

Reaching



When assessing whether someone might be using drugs, you may observe symptoms that are extreme. But you may also observe behaviors that fall into the overall range of what is normal. If possible, observations are best evaluated in comparison to an individual's normal behavior.

The following chart provides specific information about the most prevalent forms of drugs, including a brief description, common street names, signs of use, effects on the user and effects on children. All of the information on this chart, with the exception of some sections of the "Effects on

Children," comes from the National Institute on Drug Abuse Web site: www.nida.nih.gov. The information for some sections of "Effects on Children" is copyrighted and used by permission from the March of Dimes at www.marchofdimes.com.

ACID (LSD)

Brief Description	A hallucinogen. One of the strongest mood-changing drugs. Sold as tablets, capsules, liquid or on absorbent paper that can look like a stamp.
Street Names	Acid, blotter.
Signs of Use	Dilated pupils, disorientation, rambling or strange speech, sweating, rapid mood changes, panic and/or heightened anxiety response, erratic behavior.
Effects on User	Unpredictable psychological effects. With large enough doses, users experience delusions and visual hallucinations. Physical effects include increased body temperature, heart rate and blood pressure; sleeplessness; and loss of appetite.
Effects on Children*	No research showing impact on birth outcomes.

ALCOHOL

Brief Description	A depressant drug that reduces social inhibitions. Alcoholic drinks consist mainly of water, flavoring and ethanol or ethyl alcohol in varying strengths.
Street Names	Booze, brew, cold one, juice, sauce, wahoo juice, forty.
Signs of Use	Smell of alcohol on breath, loss of physical coordination, loss of balance, bloodshot eyes, slurred and/or incoherent speech, loss of consciousness, slowed thinking, inappropriate or violent behavior, blackouts.
Effects on User	At intoxicating doses, alcohol can decrease heart rate, lower blood pressure and respiration rate, and result in decreased reflex responses and slower reaction times. Nausea, vomiting, euphoria, impairment of reasoning, reduced self-control and sense of caution, impaired short-term memory, loss of motor coordination, depression, total mental confusion. Loss of consciousness. Onset of coma, possible death due to respiratory arrest.
Effects on Children*	Drinking during pregnancy raises the risk of low-birth weight babies and intrauterine growth retardation, increasing the danger of infection, feeding difficulties and/or long-term developmental problems. Heavy drinking during the early months of pregnancy can result in the birth of babies with fetal alcohol syndrome.

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CLUB DRUGS

Brief Description	Typically used by teenagers and young adults at bars, clubs, concerts and parties. The most common club drugs include Ecstasy (MDMA), GHB, Rohypnol and ketamine. These drugs are usually in tablet form, and are a mix of stimulants, depressants and mood-changing drugs.
Street Names	XTC, X, Adam, hug, beans, love drug (MDMA); Special K, Vitamin K (ketamine); liquid ecstasy, soap (GHB); roofies (Rohypnol).
Signs of Use	Nausea, chills, sweating, teeth clenching, muscle cramping, blurred vision, increased energy.
Effects on User	Chronic use of MDMA may lead to changes in brain function. Short-term effects include feelings of mental stimulation, emotional warmth, enhanced sensory perception and increased physical energy. GHB abuse can cause coma and seizures. High doses of ketamine can cause delirium, amnesia and other problems. Mixed with alcohol, Rohypnol can incapacitate users and cause amnesia.
Effects on Children*	No research showing impact on birth outcomes.

COCAINE

Brief Description	A powerfully-addictive central nervous system stimulant that is snorted, sniffed, injected or smoked. Most often seen in the form of a white, crystalline powder, it is extracted from the leaves of the coca plant. Crack is cocaine that has been processed from cocaine hydrochloride to a free base for smoking.
Street Names	Coke, snow, flake, ice, blow.
Signs of Use	Dilated pupils, bloodshot eyes, runny nose, frequent sniffing, high level of energy, euphoria. The signs of post use are fatigue and irritability.
Effects on User	Common health effects include increased heart rate, restlessness, anxiety, increased body temperature, insomnia, loss of appetite and increased blood pressure. Large amounts can cause bizarre and violent behavior, heart attacks, respiratory failure, strokes and seizures. In rare cases, sudden death can occur on the first use of cocaine or unexpectedly thereafter.
Effects on Children*	Fetal cocaine effects include premature separation of the placenta, spontaneous abortion, premature labor, low birth weight and head circumference at birth, greater chance of visual impairment, mental retardation and developmental problems.

HEROIN

Brief Description	An addictive drug that depresses the central nervous system, heroin is processed from morphine and usually appears as a white or brown powder. Can be injected or smoked.
Street Names	Smack, H, skag, junk, horse, dope.
Signs of Use	Very small pupils, lethargic and drowsy appearance, scratchy voice, reduced appetite. Equipment for use: burnt foil, syringes, spoon.
Effects on User	Short-term effects include a surge of euphoria followed by alternately wakeful and drowsy states and cloudy mental functioning. Long-term users may develop collapsed veins, liver disease and lung complications. Since heroin is commonly injected, other side effects include those associated with injection drug use including hepatitis and HIV/AIDS.
Effects on Children*	Use during pregnancy: miscarriage, poor fetal growth, premature delivery and stillbirth. Serious prematurely-related health problems during the newborn period, including low birth weight, breathing problems and brain bleeding, sometimes leading to lifelong disabilities. Most babies of heroin users suffer from withdrawal symptoms after birth, including fever, sneezing, trembling, irritability, diarrhea, vomiting, continual crying and, occasionally, seizures. A ten-fold increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

