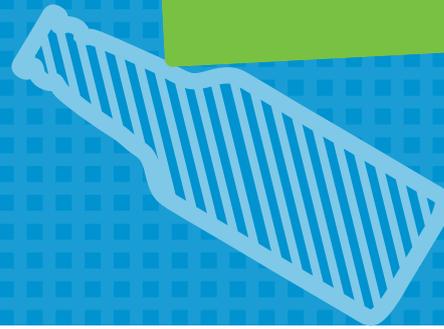




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Alcohol



Alcohol AKA **booze, piss, grog, drink.**

What is it?

A lot of people don't think about alcohol as a drug – but it's the most widely used drug in Australia and is really easy to get. There are many different kinds of alcohol, like beer, cider, wine and spirits.



Many people feel pressured to drink. If you choose to drink alcohol, it should be on your terms. There is no "safe way" to use alcohol; however, if you are choosing to drink, it is important that you drink as safely as possible.

What does it do?

How alcohol will make you feel depends on lots of things like how much you weigh, how healthy you are, how regularly you drink, the kind of mood you're in when you drink and the people you are drinking with. But as a general rule, alcohol will relax you, make you feel more confident and less inhibited, slow down your reflexes and affect your balance and coordination.

Drinking too much can give you headaches, make you feel dizzy, sick or cause you to vomit. In extreme cases you might even pass out and not remember what happened.

The effects of alcohol can last for hours, especially if you have drunk a lot. When it wears off you may feel tired, thirsty, headachy and sick or have an upset tummy. This usually won't last longer than a day.

Alcohol and your mental health

One of the major reasons people drink alcohol is to change their mood. This is why people think drinking alcohol is so much fun. You can pretty much expect whatever mood you were in before you started drinking to be amplified. So if you were feeling happy, you will feel really happy.

If you felt anxious or depressed before you started drinking you

will probably feel much worse once the effects have worn off. This can have a big effect on people who have depression and other mental health problems.

Alcohol will make you less inhibited so you might say stuff you wouldn't normally say or do stuff you wouldn't normally do. This can lead to feeling really bad the next day if you said



mean things to a mate, or to your boyfriend or girlfriend, or had a fight with someone.

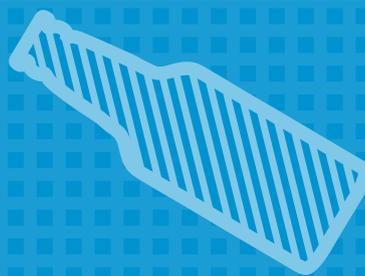
Alcohol and your physical health



Long term alcohol use can also cause problems with your physical health, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, brain damage, liver disease as well as different kinds of cancers.



Alcohol



What happens if I stop drinking?

It can be tricky giving up drinking if you've been doing it for a long time, because your body has to get used to going without it. If you are dependent on alcohol and you suddenly stop drinking, you might get withdrawal symptoms including sweating, feeling sick, anxiety, irritability, problems sleeping, tremors (e.g. shaking hands), even seizures or fits. Because of this, it's a good idea to have



a chat to a general practitioner (GP) to discuss the safest way of cutting down your drinking.

When someone overdoses

In some cases, drinking too much can cause someone to overdose. How this looks may be different depending on what's happening for the person (e.g. they may have mixed alcohol with other drugs), but too much alcohol can cause fits, irregular or shallow breathing, pale or blue looking skin, or unconsciousness. If something like this happens, some sensible things you can do are:



Call 000 – you won't get into trouble for asking for help.



Don't leave your friend alone.



Put your friend on their side if they are unconscious or in case they vomit.



Keep an eye on their breathing.

Staying safe

If you are going to drink, here are some tips to help you and your mates stay safe:

Don't drink alone.	Eat before and while you are drinking.	Drink water in between alcoholic drinks and/or drink low alcohol drinks.
Slow down. Finish one drink before the next and sip instead of scull.	Avoid rounds (or shouts).	Take it in turns to stay sober so that one of you can drive everyone else home safely. If not, keep enough money for a cab.
Look out for your mates. Keep an eye on them if they get sick, make sure they are okay to get home and don't let them get into risky situations.	Try having days and weekends without drinking.	Avoid drinking if you have school, uni or work the next day.

