

# Healthy Spirit Healthy Community

A GUIDE TO DRUGS AND ALCOHOL WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY



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## ARTIST/DESIGNER INTRODUCTION

Working as a designer for over 10 years Jessica Johnson was born in Darwin to a Warumungu / Wombaya father and mother of Irish / English decent. She spent her formative years on Ngunnawal / Wiradjuri country of the ACT / NSW.

Jessica is driven to find dynamic and original solutions that reflect those pronounced qualities of our people. She attributes her initial interest in art, design and communications to her wildly creative family. The application in context of health and wellbeing is also a natural continuation of her family's focus.

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## INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been developed for community members as an educational and informational resource. It contains information on crystalline methamphetamine (ice) and other drugs including alcohol.

The information in this booklet is a guide only. If you or a family member or friend is experiencing any negative effects from alcohol or other drugs or have any questions or concerns, visit your local Aboriginal health service, other health worker or GP (contact details are on page 44).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The NSW Healthy Spirit, Healthy Community was based on a Victorian resource that was developed by the Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF) in conjunction with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO). The ADF would like to thank and acknowledge VACCHO for their contribution and the NSW Ministry of Health for funding this booklet.

The ADF would also like to thank the Leadership Group of the Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Network (ADAN) and the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council in NSW for their contribution.

We would especially like to thank the following people for their editorial input into this resource:

Cherie Colliss, Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Health Service

Verina Crawford, Far West NSW Local Health District

Kylie Paulson, Hunter New England Local Health District

Rodney Tighe, Hunter New England Local Health District

Raechel Wallace, Wandarma Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Service

Ty Madden, Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council



# CRYSTALLINE METHAMPHETAMINE (ICE)

## What is ice?

Ice is a stimulant drug, which means it speeds up the messages travelling between your brain and body. It belongs to the methamphetamine family which includes speed and base. Ice is generally stronger, more addictive and has worse side effects than speed and base which aren't as potent.

## Street names

Ice, crystal meth, crystal, shabu, glass, shard, meth, Tina.

## How is it used?

Ice is generally smoked or injected and the effects can be felt immediately. It can also be swallowed or snorted – the effects take around 30 minutes to feel if it's used this way.

## Effects of ice

The effects of ice can last around 6-8 hours, but it might be hard to sleep for a few days after using these drugs.

Drugs affect everyone differently, but you may experience:

- Happiness and confidence
- Talking more and feeling energetic
- Repeating simple things like itching and scratching
- Large pupils and dry mouth
- Fast heart beat and breathing
- Teeth grinding
- Reduced appetite
- Excessive sweating
- Increased sex drive.

Because it can be hard to sleep for a few days after taking ice – the drug can also cause:

- Headaches
- Dizziness and blurred vision
- Paranoia, hallucinations and confusion
- Irritability and violence.

If you have a lot (or get a strong batch), ice can also cause:

- A racing heart beat
- Fits
- Passing out
- Heart attack or stroke.

‘Ice psychosis’ is generally caused by high doses and frequent heavy use of the drug. It involves paranoid delusions, hallucinations and out of character, aggressive or violent behaviour. These symptoms usually disappear after 2-3 hours but sometimes they can become more severe and can last for days after the person stops using ice.

Injecting ice and sharing needles may also cause:

- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis C
- HIV/AIDS
- Tetanus.

Read about how to prevent catching these viruses on page 38. If you snort ice it can damage your nasal passage and cause nose bleeds.

### In an emergency

Call triple zero (000) if someone looks like they've had ice or speed and are in trouble. Ambulance officers don't have to involve the police.

While you wait for help to arrive:

- Stay with the person and keep to people back
- Make sure they have enough air and loosen tight clothing
- If they lie down, put them on their side in case they vomit.

### Coming down

Usually 12-24 hours after using ice, people experience a 'crash' and feel very low. They may also feel:

- Restlessness, sleepy and exhausted
- Irritable, depressed and moody.

If you use a depressant drug such as alcohol, benzos or yandri to help with 'coming down', you may become trapped in a vicious cycle where you are addicted to both types of drugs.

If you regularly use a lot of ice, it may eventually cause:

- Reduced appetite and extreme weight loss
- Restless sleep
- Dry mouth and dental problems
- Regular colds or flu
- Trouble concentrating
- Breathlessness
- Muscle stiffness
- Anxiety, paranoia and violence
- Depression
- Heart and kidney problems
- Increased risk of stroke
- Needing to use more to get the same effect
- Relying on drugs to feel good
- No money for food and bills
- Letting down your family and community.

### Mixing ice with other drugs

The effects of taking ice with other drugs – including over-the-counter or prescribed medications – can be unpredictable and dangerous.

Ice + ecstasy = extra strain on the heart and other parts of the body, which can lead to stroke.

Ice + alcohol, yarrdi or benzos = extra strain on the body and more likely to overdose.

### Giving up ice

If you want to give up ice, but have been using it regularly for a long time, your body has to get used to working without it. That's why you may experience withdrawal symptoms, which should settle down after one to two weeks. Some people who have used the drug heavily may experience symptoms up to a year.

Symptoms include:

- Cravings for ice
- Increased appetite
- Confusion and irritability
- Aches and pains
- Exhaustion
- Restless sleep and nightmares
- Anxiety, depression and paranoia.

If you, a family member or a friend want 'Help and support' turn to page 44.

If you are pregnant, ice can affect your baby (find out more on page 41 and [www.yourroom.com.au/aboriginal-info](http://www.yourroom.com.au/aboriginal-info).) Visit your doctor or health service for advice.

Possession, use and distribution of ice is illegal within Australia.



# ALCOHOL

## What is alcohol?

Alcohol is a depressant drug, which means it slows down the messages travelling between your brain and body.

## Street names

Booze, grog, piss, liquor, charge, nip.

## Effects of alcohol

Alcohol effects everyone differently, but you may experience:

- Feeling relaxed
- Trouble concentrating
- Slower reflexes
- Increased confidence
- Feeling happier or sadder, depending on your mood.

If you have a lot, you may also experience:

- Confusion
- Blurred vision
- Clumsiness
- Offensive and violent behaviour
- Memory loss
- Nausea and vomiting
- Passing out
- Coma
- Death (rarely).



