned about a loved one's drug use or have reason to believe that a friend or family member is using drugs, it is important to reach out to a professional and get some advice on how to approach the issue with your loved one.

Where appropriate, try to maintain open communication with your loved one. When discussing your concerns, be honest, avoid judgement or accusations, and provide them with support if needed.

## Other Drugs support services and resources

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There are online resources available to help you have these difficult conversations or to refer your friend to:

### **ADF**

- [Have the conversation](#)
- [Drug Info line](#)
- [Finding help and support](#)

### **Reach Out**

- [How to help a friend with drug addiction](#)
- ['I Am Sober' app](#)

### **Your Room**

- [For Families support section](#)