Getting help

If your alcohol use is starting to affect things that matter, like your mental health, wellbeing or your friendships, it can be a good idea to talk to someone about your options, such as different ways to reduce or stop your use. Whatever you decide, **headspace** can help.



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Amphetamines



Amphetamines AKA speed, ice, fast, crystal meth, whizz, base, paste, dexies, meth.

What are they?

Amphetamines are stimulants, so they speed up your brain and your body. They come in a few different forms including powder, tablets, crystal and paste. Some prescription medicines include amphetamines as an ingredient (e.g. dexamphetamine which is used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)). Amphetamines can be swallowed, injected, shafted (put up your bottom), smoked or snorted, depending on the type.



There is no "safe way" to use amphetamines, however, if you are choosing to use, it is important that you use as safely as possible.

What do they do?



How amphetamines make you feel depends on things like how strong they are, the kind of mood you are in, who you are using with, how much you use and your size. As a general rule, amphetamines will make you feel excited, confident, talkative, energetic and awake. People who like to go clubbing use amphetamines to give them the energy to dance for ages.



If you use amphetamines, you probably won't feel hungry and you will find it tricky to sleep. They may take a while to wear off and you might even find that you can't sleep for a night or two. When they do wear off you can feel tired, irritable and depressed for a couple of days afterwards.

Amphetamines and your mental health

One of the reasons people use amphetamines is because they think they will make them feel good. In most cases they do. However if you already have a mental health problem you may find that amphetamines make you feel worse. Lots of people feel anxious, restless, irritable and suspicious when they use amphetamines. In extreme cases you might feel angrier and behave more violently than you would normally.



Amphetamine use can cause paranoia, so you might think that you are being talked about or watched when you aren't. If you use a lot, it can cause drug induced psychosis, where you start to believe strange things or see and hear things that aren't there.



Amphetamines



What happens if I stop using?

If you have been using amphetamines regularly, you will probably have withdrawal symptoms when you stop. How bad they are depends on how much you've been using and how often, as well as what kind of shape you are in. Withdrawal symptoms tend to be worst during the first week and then will start to ease off, although in extreme cases some symptoms may hang around for a couple of months.

Some common withdrawal symptoms are:

- Irritability
- Sleeplessness
- Depression/anxiety
- Mood swings
- Headaches
- Feeling hungry
- Difficulty concentrating.

When someone overdoses

In some cases, taking too many amphetamines can cause someone to overdose. This may lead to things like loss of consciousness or overheating – it will look different depending on what's happening for the person (e.g. they may have mixed drugs or taken lots of amphetamines when they haven't eaten or slept for a few days).

If something like this happens, some sensible things you can do are:



Call 000 – you won't get into trouble for asking for help.



Don't leave your friend alone.



Put your friend on their side if they are unconscious or in case they vomit.



Keep an eye on their breathing.

Staying safe

If you are going to use amphetamines, there will always be a risk of bad things happening. You can reduce some of these risks by:



Going low, going slow. Just use a bit at a time and wait to see what it feels like before taking more.



Not mixing with other drugs or alcohol – it can get out of control quickly.



Only using with people you trust. It's good if someone in your group isn't using to keep an eye on you.



Never sharing needles. Use clean equipment to avoid the risk of contracting blood-borne viruses like HIV or Hepatitis C.



Making sure that you eat, even if you don't feel like it.



Take a break. Make sure that you have amphetamine free days and try not to use them before anything big (e.g. exams).



Calling an ambulance if things get bad.



If your amphetamine use is starting to affect things that matter, like your mental health, wellbeing or your friendships, it can be a good idea to talk to someone about your options, such as different ways to reduce or stop your use. Whatever you decide, **headspace** can help.



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Benzodiazepines



Benzodiazepines AKA **benzos, sleepers, jellies, rohys, vallies, roofies, moggies.**

What are they?

Benzodiazepines (often called benzos) are a group of drugs known as minor tranquillisers. Benzos are generally prescribed by doctors to help people with anxiety or sleep problems to help them to relax. Used in the short term, they can be really helpful however people often use them recreationally as well. There are a lot of different types of benzos and they are all sold under different brand names – same class, different drug.



The only "safe way" to use benzodiazepines is under close medical supervision, however, if you are choosing to use recreationally, it is important that you use as safely as possible.

What do they do?