### Long term effects

If you drink a lot of alcohol regularly, it may eventually cause:

- Liver and/or brain damage
- High blood pressure
- Regular colds or flu
- Difficulty getting an erection
- Depression
- Poor memory
- Low fertility (males and females)
- Cancer in many parts of the body
- Needing to drink more to get the same effect
- Relying on alcohol to feel good
- No money for food and bills
- Letting down your family and community.

### Responsible drinking

While there is no safe level of drinking, the National Health and Medical Research Council has developed a set of guidelines to help you drink responsibly. If you are healthy (and not pregnant or under 18), the guidelines recommend:

- No more than two standard drinks a day to reduce long term harm to your health.
- No more than four standard drinks on any one occasion (for example at a party) to avoid injuring yourself or other people.



# WHAT IS A STANDARD DRINK?

A standard drink contains 10 grams of pure alcohol. Alcoholic drinks often contain more than one standard drink, e.g. a schooner of full strength beer is 1.6 standard drinks.

Use the picture below as a guide. If you're unsure how many standard drinks your drink contains check on the label. If you're at someone's house pour your own drinks so you can keep track.



## WHITE WINE

1.4 standard drinks  
11.5% alcohol  
150 ml average serving  
(about half a glass)



## RED WINE

1.5 standard drinks  
13% alcohol  
150 ml average serving  
(about half a glass)



## WINE

6-8 standard drinks  
11-13% alcohol  
750 ml bottle of wine



## WINE

18-21 standard drinks  
11-13% alcohol  
2 litre cask of wine



## FULL STRENGTH BEER

1.1 standard drinks  
4.8% alcohol  
285 ml glass (middy)



## FULL STRENGTH BEER

1.6 standard drinks  
4.8% alcohol  
425 ml glass (schooner)



## FULL STRENGTH BEER

1.4 standard drinks  
4.8% alcohol  
375 ml (can)



## FULL STRENGTH BEER

34 standard drinks  
4.8% alcohol  
24 x 375 ml cans



## HIGH STRENGTH SPIRITS

1 standard drink  
40% alcohol  
30 ml nip (shot glass)



## READY-TO-DRINK SPIRITS

1.5 standard drinks  
5% alcohol  
375 ml (premix can)



## READY-TO-DRINK SPIRITS

3.6 standard drinks  
7% alcohol  
660 ml (large premix bottle)



## HIGH STRENGTH SPIRITS

22 standard drinks  
40% alcohol  
700 ml spirit bottle

## Hangovers

If you drink a lot, the next day you may experience a hangover that may include:

- Headaches
- Diarrhoea and nausea
- Tiredness and trembling
- Increased heart rate and blood pressure
- Dry mouth and eyes
- Trouble concentrating
- Anxiety
- Restless sleep.

## Sobering up

Sobering up takes time. The liver gets rid of about one standard drink an hour (see standard drinks on previous page). Sweating it out with exercise, cold showers, coffee, fresh air and/or vomiting will not speed up the process. They may make you feel better, but they don't get the alcohol out of your blood quicker. This means it may not be safe for you to drive or work the next day.

## Mixing alcohol with other drugs

The effects of drinking and taking other drugs – including over-the-counter or prescribed medications – can be unpredictable and dangerous.

Alcohol + yarndi = nausea, vomiting, panic, anxiety and paranoia.

Alcohol + energy drinks (with caffeine), ice, speed, or ecstasy = more risky behaviour, body under great stress, overdose more likely.

Alcohol + GHB or benzos = decreased heart rate, overdose more likely.

## If you are drinking, it's a good idea to:

- Drink low alcohol drinks
- Eat before and while you are drinking, but avoid salty snacks
- Pace yourself
- Alternate between alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks (water is best)
- Keep track of the number of standard drinks you've drunk
- Don't be pressured into drinking more than you want to
- Avoid sitting around and drinking for a long time – stay busy.

### Alcohol and the law

In Australia it's illegal to supply alcohol to anyone under the age of 18. If you are caught selling, supplying or buying alcohol for someone under 18 you may face legal action - even if it is in your home and you have their parent or legal guardian's consent.

### Alcohol and pregnancy

Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can be harmful to your baby, so the best option is not to drink.

If you drink while pregnant, it may cause:

- Miscarriage
- Stillbirth
- Premature birth
- A low birth weight baby.

Alcohol may also cause your baby to be born with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD).

This means your baby may be born with:

- Attention and/or learning difficulties
- Mental, social and emotional difficulties
- Facial abnormalities
- Damaged heart, kidneys and other organs.

It is never too late to stop drinking during pregnancy.

Not many babies in Australia are born with FASD, but there are more born to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people than non-Aboriginal Australians.

If you're concerned about pregnancy and alcohol talk to your GP, midwife or health service.

Find out more about the possible harms caused by drinking alcohol during pregnancy and breastfeeding at [www.yourroom.com.au/aboriginal-info](http://www.yourroom.com.au/aboriginal-info)

For pregnancy tips to keep you and your bub strong and healthy go to: [www.facebook.com/StayStrongAndHealthy](https://www.facebook.com/StayStrongAndHealthy)

### Giving up alcohol

If you want to give up alcohol, but have been drinking regularly for a long time, your body has to get used to working without it. That's why you may experience withdrawal symptoms. The symptoms usually start about four to twelve hours after the last drink and can last for about four or five days.

Symptoms include:

- Sweating
- Tremors
- Nausea
- Anxiety
- Seizures or fits.

It's important to ask for medical help to get you through withdrawal safely. Withdrawing from alcohol without medical supervision can be life threatening.

If you, a family member, or a friend want 'Help and support' turn to page 44.

### In an emergency

Call triple zero (000) if someone looks like they've had too much alcohol and are in trouble. Passing out is a sign that someone may overdose and in extreme cases can lead to death. Ambulance officers don't have to involve the police.

While you wait for the police to arrive:

- Stay with the person and keep people back
- Make sure they have enough air and loosen tight clothing
- If they lie down, put them on their side in case they vomit.





# YARNDI

## What is yarndi?

Yarndi is the Koori word for cannabis. It's a depressant drug, which means it slows down messages travelling between your brain and body.

