drugs
the facts
- cannabis
- speed
- magic mushrooms
- LSD
- ecstasy
Problem Page
DRUGS and the DANGERS
Drugs and Sport
Plus info on gases, glues and aerosols
know the score
sort out the facts from the fiction
This booklet will answer many of your questions about drugs.

What are the real facts about drugs? What harm can they do? What could happen if you take them?

What different drugs are around? So many drugs look the same... which drug is which?

Would you know how to help a friend who's getting into drugs? What about gases, glues and aerosols?

Why do people take drugs anyway?

People take drugs for all sorts of reasons. Because they think drugs can make them forget their worries, because their friends do, or because they think it might be fun. Some drugs like LSD can make people see and hear strange things. Others like cocaine and speed can make people feel energetic and over-active. It's not always easy to describe what happens to people when they take drugs. It often depends on what mood they are in at the time, who they are with, where they are and the atmosphere of the place.

Drugs affect different people in different ways.

Please note — proposed rescheduling of cannabis

At the time of going to press, there is a Government proposal to reschedule cannabis from a Class B drug to Class C. If there is a change in the law it is likely to be during 2003. Until that happens cannabis remains a Class B drug. The penalties for Class C drugs are less than those for Class B but possession of both remains a criminal offence.
**Fact & Fiction!**

Don't believe everything you hear...

"Drug dealers are usually shady looking men who hang about looking suspicious."

**Fact:** Many people are offered drugs by their friends, or by people they know. You can't tell if someone is a drug dealer just by what they look like.

"I can rely on what my friends tell me."

**Fact:** Often friends know less than you do about drugs, but they may want to look as if they know everything. Don't rely on what your friends say. To find out how to get the real information about drugs, see the back page of this booklet.

"If you're into drugs there's nothing you can do about it."

**Fact:** If someone you know is worried about their drug use here's some things you can do:

1. Do spare some time to listen to them.
2. Do suggest they talk to a youth worker or ring the National Drugs Helpline on 0800 776 600.
3. Do offer to ring up the Helpline for them.
4. Do remember that what they do is up to them; at the end of the day it's their life and not yours.

**FACT:** "The National Drugs Helpline is only for people with a drug problem."

**Fact:** Lots of people who ring the National Drugs Helpline just want to ask questions and get information. It offers free advice and the people who answer the telephone are friendly and understanding. They won't tell you off or lecture you. It's a confidential service so they're not allowed to tell anyone else that you've called. You don't even have to tell them your name if you don't want to.

---

**NAME: Cannabis**

**Slang Names:** grass, blow, weed, spliff, ganja, dope, hash

**What It Looks Like:** Cannabis resin usually looks like small brown lumps. The leaves, stalks and seeds of the cannabis plant look like greeny brown tobacco.

**How It's Taken:** It's made into a 'joint' which looks a bit like a cigarette. It can be smoked on its own, in a special pipe or even cooked and eaten.

**Why Some People Take This Drug:** It makes people feel relaxed and more friendly. People giggle and want to talk a lot.

**What the Risks Are:** People can imagine that everyone around is talking about them and making fun of them. Cannabis can make people feel very panicky and anxious. People get confused and are more likely to have accidents - riding a bike or crossing the road for example. People taking cannabis often have bloodshot eyes, a dry mouth and feel very tired and hungry. They can feel dizzy and sick, especially if cannabis has been mixed with alcohol. Like tobacco, cannabis can cause bronchitis and lung cancer.

---

**NAME: LSD**

**Slang Names:** trips, acid, tabs, microdots

**What It Looks Like:** very small paper squares with a picture on them.

**How It's Taken:** sucked and swallowed.

**Why Some People Take This Drug:** People may see unusual shapes. Colours may seem really bright. Sometimes people hear strange noises. Objects may appear to change and everything may seem to speed up or slow down. The effects of LSD are known as a 'trip'.

**What the Risks Are:** Once a 'trip' has started, it can't be stopped. Sometimes people feel hot, sick or dizzy. A bad 'trip' can last for hours and can make people feel really panicky and afraid. After using LSD people can have 'flashbacks' when they suddenly see or hear things from previous LSD trips. People using LSD a lot can become mentally ill.
“my friend could have died...!”

It all started about a year ago. I used to meet my mates down at the park. One day someone turned up with a refill can – it was lighter gas I think. I said ‘no’, but then the others all had a go and it looked like fun. It felt great – like I had no worries. After that I went down to the park a lot. We’d mess around sniffing lighter refills or glue... anything we could get our hands on really. It was a real laugh. Then my parents started asking me questions. They tried to stop me going out with my friends – I had to start lying to dodge them.