What benzos do to you depends on the type of benzo you are using, how many you've taken, whether you are using them on their own or with something else, your size and the kind of mood you are in. Generally speaking, benzos help you to relax, feel less anxious and make you feel sleepy. They can also make you feel really warm and fuzzy.



Benzos and your mental health

People often take benzos because they feel anxious or worried and they want to relax. When you stop taking benzos, you can get this thing called "rebound anxiety" which is where your anxiety comes back and it feels twice as strong. Coming off benzos can also cause panicky feelings and insomnia.



The effects of benzos



The effects of benzos depend on what you've taken. They all last for different amounts of time in your body - this is called a "half-life". Generally the effects will last up to 24 hours and you may find it difficult to sleep once they have worn off. It might take only a little while to develop a "tolerance" (having to take more to get the same effect) to benzos.

Benzodiazepines



What happens if I stop using?

Giving up benzos can be tricky because your body has to get used to functioning without them. If you are dependent on benzos and you suddenly stop taking them, you might get withdrawal symptoms including insomnia, anxiety, depression, restlessness, muscle pains, twitching and seizures. It's a good idea to have a chat to a general practitioner (GP) to discuss the safest way of cutting down your benzo use.



When someone overdoses

In some cases, taking too many benzos can cause someone to overdose. How this looks may be different depending on what's happening for the person (e.g. they may have mixed benzos with other drugs), but overdose can cause irregular or shallow breathing, loss of consciousness, even coma or death. If someone looks like they may have overdosed, some sensible things you can do are:



Call 000 – you won't get into trouble for asking for help.



Don't leave your friend alone.



Put your friend on their side if they are unconscious or in case they vomit.



Keep an eye on their breathing.

Staying safe

If you are going to use benzos recreationally, there will always be the risk of bad things happening. You can reduce some of this risk by:



Going low, going slow. Just use half or one at a time and wait to see what it feels like.



Not mixing with other drugs or alcohol – it can get out of control quickly. If you use benzos with other depressants (e.g. alcohol) it can increase your risk of overdose.



Only using with people you trust. It's good if someone in your group isn't using to keep an eye on you. Keep an eye on your mates too.



Avoiding injecting benzos. They are intended to be swallowed in tablet/capsule form.



Take a break. Make sure that you have benzo free days and try not to use them before anything big (e.g. exams).



Calling an ambulance (000) if things get bad.

Getting help

If your benzo use is starting to affect things that matter, like your mental health, wellbeing or your friendships, it can be a good idea to talk to someone about your options, such as different ways to reduce or stop your use. Whatever you decide, **headspace** can help.



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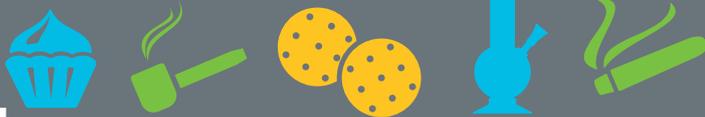
Cannabis

Cannabis AKA marijuana, pot, dope, grass, hash, ganja, hashish, choof, hemp, herb, skunk, smoke, spliff, weed.

What is it?

Cannabis is the most commonly used illegal drug in Australia and it comes in a number of different forms. For example, pot is the dried leaves and flowers of the cannabis plant and looks like tightly-packed dried herbs, and hash is a black-brown solid material

made from the resin of the plant. Cannabis is usually mixed with tobacco and smoked in joints. It can also be smoked in bongs or pipes, baked into food (e.g. cakes and cookies) or sometimes drunk as a brew.



There is no "safe way" to use cannabis, however, if you are choosing to use, it is important that you use as safely as possible.

What does it do?

Cannabis contains a chemical called Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) which moves from the bloodstream into the brain. THC is a hallucinogenic, meaning that it changes the way that you see reality. How it affects you depends on how much you use, how strong it is, how you took it, how you are feeling, who you are with and whether you have mixed it with any other drugs or alcohol.



How long being "stoned" lasts, depends on how you used cannabis and how strong it was (e.g. if you ate it, you might stay stoned for a lot longer than if you smoked it). Usually when people smoke cannabis, they stay stoned for two to four hours. If you eat cannabis, the reaction can take up to an hour to come on but it might then last for six or more hours.