## Street names

Marijuana, pot, grass, weed, hash, dope, gunja, joint, stick, Kronic (synthetic form), cone, choof.

## How is yarndi used?

Yarndi is the dried leaves or flowers of the cannabis plant. Most people smoke it in a joint or through a bong (or a bucket bong). It can also be eaten in cookies, brownies or cakes.

When it is smoked the effects come on immediately and generally last for 2-5 hours.

When it is eaten the effects take up to an hour to come on and last a lot longer. It's much more difficult to measure the dose when yarndi is eaten.

Yarndi can also come in synthetic form (i.e. Kronic), which may be more harmful than real yarndi.

## Effects of yarndi

Yarndi affects everyone differently, but you may experience:

- Feeling relaxed and happy
- Spontaneous laughter and excitement
- Increased appetite
- Dry mouth
- Quiet and reflective moods.

If you have a lot (or get a strong batch), you may also experience:

- Trouble concentrating
- Blurred vision
- Clumsiness
- Slower reflexes
- Bloodshot eyes
- Increased heart rate
- Low blood pressure
- Mild anxiety and paranoia.

### Long term effects

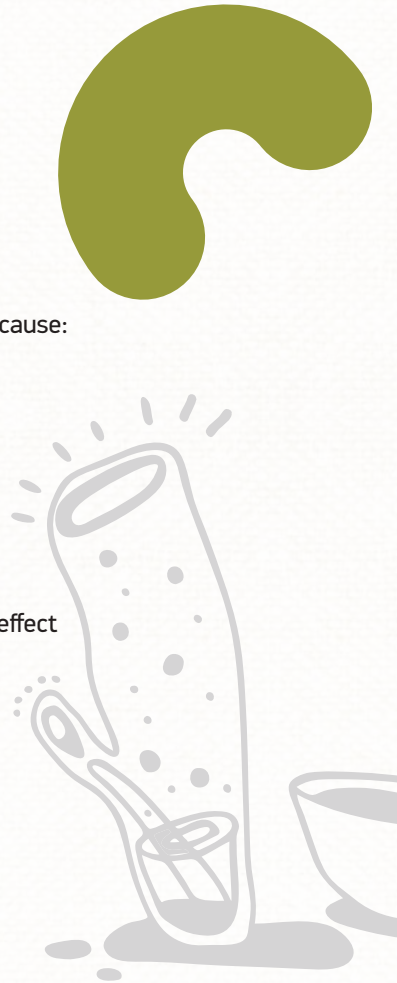
If you regularly use a lot of yarndi, it may eventually cause:

- Memory loss
- Learning difficulties
- Mood swings
- Regular colds and flu
- Reduced sex drive
- Low fertility (males and females)
- Needing to use more yarndi to get the same effect
- Relying on yarndi to feel good
- No money for food and bills
- Letting down your family and community.

### Smoking yarndi can also cause:

- A sore throat
- Asthma
- Bronchitis
- Cancer (if smoked with tobacco).

If you have a history of mental illness you are more likely to experience anxiety, depression and psychotic symptoms. Psychotic symptoms include delusions and seeing or hearing things that do not exist or are distorted.





### Mixing yarndi with other drugs

The effects of taking yarndi with other drugs – including over-the-counter or prescribed medications – can be unpredictable and dangerous.

Yarndi + tobacco = more addictive and increased cancer risk

Yarndi + alcohol = nausea, vomiting, panic, anxiety and paranoia.

Yarndi is sometimes used to help with the ‘come down’ effects of stimulant drugs, such as ice, speed and ecstasy. Doing this can cause reduced motivation, bad memory and mental health problems.

### Giving up yarndi

If you want to give up yarndi, but have been using it regularly for a long time, your body has to get used to working without it. This is why you may experience withdrawal symptoms which may last for 1-2 weeks, but your sleep may be affected for longer.

Symptoms include:

- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Aggressive and angry behaviour
- Loss of appetite and upset stomach
- Sweating, chills and tremors
- Restless sleep and nightmares.

If you, a family member, or a friend want ‘Help and support’ turn to page 44.

If you are pregnant yarndi can affect you and your baby – find out more on page 41 and [www.yourroom.com.au/aboriginal-info](http://www.yourroom.com.au/aboriginal-info). Visit your doctor or health service for advice.

Possession, use and distribution of yarndi is illegal within New South Wales.



# ECSTASY

## What is ecstasy?

Ecstasy is the street name for MDMA which is a stimulant drug with hallucinogenic effects. Stimulant drugs speed up the messages travelling between your brain and body and make a person feel more awake, alert and energetic.

The strength of ecstasy has been increasing in Australia – but there is no way of knowing how much MDMA powder or crystal is in an actual pill or capsule. This makes it hard to know how you'll react after taking ecstasy and how bad the side effects will be.

## Street names

Eckies, E, XTC, pills, pingers, caps, bikkies, flippers.

## How is ecstasy used?

Ecstasy comes in a tablet, capsule or crystals and is usually swallowed. The pills come in different colours and sizes and are often imprinted with a picture or symbol.

### Effects of ecstasy

The effects of ecstasy are usually felt about 20 minutes to an hour after it's taken and last for around six hours.

Ecstasy affects everyone differently, but you may experience:

- Feeling happy, energetic and confident
- Large pupils
- Jaw clenching and teeth grinding
- Heightened senses (sight, hearing and touch)
- Excessive sweating and skin tingles
- Muscle aches and pains
- Nausea and reduced appetite
- Fast heart beat
- Dehydration
- Heat stroke.

It's important to drink water while using ecstasy. Drink 250mls per hour if you're sitting around and up to 500mls if dancing/active.

If you have a lot (or get a strong batch), you may also experience:

- Floating sensations
- Hallucinations
- Out-of-character irrational behaviour
- Anxiety
- Irritability, paranoia and violence
- Vomiting
- High body temperature
- Racing heart beat
- Fitting.



### In an emergency

Call 000 if someone looks like they've had too much ecstasy and are in trouble. Ambulance officers don't have to involve the police. While you wait for help to arrive:

- Stay with the person and keep people back
- Keep them cool, but make sure they don't drink too much water
- If they lie down, put them on their side in case they vomit.