INHALANTS

Brief Description	Breathable chemical vapors that users intentionally inhale because of the chemicals' mind-altering (hallucinogenic) effects. The substances inhaled are often common household products that contain volatile solvents or aerosols.
Street Names	Whippets, poppers, snappers.
Signs of Use	Paint or stains on body or clothing; spots or sores around the mouth; red or runny eyes or nose; chemical breath odor; drunk, dazed or dizzy appearance; nausea, loss of appetite, anxiety, excitability, irritability.
Effects on User	Most inhalants produce a rapid high that resembles alcohol intoxication including reduction in inhibition and control. Although they differ in makeup, nearly all abused inhalants produce short-term effects similar to anesthetics, which act to slow down the body's functions. If sufficient amounts are inhaled, nearly all solvents and gases produce a loss of sensation, and unconsciousness, which may result in brain damage. Severe liver and kidney damage and hearing loss can also occur. In lethal dose, inhalants cause heart failure and suffocation.
Effects on Children*	Because inhalants involve abuse of different chemicals, it is difficult to link certain abuse to specific birth outcomes. But, in general, inhalant abuse in pregnancy can result in reduced birth weight and delayed neurobehavioral development.

MARIJUANA

Brief Description	Marijuana comes from a plant and is most commonly smoked. The main active chemical is THC. Marijuana is a depressant.
Street Names	Pot, ganga, weed, grass, reefer, mary jane, blunt, joint, roach.
Signs of Use	Seeming dizzy and having trouble walking; red, bloodshot eyes; hair and clothes that smell of marijuana smoke (sweetish smell); having a hard time remembering things that just happened; acting silly for no apparent reason.
Effects on User	Short-term effects include memory and learning problems, distorted perception and difficulty thinking and solving problems.
Effects on Children*	Some studies suggest that use of marijuana during pregnancy may slow fetal growth and slightly decrease the length of pregnancy (possibly increasing the risk of premature delivery). Both of these factors can increase a woman's chance of having a low-birth weight baby. After delivery, some babies who were regularly exposed to marijuana in the womb appear to undergo withdrawal-like symptoms including excessive crying and trembling.

METHAMPHETAMINE

Brief Description	An addictive stimulant that is closely related to amphetamine, but has longer lasting and more toxic effects on the central nervous system. It has a high potential for abuse and addiction. It can be smoked, snorted, injected or taken orally. It can easily be made in clandestine laboratories from relatively inexpensive over-the-counter ingredients.
Street Names	Speed, meth, chalk, ice, crystal, glass, crank.
Signs of Use	Excessive sweating, decreased appetite, erratic behavior, rotting teeth, weight loss, irritated skin, agitation, excited speech.
Effects on User	Increases wakefulness and physical activity, decreases appetite and can cause nausea and vomiting. Can also cause occasional episodes of sudden and violent behavior, intense paranoia, visual and auditory hallucinations, bouts of insomnia, a tendency to compulsively clean and groom, and a tendency to repetitively disassemble and sort objects. Chronic, long-term use can lead to heart problems and stroke.
Effects on Children*	Use during pregnancy: premature labor, detachment of the placenta, low birth weight babies with possible neurological damage, poor feeding, and lethargy. In addition, meth labs, which often are homes, expose children to highly toxic chemicals that are ingested through the lungs, stomach and skin. These chemicals are also highly volatile.

PCP/PHENCYCLIDINE

Brief Description	Illegally manufactured in labs and sold as tablets, capsules or colored powder. It can be snorted, smoked, injected or eaten.
Street Names	Angel dust, ozone, wack, rocket fuel.
Signs of Use	Profuse sweating, dilated pupils, flushing, shallow breathing, loss of muscle coordination, disoriented, garbled speech, severe mood swings.
Effects on User	At low to moderate doses, effects include a slight increase in breathing rate, a pronounced rise in blood pressure and pulse rate, generalized numbness of the extremities, loss of muscular coordination. At high doses, drop in blood pressure, pulse and respiration rates, nausea, vomiting, blurred vision, flicking up and down of the eyes, drooling, loss of balance, dizziness and respiration drop. People high on PCP often become violent or suicidal. High doses of PCP can also cause seizures, coma and death (though death more often results from accidental injury or suicide during PCP intoxication). High doses can cause symptoms that mimic schizophrenia, such as delusions, hallucinations, paranoia, disordered thinking, a sensation of distance from one's environment and catatonia.
Effects on Children*	Causes central nervous system and brain damage to fetus.

STEROIDS (ANABOLIC)

Brief Description	Human-made substances related to male sex hormones. Highly addictive. Some athletes abuse anabolic steroids to enhance performance. Orally ingested, injected or applied to skin as cream or gel.
Street Names	Juice, Roids, Gym Candy, Pumpers, Stackers.
Signs of Use	Needle marks over large muscle areas, disproportionate body size, with overdeveloped upper body muscles, mood swings and aggressive behavior, acne, deepened voice for women, hair loss, increased appetite.
Effects on User	Major side effects can include liver tumors and cancer, jaundice, high blood pressure, kidney tumors, severe acne and trembling. In males, side effects may include shrinking of the testicles and breast development. In females, side effects may include growth of facial hair, menstrual changes, and deepened voice. In teenagers, growth may be halted prematurely and permanently.
Effects on Children*	If taken while pregnant, may cause development of male features in the female fetus and premature growth and development of male features in the male fetus.

* As with any form of substance abuse, children may suffer from chronic neglect or abuse from parents who are using and are addicted.