The effects of cannabis



Some effects of cannabis or being "stoned" are feeling chilled out, relaxed and happy, becoming talkative and laughing a lot and experiencing hunger or food cravings (known as "the munchies"). Some of the not-so-good effects can include feeling sick, your heart rate speeding up, a change in the way you experience sensations (colours and sounds), poor concentration, anxiety and panic, suspicion, paranoia and poor coordination which can affect driving and other activities.

Cannabis



Cannabis and your mental health

People usually use cannabis because they want to feel good, and in most cases they do. However if you already have a mental health problem, you might find that cannabis makes you feel worse.

Sometimes cannabis can make feelings of anxiety, panic or paranoia more intense. Young people who use cannabis are at risk of developing mental health problems, such as psychosis. Psychosis is when you start to believe strange



things or see and hear things that aren't there. The risk of developing psychosis can be even higher if you start using cannabis when you are young, or if other people in your family have had mental health problems.

What happens if I stop using?

If you use cannabis for a long time you might become dependent and then find it hard to stop. If you are trying to cut down or stop using cannabis after using it for a while, you might experience withdrawal symptoms. These can include cravings, an upset tummy, not wanting to eat, problems sleeping and sometimes feeling angry, irritable and restless. Withdrawals usually last around a week, although problems with sleep may go for longer.



Staying safe

If you are going to use cannabis, there will always be the risk of bad things happening. You can reduce some of this risk by:



Going low, going slow.

Just use a bit at a time and wait to see what it feels like.



Eating cannabis (in cakes or cookies) rather than smoking it.

Be aware that it's easy to have too much, so start with a small amount and wait up to an hour to see how strong it is.



Not mixing with other drugs or alcohol.

Things can get out of control quickly.



Not driving or doing anything that requires coordination after you've used.



Only using with people you trust.

It's good if someone in your group isn't using to keep an eye on you. Keep an eye on your mates too.



Having cannabis free days.

Avoid using if you have school, uni or work the next day.



Calling an ambulance (000) if things get bad.

Getting help

If your cannabis use is starting to affect things that matter, like your mental health, wellbeing or your friendships, it can be a good idea to talk to someone about your options, such as different ways to reduce or stop your use. Whatever you decide, **headspace** can help.



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Inhalants have vapours or fumes which can be breathed in and make you feel high, intoxicated or disoriented.

A.K.A.: Solvents, glue, gas, sniff, sniffing, huff, chroming, poppers

Inhalants will slow down your coordination, judgement and response times, but they will not necessarily make you feel depressed. Many everyday products have been used as inhalants, including glue, aerosol sprays, cleaning fluids, liquid paper, paints and petrol.

How are inhalants taken?

Inhalants are breathed in through the nose or mouth. They can be inhaled by sniffing or 'snorting' fumes from containers, spraying aerosols directly into the mouth or nose, spraying or placing the product in a paper or plastic bag and then inhaling, by huffing from an inhalant-soaked rag, or inhaling from balloons filled with nitrous oxide.

What are the effects of inhalants?

The effect of inhalants varies from one person to the next. It depends on how much you inhaled, your weight and health, what you have used before (and how much), your mood when you use inhalants, and whether you have taken other drugs. Most inhalants slow down the body's functions. If large quantities are inhaled they can quickly cause intoxication, which usually lasts only a few minutes.

Some of the effects include feeling dizzy and light-headed, feeling confident, and excitement and laughter.

Effects that aren't so good can include:

- Slurred speech
- Feeling thirsty
- Being unable to coordinate your movements, with slow reflexes
- Dribbling, sneezing or coughing
- Feeling tired after the initial high
- Blurred vision
- Nausea (feeling sick and wanting to vomit)
- Nose bleeds
- Headaches and feeling 'hung over'
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there)
- Risky behavior, including aggression and violence, accidents and injury, and unwanted sex.

Repeated use of inhalants can feel good at first, but can make you feel less inhibited and less in control.

Inhalants can make you lose consciousness, and there is a risk of death from heart failure or suffocation. Death is a very real risk of inhalants, and can happen whether you're a first timer or a regular user.



Inhalants

What are the long-term effects of inhalants?

Inhalants are dangerous chemicals, often more so than cannabis or ecstasy. Repeated use can cause severe damage to the brain, liver and kidneys, cause memory loss, confused thinking, tremors, lead poisoning, sores around the mouth and nose, weight loss, depression and irritability.

Use of inhalants can also lead to conflict with friends and family, and perhaps losing contact with them.