### Coming down

One to two days after using ecstasy, you may experience:

- Restless sleep and exhaustion
- Anxiety, irritability and depression
- Difficulty concentrating.

If you use a depressant drug such as alcohol, benzos or yarrdi to help with these 'come down' effects, you may become trapped in a vicious cycle where you are addicted to both types of drugs.

### Long term effects

If you regularly use a lot of ecstasy, it may eventually cause:

- Depression
- Needing to use more to get the same effect
- Regular colds or flu
- Relying on ecstasy to feel good
- No money for food and bills
- Letting down your family and community.



### Mixing ecstasy with other drugs

The effects of taking ecstasy with other drugs – including over-the-counter or prescribed medications – can be unpredictable and dangerous especially if you are using anti-depressants in particular selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) drugs.

Use of ecstasy with the following drugs could cause:

Ecstasy + ice or speed = extra strain on the heart and other parts of the body, which can lead to stroke.

Ecstasy + alcohol, yamdi or benzos = extra strain on the body, and more likely to overdose.

### Giving up ecstasy

If you want to give up ecstasy and have been using it a lot for a long time, your body has to get used to functioning without it. Withdrawal symptoms should settle down after a week and will mostly disappear after a month. Symptoms include:

- Cravings for ecstasy
- Aches and pains
- Exhaustion
- Restless sleep
- Agitation
- Trouble concentrating
- Anxiety, depression.

It's important to ask for medical help to get you through withdrawal safely.

If you, a family member, or a friend want 'Help and support' turn to page 44.

If you are pregnant ecstasy can affect you and your baby - find out more on page 41 and [www.yourroom.com.au/aboriginal-info](http://www.yourroom.com.au/aboriginal-info). Visit your doctor or health service for advice.

Possession of or sale of ecstasy is illegal in Australia.



# HALLUCINOGENS

## What are hallucinogens?

Hallucinogens can make you see, hear, smell, feel or taste things that aren't really there or are different from how they are in reality.

Some plants such as magic mushrooms can cause you to hallucinate. Hallucinogens such as LSD can also be made in a lab.

## Street names

LSD (Lysergic acid diethylamide): acid, trips, tabs, microdots, dots.

Magic mushrooms: shrooms, mushies, blue meanies, golden tops, liberty caps.

Mescaline (peyote cactus): cactus, cactus buttons, cactus joint, mesc, mescal.

## LSD

In its pure state, LSD is a white odourless powder. However, it usually comes in squares of gelatine or blotting paper that have been dipped or soaked in LSD. LSD is sometimes sold as a liquid, in a tablet or in capsules.

LSD is usually swallowed, but it can also be sniffed, injected or smoked.

### Magic mushrooms

There are many different types of magic mushrooms. The most common ones in Australia are called 'golden tops', 'blue meanies' and 'liberty caps'. Magic mushrooms look similar to poisonous mushrooms that can cause you to become very sick and die.

Magic mushrooms are usually sold as dried mushrooms, a powder or as capsules.

Mushrooms are often eaten fresh, cooked or brewed into a tea. They are sometimes mixed with tobacco or yarrdi, and smoked.

### Mescaline (peyote cactus)

Mescaline is the active ingredient of the peyote cactus plant. It is also known to be made synthetically in a lab.

In its pure form, mescaline sulphate is a white crystal-like powder. Synthetic mescaline can come in different colours. The peyote cactus contains 'buttons' that can be cut from the root of the plant, and then dried before eating or smoking them.

### Effects of hallucinogens

The effects of hallucinogens can last for 4-12 hours and can be different depending on which type of hallucinogen you have used.

Hallucinogens also affect everyone differently, but you may experience:

- Feeling happy and relaxed
- Seeing and hearing things that aren't there
- Confusion and trouble concentrating
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision
- Clumsiness
- Fast or irregular heart beat
- Breathing quickly
- Vomiting
- Sweating and chills
- Numbness.



### Bad trips

Sometimes you can have a 'bad trip' and experience a scary or disturbing hallucination. This can lead you to panic and do risky things like run across a road or attempt suicide, even though what scared you isn't really there.

If you have a lot (or get a strong batch), you are more likely to experience the negative effects of hallucinogens.

### In an emergency

Call 000 if someone looks like they've had too much and are in trouble. Ambulance officers don't have to involve the police. While you wait for help to arrive:

- Stay with them and try and keep them calm
- Make sure they have enough air and loosen tight clothing
- If they lie down, put them on their side in case they vomit.

### Coming down

In the following days after using hallucinogens, you may experience:

- Anxiety
- Panic attacks
- Depression.

### Long term effects

If you regularly use hallucinogens, they may eventually cause flashbacks. Flashbacks are when you hallucinate (see things that aren't there) weeks, months or even years after you have taken the drug. This can be disturbing, especially when the hallucination scares you. Flashbacks can be brought on by using other drugs, stress, tiredness or exercise and usually last for a minute or two.

### Mixing hallucinogens with other drugs

The effects of taking hallucinogens with other drugs – including over-the-counter or prescribed medications – can be unpredictable and dangerous, and could cause:

Hallucinogens + ice, speed or ecstasy = extra strain on the heart and body, which can lead to stroke.

Hallucinogens + alcohol, yarrdi or benzos = extra clumsiness and chance of vomiting.

If you, a family member, or a friend want 'Help and support' turn to page 44.

If you are pregnant hallucinogens can affect you and your baby – find out more on page 41 and [www.yourroom.com.au/aboriginal-info](http://www.yourroom.com.au/aboriginal-info). Visit your doctor or health service for advice.

Possession or sale of hallucinogens is illegal in Australia.





# HEROIN

## What is heroin?

Heroin is a depressant drug, which means it slows down the messages travelling between your brain and body. Heroin belongs to a group of drugs known as 'opioids' that are from the opium poppy.

Heroin comes in different forms including:

- Fine white powder
- Coarse off-white granules
- Tiny pieces of light brown 'rock'.

## Street names

Smack, H, gear, hammer, the dragon, dope, junk, harry, horse, black tar, skag, white dynamite, homebake, china white, snow, brown sugar, poison.