“I just felt so tired all the time”

Eventually the headmaster asked to see me because I’d fallen asleep in class. But I didn’t care. I felt good when I was down at the park; when I was at school or at home I felt bored and sort of shut off.

“I’ve been scared off sniffing for good

“None of us were laughing anymore”

Then one day, we’d all had a sniff of a can and one of my friends said he felt really dizzy. He fell over and just lay on the ground – all curled up. I was frightened.

Name: Chris
Age: 14
Lives: Leeds

friend said he felt better – he just didn’t want his parents to find out what he’d been doing. The man told us we were really lucky – he said you can die from sniffing. Sniffing from cans – I’m finished with all that.

Name: gases, glues, aerosols

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
aerosol can, lighter gas, tins or tubes of glue
HOW IT’S TAKEN
Fumes are sniffed, breathed or sprayed into the mouth or nose.
WHY SOME PEOPLE TAKE THIS DRUG
People often feel as if they are drunk and ‘on a high’, laughing and talking a lot. They sometimes do things they would be too scared or shy to do normally. Some see things that aren’t really there.

WHAT THE RISKS ARE
People can feel dizzy, sick or drowsy. People can lose control of their balance and stagger and fall about. This can be dangerous, especially if someone is alone or in an unsafe place. Sniffing by putting a plastic bag over your head can make it hard to breathe and lead to suffocation. There’s a chance of passing out and choking on vomit. It’s very dangerous to mix sniffing with drinking alcohol. Sniffing or spraying gas into the mouth can cause almost instant death. One person dies every week from sniffing. It’s now illegal for shopkeepers to sell cigarette lighter refills to anyone under 18.
WOULD YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY?

Sometimes drugs can make people feel very drowsy - or even unconscious. Sometimes people who have taken drugs can get very tense and panicry. They may start to hyperventilate (breathe very quickly) and feel sick and dizzy. You can't say exactly which drugs cause these problems. Different drugs affect different people in different ways.

IF SOMEONE IS DROWSY OR UNCONSCIOUS...
- make sure they have plenty of cool, fresh air - especially if you think they have taken ecstasy
- don't frighten or startle them in any way - especially if you think they have been sniffing gases, glues or aerosols
- don't throw water over them
- turn them on their side and put them in the recovery position
- get to a telephone, dial 999 and get an ambulance
- give any drugs you find to the ambulance crew

IF SOMEONE IS GETTING PANICKY...
- try to calm them down
- keep them away from loud noises and bright lights
- talk quietly and tell them that the panicky feeling will gradually go away

Some people who have had problems with drugs are only alive today because their mates knew what to do in an emergency.

Why don't you learn some Basic First Aid?

Your local St John Ambulance and the Red Cross run courses in First Aid. You could look them up in the phone book or ring the national headquarters:

British Red Cross (020) 7235 5454
St John 08700 10 49 50

They will tell you where your local branch is.

NAME: Ecstasy

SLANG NAMES
- E, mitsubishi, rolexes

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
- tablets of different colours and shapes
- swallowed

HOW IT'S TAKEN

WHY SOME PEOPLE TAKE THIS DRUG

People can feel full of energy and think that everyone is their friend. There are sometimes slight changes in the way people see and hear things. The energy buzz is often followed by a feeling of calm.

WHAT THE RISKS ARE

Some people feel panicky and frightened. There is a danger of having an accident because people have a 'space out' and dizzy feeling. When the effects of the drug start wearing off, people can feel very tired but find it difficult to sleep. Taking ecstasy and dancing for a long time in a hot place can make the body overheat. This can be very dangerous and can kill.

People have died after taking ecstasy for the first time, and evidence supports the possibility that depression and mental illness may occur in later life as a result of heavy use.

NAME: Magic Mushrooms

SLANG NAMES
- mushies, happy, salves, shrooms

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
- brown, dried-up mushrooms

HOW IT'S TAKEN

usually eaten, but can be made into a tea-type drink

WHY SOME PEOPLE TAKE THIS DRUG

It makes people have a 'trip', a bit like taking LSD. People taking magic mushrooms often laugh a lot.

WHAT THE RISKS ARE

People usually feel sick and often get stomach ache. Accidents can happen because people get confused and clumsy.

Another real danger is eating the wrong type of mushrooms; many mushrooms which look like 'magic' ones are poisonous.