What about withdrawal?

It is possible to become dependant on inhalants. This mean it can be very hard to stop, and stopping suddenly can cause symptoms like anxiety, depression, loss of appetite, irritation, aggression, dizziness, tremors and nausea.

Managing your drug use

If you, your family or your friends think your drug use is becoming a problem, then get some help and talk to people about it. Changing your drug use can be hard work, but it will be worth it.

Some people can reduce or stop drug use on their own, but think about talking to a trusted family member, friend, doctor or counsellor.

For more information, and to find out how to get help, visit the headspace website: www.headspace.org.au



Tobacco

Tobacco AKA ciggies, fags, butts, darts, smokes, rollies.

What is it?

Tobacco is one of the oldest known drugs. It's a green leafy plant that is grown in warm climates and once it is picked, it is dried, ground up and used in different ways. Most people smoke tobacco in cigarettes, but some people prefer cigars or pipes. It can also be chewed, and sniffed through the nose as 'snuff'.



What does it do?

Tobacco contains the stimulant drug nicotine. Nicotine speeds up your central nervous system and makes you feel like you have more energy. It can also affect the brain so that you feel 'good' after smoking. Nicotine is highly addictive so you can get 'hooked' fast making it hard to quit.



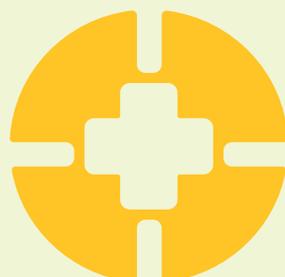
The effects of tobacco



When you first start to smoke you can feel sick and dizzy. It can make your heart beat faster, give you a headache and make you cough. Most of these effects – the good ones as well as the bad ones – become less as you keep on smoking. Over time, your body gets used to the chemicals in cigarettes, including nicotine.

When you inhale the nicotine in a cigarette, it hits your brain in about ten seconds and it wears off again within a few minutes. This is why most people feel like they need to keep smoking throughout the day and why it is easy to become dependent on smoking.

Tobacco and your mental and physical health



If you already have mental health problems, smoking can make it more complicated. You might start or keep smoking because you think it helps with your anxiety or depression, and then find that when you try and quit smoking your anxiety/depression becomes much worse.

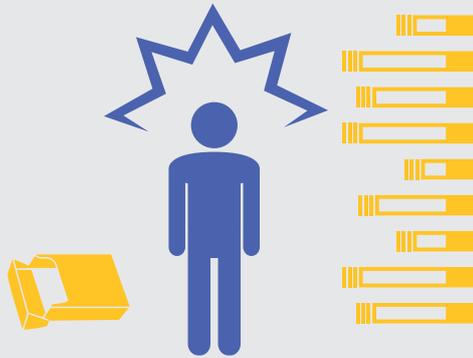
So if you keep smoking, it becomes a vicious cycle. Smoking can also affect your physical health, causing things like shortness of breath, more regular colds or flu, yellow stained fingers and in the long term, heart disease and cancers.

Tobacco



Overdose

Although it's hard to imagine, it is possible to have too much nicotine in one go. If you smoke too much (this doesn't often happen) or you smoke or chew nicotine gum while wearing nicotine patches, you might end up feeling confused, being unable to get your breath or in extreme cases, have seizures.



Staying safe

If you are going to use tobacco, there will always be the risk of bad things happening. You can reduce some of this risk by:

Smoking less. See if you can cut down so that you smoke fewer cigarettes in a day or set limits on the number of cigarettes you will have in a day.

Having smoke free days.

Switching to something that reduces the health risks of smoking (e.g. patches, gum, lozenges and inhalers).

Quitting.

Quitting



Some people manage to quit smoking without any help, but most people need some assistance.

Your general practitioner (GP) or local **headspace** centre can talk you through the options.

It is normal to crave cigarettes when you first quit, because your body is withdrawing from the

nicotine. Gradually the cravings will become less and less.

You may find that after quitting you 'relapse' and start smoking again – don't worry, every relapse is an opportunity to learn something new about your smoking habits and triggers.

Making the change can be hard work, but it will be worth it.



Getting help

If your smoking is starting to affect things that matter, like your mental health, wellbeing or your friendships, it can be a good idea to talk to someone

about your options, such as different ways to reduce or stop your use. Whatever you decide, **headspace** can help.



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