## How is heroin used?

Heroin is usually injected into a vein, but it's also smoked ('chasing the dragon'), and added to cigarettes and yarndi. The effects are usually felt straight away. Sometime heroin is snorted – the effects take around 10 to 15 minutes to feel if it's used in this way.

## Effects of heroin

The effects of heroin usually last for 3-5 hours.

Heroin affects everyone differently, but you may experience:

- Intense pleasure and pain relief
- Relaxation, drowsiness and clumsiness
- Slurred and slow speech
- Slow breathing and heart beat
- Dry mouth
- Tiny pupils
- Confusion
- Reduced appetite
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Decreased sex drive.

If you inject heroin and share needles you could also get:

- Tetanus
- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis C
- HIV/AIDS.

Read about how to avoid catching these infections and viruses on page 38.

If you have a lot (or get a strong batch), you may also experience:

- Trouble concentrating
- Falling asleep ('going on the nod')
- Slow breathing
- Irregular heartbeat
- Cold, clammy skin
- Itchiness
- Wanting to urinate but finding it hard to
- Passing out
- Overdose
- Death.

Naloxone (also known as Narcan®) reverses the effects of heroin, if you overdose. It can be given to you by family and friends or paramedics. Speak to your local chemist or call the NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA) see page 44 for details.

### In an emergency

- Stay with the person and keep people back
- Make sure they have enough air and loosen tight clothing
- If they lie down, put them on their side in case they vomit.

### Coming down

In the days after using heroin, you may experience:

- Irritability
- Depression.

### Long term effects

If you regularly use heroin, it may eventually cause:

- Increased risk of overdose
- Irregular periods and difficulty having children (females)
- No sex drive (males)
- Constipation
- Damaged heart, lungs, liver and brain
- Vein damage and skin, heart and lung infections from injecting
- Needing to use more to get the same effect
- Relying on heroin to feel good
- No money for food and bills
- Letting down your family and community.



### Mixing heroin with other drugs

The effects of taking heroin with other drugs – including over-the-counter or prescribed medications – can be unpredictable and dangerous – particularly if another depressant drug like alcohol and/or benzos is mixed with heroin.

Heroin + ice, speed or ecstasy = extra strain on the heart and body, which can lead to stroke.

Heroin + alcohol, yandri or benzos = extra strain on the body, and more likely to overdose.

### Giving up heroin

If you want to give up heroin and have been using it for a long time, your body has to get used to functioning without it. Withdrawal symptoms usually start within 6-24 hours after the last dose and can last for about a week – days 1 to 3 will be the worst. These symptoms can include:

- Cravings for heroin
- Restlessness and irritability
- Depression and crying
- Diarrhea
- Restless sleep and yawning
- Stomach and leg cramps
- Vomiting and no appetite
- Goose bumps
- Runny nose
- Fast heart beat.

It's important to ask for medical help to get you through withdrawal safely.

If you, a family member, or a friend want 'Help and support' turn to page 44.

If you are pregnant heroin can affect you and your baby - find out more on page 41 and [www.yourroom.com.au/aboriginal-info](http://www.yourroom.com.au/aboriginal-info). Visit your doctor or health service for advice.

Possession or sale of heroin is illegal in Australia.



# WHAT IS TOBACCO?

## What is tobacco?

The leaves in the tobacco plant contain nicotine, which is a stimulant drug that speeds up the messages travelling between your brain and body. The nicotine in tobacco is possibly more addictive than heroin. Tobacco can be smoked in cigarettes, pipes and cigars. It is also commonly mixed with yarndi.

## Street names

Ciggies, darts, durries, rollies, smokes, fags, butts, cancer sticks.

## Effects of tobacco

Tobacco affects everyone differently, but you may experience:

- Feeling more alert and happy
- Bad breath
- Yellow finger tips
- Dizziness
- Reduced appetite
- Stomach cramps and vomiting
- Fast heart beat
- Tingling or numbness in fingers and toes
- Headaches
- Coughing.

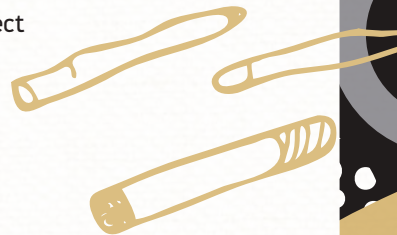
If you smoke a lot of tobacco, you may also experience:

- Confusion
- Feeling faint
- Seizures
- Fast breathing
- Death.

### Long term effects

If you regularly smoke tobacco, it may cause:

- Shortness of breath
- Coughing fits, asthma and lung diseases
- Regular colds or flu
- Loss of taste and smell
- Yellow, rotting teeth
- Early wrinkles
- Back pain
- Slower-healing wounds
- Mood swings
- Eye disease and hearing loss
- Stomach ulcers
- Difficulty having children (males and females)
- Irregular periods and early menopause (females)
- Difficulty getting an erection
- Cancer (in many areas of the body)
- Stroke and brain damage
- Heart attack and disease
- Needing to smoke more to get the same effect
- Relying on smoking to feel good
- No money for food and bills
- Letting down your family and community.



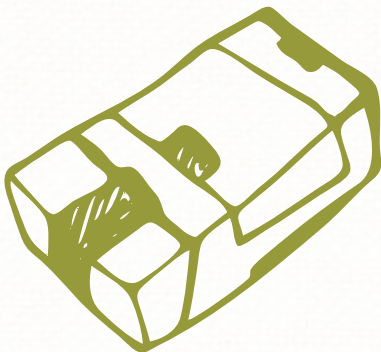


### Passive smoking

Passive smoking is when you breathe in somebody else's cigarette smoke. Passive smoking can cause many of the health problems caused by smoking. That's why it's important to smoke away from other people, especially babies and children who can get sick more easily than adults.

### Mixing tobacco with other drugs

The effects of smoking with other drugs – including over-the-counter or prescribed medications – can be unpredictable and dangerous. The nicotine in tobacco can cause some prescription drugs to not work as well. If you are taking the contraceptive pill, smoking increases the chances of blood clots and heart disease.



### Giving up smoking

If you want to give up smoking, but have been doing it for a while, your body has to get used to functioning without it. Withdrawal symptoms usually go away within a few days or weeks of quitting and include:

- Cravings for a cigarette
- Irritability, anxiety and depression
- Restless sleep
- Eating more and putting on weight
- Trouble concentrating
- Headaches
- Coughing and sore throat
- Aches and pains
- Upset stomach and bowels.

When you give up tobacco your health gets better quickly. Within 20 minutes your heart rate slows down, and within 12 hours poisons like carbon monoxide have started to leave your blood.

You may still crave a cigarette for months and years after giving up. It's important to ask for help by calling Quitline on 13 QUIT (13 78 48). You can also contact your local Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation – the details are on page 44 of this booklet.

### Pregnancy

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding smoking can harm you and your baby. Find out at [www.yourroom.com.au/aboriginal-info](http://www.yourroom.com.au/aboriginal-info). Talk to your GP, midwife or health service to assist you in quitting smoking or call the Quitline on 13 78 48.

Smoking is illegal in Australia if you're under 18, and buying cigarettes for people under 18, even if you're over 18, is also illegal.





# PRESCRIPTION AND OVER-THE-COUNTER DRUGS

## What are they?

You need a prescription from your doctor to get prescription drugs. Over-the-counter (OTC) medicine can be bought without a prescription. Even though you can get these medicines in a shop, they are still drugs and can be dangerous and cause bad side effects.

## Street names

Xanax: zannies, z-bar, benzos

Oxycodone: oxies, hillbilly heroin, dope, 40s, 20, 80s

Valium: blues, v's

Ritalin: rid, vitamin R, ritties, rits

## How should they be used?

When taking these drugs it's important to follow the instructions, either from your doctor for prescription medicine or on the packet for OTC drugs. If you do get bad side effects, tell your doctor or chemist so they can give you a different drug or change how much you take to make sure you don't get sicker.

It's important to never take prescription medicine unless it's prescribed for you. A drug that might be OK for someone else might make you very sick. That's why to get prescription medicine a doctor has to check you out and then monitor you. That's also why it's illegal to sell or give prescription medicine to someone else.

### Misuse of prescription and OTC drugs

Some people use prescription and OTC drugs to get 'high', help with the 'come down' of other drugs, or continue taking them after their prescription has finished.

Many prescription and OTC drugs are addictive and using them regularly increases your chances of becoming dependent on them. Addiction can cause:

- Needing to use more to get the same effect
- Relying on drugs to feel good
- No money for food and bills
- Letting down your family and community.

The most common prescription and OTC drugs that are misused are:

#### Painkillers (opioids)

- Morphine (MS Contin)
- Oxycodone (OxyContin)
- Codeine (Panadeine Forte)
- Fentanyl (synthetic opioid).

Opioids affect everyone differently, but you may experience:

- Drowsiness
- Constipation
- Nausea and vomiting
- Dry mouth
- Itching
- Slow breathing
- Unconsciousness, coma and death.

#### Downers (benzodiazepines)

Benzodiazepines are usually used to treat anxiety, panic attacks and/or sleep problems and include:

- Diazepam (Valium)
- Temazepam (Temtabs)
- Alprazolam (Xanax).

Antipsychotics are usually used to manage mental health conditions and include:

- Zyprexa
- Seroquel.

Depressants affect everyone differently, but you may experience:

- Feeling happy and sleepy
- Confusion and trouble concentrating
- Clumsiness and feeling dizzy
- Seeing and hearing things that aren't there
- Slurred speech
- Headaches
- Depression
- Coma and death.

### Stimulants ('uppers')

Stimulants are often used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or narcolepsy and include:

- Methylphenidate (Ritalin)
- Dexamphetamine.

Stimulants affect everyone differently, but you may experience:

- Happiness and confidence
- Talking more and feeling energetic
- Fast heartbeat and breathing
- Reduced appetite and stomach pain
- Headaches
- Dizziness and blurred vision
- Paranoia, hallucinations and confusion
- Irritability and violence
- Passing out
- Stroke, heart attack and death.

### Cough and cold medicines

Cough and cold medicines often contain dextromethorphan (DXM) that some people take in high doses to get 'high', which may also cause:

- Nausea
- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Allergic reactions
- Hot flushes
- Dizziness
- Hallucinations
- Psychotic episodes
- Psychological addiction and depression
- Brain damage.

### Mixing drugs

The effects of taking different drugs at the same time can be unpredictable and dangerous. For example, mixing prescription or OTC drugs with alcohol, unless your doctor has said it's OK, can cause you to pass out and die.

### In an emergency

Call triple zero (000) if someone looks like they've had too many drugs and are in trouble. Ambulance officers don't have to involve the police. While you wait for help to arrive:

- Stay with the person and keep people back.
- Make sure they have enough air and loosen tight clothing
- If they lie down, put them on their side in case they vomit.

### Giving up prescription and over-the-counter drugs

If you want to give up drugs, but have been using them for a long time, your body has to get used to functioning without them. Withdrawal symptoms can last for around a week. It's important to ask for medical help to get you through withdrawal safely. Withdrawing from benzodiazepines without medical supervision can be life threatening.

If you, a family member, or a friend want 'Help and support' turn to page 44.

If you are pregnant taking drugs can affect you and your baby. Read about 'Pregnancy and breastfeeding' on page 41. Visit your doctor or health service for advice.



# SYNTHETIC DRUGS

## What are synthetic drugs?

Synthetic drugs is a general term for drugs that are designed to produce similar effects to illegal drugs such as yarrdi, cocaine and ecstasy.

Manufacturers of these drugs use new chemicals to replace those that are banned. They are constantly changing the chemical structure of the drugs to stay ahead of the law.

## Other names

Synthetic drugs are also called kronic, legal highs, herbal highs, party pills, herbal ecstasy, new psychoactive substances, bath salts, plant fertiliser, herbal incense and research chemicals. These products can sometimes be marked 'not for human consumption'.

## Are they legal?

Synthetic drugs are often advertised as legal, but the laws are constantly changing as the government cracks down on these new drugs. So a drug that could be legal today may be illegal tomorrow.

## Are they safe?

Just because these drugs are often advertised as legal and sold in shops doesn't mean they are safe. They can often be more dangerous than regular drugs like yarrdi or ecstasy. This is because it's easier to predict how you will react to regular drugs and how much to take.

The ingredients in synthetic drugs are constantly changing to stay ahead of the law. This means it's easy to receive a very different product from batch to batch, even if the packaging and name are the same.

# KETAMINE

## What is ketamine?

Ketamine hydrochloride is an anesthetic used by vets and other medical professionals.

It is sometimes used illegally by people to hallucinate – see, hear, smell, taste and feel things that aren't there or different to how they are in reality.

When it's sold illegally, ketamine usually comes as a white crystal powder. It can also be made into tablets and pills, or dissolved in a liquid.

## Street names

Special K, K, ket, kitkat, super k or horse tranq.

## How is it used?

Ketamine can be swallowed, snorted or injected. It is also sometimes smoked with yandri or tobacco.

## Effects

Ketamine affects everyone differently, but you may experience:

- Feeling happy and relaxed
- Feeling detached from your body ('falling into a k-hole')
- Hallucinations
- Confusion and clumsiness
- Slurred speech and blurred vision
- Anxiety, panic and violence
- Vomiting
- Less likely to feel pain
- Unable to move
- Coma and 'near death' experiences.

Using ketamine regularly can also cause serious bladder problems and difficulty holding in urine.





# GHB

## What is GHB?

GHB (gamma hydroxybutyrate) is a depressant drug that slows down the messages travelling between your brain and body.

GHB is a bitter or salty-tasting liquid, usually sold in small bottles or vials, like the fish shaped soy sauce containers. It is most commonly sold as a clear liquid, but blue food colouring is sometimes added so it's not confused with water. Sometimes it is sold as a white powder, as a capsule or tablet. People often mix GHB with juice or soft drinks to disguise the flavour. Mixing GHB with alcohol can be very dangerous and can lead to overdose.

## Street names

G, fantasy, grievous bodily harm (GBH), liquid ecstasy, liquid E, liquid X, Georgia Home Boy, soap, scoop, cherry meth, blue nitro.

## How is it used?

GHB is usually swallowed, but sometimes it's injected.

## Effects

GHB affects everyone differently. You may experience feeling relaxed and more sociable, and lose your inhibitions ('cut loose').

It is very easy to take too much GHB because there isn't much difference between the amount you need to get high and the amount that causes an overdose.

If GHB is taken with other depressant drugs such as benzos or particularly alcohol, the chances of overdosing are increased. If you overdose you may experience:

- Vomiting
- Sweating
- Irregular or shallow breathing
- Confusion, irritation and agitation
- Hallucinations
- Blackouts and memory loss
- Unconsciousness that can last for 3 to 4 hours
- Seizures
- Death.

#### **In an emergency**

Call triple zero (000) if someone looks like they've had too much GHB and are in trouble. Ambulance officers don't have to involve the police. While you wait for help to arrive:

- Stay with the person and keep people back
- Make sure they have enough air and loosen tight clothing
- If they lie down, put them on their side in case they vomit

**The possession or sale of any GHB is illegal in Australia.**



## REDUCING THE HARM OF DRUGS

To stay healthy and strong it's better not to take drugs. Many are addictive and once you start taking them it can be difficult to control your behaviour. If you are going to take drugs there are a number of things you can do to reduce the risk of getting sick, having an accident or overdosing.

### Injecting drugs

- Use new injecting equipment (needles, syringes, filters, swabs, spoons, tourniquets, etc). Every time you inject use new equipment.
- If you inject drugs you are at risk of blood borne viruses, through blood to blood infections like hepatitis and HIV, so it's important that you don't share injecting equipment with anyone (this includes partners).
- Use warm soapy water or swabs to get rid of any blood or dirt on your hands before injecting. If using a swab, wipe in one direction and don't just move the blood and dirt around.
- Dispose of all your used injecting material, swabs and wrappers in a 'sharps safe' bin, which can often be found in public toilets, Hospitals or Needle Syringe Programs (NSP).

## Smoking drugs

- Smoke outside and away from other people, especially from babies and children and pregnant women.
- If you're smoking yarrdi try smoking joints rather than bongs or pipes as it reduces the risk of catching Hepatitis A.
- If you do use a bong, don't use one made of a plastic bottle, rubber hose or with an aluminium cone because they can give off harmful fumes.
- Keep your bong clean and change the water frequently – a dirty bong can have germs like Hepatitis.

## Preventing overdose

- If possible use drugs in the company of others. If you do overdose someone is around to call triple zero (000) for emergency assistance.
- Always start with a small test amount (like half a pill) and wait two hours before taking any more. This is to make sure it doesn't have a bad affect on you and to help you decide how much to take.
- Avoid using any drug if you are not well or have a health condition.
- Don't mix drugs because doing this make the effects of the drugs can be more unpredictable and dangerous. This includes alcohol and prescription drugs.
- Stay hydrated by drinking small sips of water, but don't drink more than 250ml in an hour. This is especially important when taking ecstasy as drinking too much water may lead to death.
- If you are using stimulants (like ecstasy, speed or ice) take regular breaks from physical exercise like dancing.
- Always call an ambulance by dialing triple zero (000) if someone looks like they are in trouble. Ambulance officers don't have to involve the police.
- To make it easier for the ambulance officers to help you if you do overdose, make sure someone knows what you've had and how much. (If no one is around write it down somewhere.)

If you or someone you know uses heroin or any opiates, it's a good idea to have naloxone on hand. This is because if someone overdoses you can inject them with naloxone straight away to reverse the overdose. It's important to still call an ambulance by dialing triple zero (000). Naloxone is available through a prescription from a GP. To learn more about naloxone contact the Alcohol and Drug Information Services on 1800 422 599 (rural/regional) or (02) 9361 8000 (Sydney only). You can also call the NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA) on (02) 8354 7300 or 1800 644 413 (NSW Rural callers). You can also speak to your GP.

### Avoiding accidents

It's easy for accidents to happen when you've taken drugs, so it's important to:

- Not drive or operate machinery
- Look after your mates and help them make good decisions
- Plan to not be under the influence, hungover or coming down from drugs when you're at work
- Always carry a condom as some drugs can increase your sex drive.

### Staying healthy

It's easy for you to become 'run down' and sick when you use drugs, so it's important to:

- Try not to use drugs regularly and only use a small amount
- Eat a balanced diet including fruit and vegetables (even if you don't feel hungry)
- Get enough rest (even if you're not tired)
- Remember to brush and floss your teeth regularly.

There is no safe level of drug use.



# PREGNANCY AND BREASTFEEDING

Having a baby is a time of great change. If you are thinking about having a baby, are pregnant or breastfeeding, it's important to consider the types of drugs you might be taking and how they could affect you and your baby. This is important because alcohol and other drugs you take will reach your baby while you are pregnant and breastfeeding.

## What drugs are harmful?

Drugs that may be harmful during pregnancy and while breastfeeding include:

- Legal drugs such as alcohol, tobacco and caffeine
- Complementary medicines such as herbal preparations and nutritional supplements
- Over-the-counter medicines such as antacids, cold and flu medicines, diet pills, laxatives, and painkillers
- Prescribed medicines such as painkillers, sleeping pills and antidepressants
- Illegal drugs such as yarrdi, ice, speed, ecstasy, GHB, ketamine, hallucinogens and heroin
- Drugs used to treat opiate or alcohol dependence such as methadone, buprenorphine and naltrexone
- Other substances such as glues and aerosols (inhalants or volatile substances).

Talk to your GP, pharmacist or other health professional about any prescription, over-the-counter or complimentary medicines you are taking to ensure they are safe during pregnancy.

Find out more about the possible harms caused by each drug during pregnancy and when breastfeeding at [www.yourroom.com.au/aboriginal-info](http://www.yourroom.com.au/aboriginal-info)

### How can alcohol affect my baby?

Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can be harmful to your baby, so the safest option is not to drink.

If you drink while pregnant, it may cause:

- Miscarriage
- Stillbirth
- Premature birth
- A low birth weight baby.

Alcohol may also cause your baby to be born with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD).

This means your baby may be born with permanent disabilities:

- Attention and/or learning difficulties
- Impaired language and communication
- Mental social and emotional delays
- Facial abnormalities
- Damaged heart, kidneys and other organs.

It is never too late to stop drinking during pregnancy.

Find out more about the possible harms caused by drinking alcohol during pregnancy and breastfeeding at [www.yourroom.com.au/aboriginal-info](http://www.yourroom.com.au/aboriginal-info)

For pregnancy tips to keep you and the bub strong and healthy go to [www.facebook.com/StayStrongAndHealthy](https://www.facebook.com/StayStrongAndHealthy)

Talk to your GP or health worker to assist you in stopping your alcohol use safely.

### Help and support

To make sure you give your baby the best start in life, try to give up alcohol and other drugs while you are trying to get pregnant, pregnant and breastfeeding. This can be difficult, especially if you have been drinking or taking drugs for a long time. It is recommended you try hard to give up because the effects on your baby may be serious. There is support available to help you get through this challenging time. Talk with your local Aboriginal health worker, other health professional or GP about how they can help you.



# HELP AND SUPPORT

## Alcohol and Drug Information Service NSW (ADIS)

24/7 confidential service providing phone counselling, advice, information and referrals to treatment services in your area.

T: 9361 8000  
(Sydney metropolitan)

T: 1800 422 599  
(regional and rural and NSW, free call from a landline)

NSW Health Drug and Alcohol website

[www.yourroom.com.au](http://www.yourroom.com.au)

## Stimulant Treatment Line

24/7 confidential service offering education, information, referral, crisis counselling and support specifically for stimulant use such as speed, ice, ecstasy and cocaine.

T: 9361 8088  
(Sydney metropolitan)

T: 1800 101 188  
(regional and rural NSW, free call from a landline)

## Family Drug Support

24/7 support for families of people who have an alcohol or drug problem.

T: 1300 368 186  
(Australia-wide)

## Crystal Meth Anonymous

A free 'twelve step' group support meeting for people experiencing problems with their ice use – visit the website to find a meeting near you.

[www.crystalmeth.org.au](http://www.crystalmeth.org.au)

## Narcotics Anonymous

A free 'twelve step' group support meeting for people experiencing problems with drugs – visit the website to find a meeting near you.

[www.na.org.au](http://www.na.org.au)

## Counselling Online

A free 24/7 online counselling service for people using alcohol and other drugs, as well as their family and friends.

[www.counsellingonline.org.au](http://www.counsellingonline.org.au)

## NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA)

Find a needle and syringe program, giving out clean, free injecting equipment near you.

T: 8354 7343  
(Sydney metropolitan)

T: 1800 644 413  
(rural and regional NSW, free call from a landline)

### **Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council (AH&MRC)**

The peak representative body and voice on Aboriginal health services in NSW.

T: 9212 4777

[www.ahmrc.org.au](http://www.ahmrc.org.au)

### **Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF)**

Information about alcohol and other drugs can be found on our website.

[www.adf.org.au](http://www.adf.org.au)

### **Your Room website**

NSW Health alcohol and other drugs information, services, interactive games and Aboriginal videos and resources can be found on our website.

[www.yourroom.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.yourroom.health.nsw.gov.au)

### **Aboriginal residential rehabilitation services in NSW**

#### **Oolong House, Nowra**

T: 4422 0644

[www.oolonghouse.org.au](http://www.oolonghouse.org.au)

#### **The Glen Centre, Hunter Valley**

T: 4388 6360

[www.theglencentre.org.au](http://www.theglencentre.org.au)

#### **Namatjira Haven, Alstonville**

T: 6628 0520

[www.namatjirahaven.com](http://www.namatjirahaven.com)

#### **Benelong's Haven Family Rehabilitation Centre, Kinchela**

T: 6567 4880

[www.benelongshaven.com.au](http://www.benelongshaven.com.au)

#### **The Weigelli Centre Aboriginal Corporation, Cowra**

T: 6345 1868

[www.weigelli.com.au](http://www.weigelli.com.au)

#### **Orana Haven, Brewarrina**

T: 6874 4983 or 6874 4886

[www.oranahaven.com.au](http://www.oranahaven.com.au)

#### **Maayu Mali Marrs, Moree**

T: 6752 5036

[www.marrs.org.au](http://www.marrs.org.au)



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PREVENTING HARM IN AUSTRALIA



VACCHO