



Quick Info Booklet

from PAD's Parent & Community Handbook, 7th edition

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Tobacco.....	1
Caffeine and High Caffeine Energy Drinks	2
Alcohol	3
Cannabis	4
Heroin and Methadone	5
Prescription and Over-the- Counter (OTC) Medications...	6-7
Party Drugs, Ecstasy and Hallucinogens	8-9
Methamphetamine and Cocaine	10-11
Steroids.....	12
Solvents, Glue and Other Inhalants	13

There has been a decline in smoking among Canadians – both adults and youth. Smoking rates among students are the lowest on record. Nonetheless, tobacco is the fifth most commonly used drug among students. Tobacco use includes cigarette smoking and smokeless (chewing) tobacco. Since there is strong evidence that smoking tobacco is related to more than two dozen diseases, rates of cigarette smoking – and exposure to second hand smoke – continue to be a source of concern. Tobacco smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals, and more than 70 of these are linked to cancer. The nicotine in tobacco is largely responsible for the short-term effects of smoking and its addictive nature. The long-term effects are associated with the tar and other poisons such as cyanide, formaldehyde, arsenic and carbon monoxide.

Effects of Smoking Tobacco:

- the person's pulse rate and blood pressure will rise and the person's skin will become cooler
- the amount of acid in the stomach will increase and the amount of urine produced will decrease
- at first, activity in the person's brain and nervous system will speed up, then it slows down
- the person's appetite decreases
- the person will be less capable of vigorous physical activity
- with continued use the person's blood vessels in the heart and brain will narrow or darken and the person will be short of breath and cough often

Effects of Second Hand Smoke:

- two-thirds of the smoke from a cigarette enters the air around the smoker
- can aggravate allergies, asthma, eye, nose and throat irritations, headaches, dizziness, nausea, coughing and wheezing
- children absorb higher amounts of smoke than adults and are more likely to suffer respiratory illnesses and infections

Tobacco and Disease

- Smoking is the most important preventable cause of lung cancer; it accounts for 85% of all new lung cancer cases
- Smoking is linked to cancers of the lung, mouth, larynx, esophagus, bladder, kidney and pancreas
- Smoking greatly increases the risk of heart attack and stroke.

Women and Smoking

- Smoking among women is linked to lower fertility, cancer of the cervix and osteoporosis.
- Pregnant women who smoke have higher rates of miscarriage, complications in pregnancy and delivery, stillborn babies, low birth weight babies, and babies who die of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Women who smoke are even more likely than men to die of lung cancer



Quick Info: Caffeine and High Caffeine Energy Drinks

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CAFFEINE

Caffeine is a drug that is found in a large number of everyday products, including coffee, tea, colas, chocolate and a number of prescription and over-the-counter medicines. Caffeine comes from a number of different plant sources, such as coffee, tea, kola, cocoa, guarana and yerba maté. It can also be produced and added to drinks and medicines. Tolerance to the effects of the drug varies greatly. In general, healthy adults are not considered to be at risk for adverse effects of caffeine as long as they limit their intake to 400 milligrams a day. While the amount of caffeine in a beverage varies widely, that would be about three cups of coffee. Children and adolescents are at a greater risk for the effects of caffeine. The recommended limit for pre-teens is 85 milligrams a day.

Effects

- the person may feel more alert and able to concentrate
- the person may experience insomnia, headaches, irritability and nervousness

HIGH CAFFEINE ENERGY DRINKS

Energy drinks are beverages (such as Red Bull, Rockstar, and Monster) that contain caffeine and high levels of sugar or artificial sweeteners. In addition to the caffeine content noted in the listed ingredients, additional caffeine can come from added herbal ingredients such as guarana and yerba maté. Other ingredients, such as taurine, ginseng or vitamins, may also be in these drinks. There is little scientific evidence concerning the effects of these ingredients. Recently Health Canada has set out regulations to cap the amount of caffeine in energy drinks. The consumption of energy drinks by children and adolescents is of particular concern because the stimulating effects can cause rapid heart rate, an abnormal heart rhythm, increased blood pressure, and sleeplessness. Mixing alcohol with energy drinks is particularly dangerous. When a person is impaired by alcohol, energy drinks give them a feeling of greater alertness and improved motor control. They then feel more sober than they really are and more likely to keep drinking – leading to increased rates of injury, drunk driving, risky sexual behaviour or alcohol poisoning.

Effects

- the person may feel more alert
- the person may experience headaches, anxiety, irregular heartbeat and seizures
- the use of energy drinks after exercise may interfere with proper hydration
- when mixed with alcohol, there is an increased risk of injury, risk taking and excessive drinking

High Caffeine Energy Drinks and Adolescents

- About half (49.5%) of all students in grades 7 through 12 report drinking an energy drink at least once in the past year.
- Use of energy drinks begins early; more than one-third of grade 7 students reported having had a drink
- About one in five students report mixing energy drinks with alcohol

Alcohol is one of the most popular drugs for youth as well as adults. Although many people think of alcohol as a “pick-me-up”, it is in fact a “depressant” and slows down the activity of the central nervous system. The effects of alcohol can be very serious. Even over a short period of time, drinking can be extremely dangerous - for example, when a number of drinks are consumed quickly or when combined with other activities such as driving. The effects of alcohol are also increased when drinking is mixed with other drugs such as sleeping pills, tranquilizers and some cold remedies.

Short-term Effects of Drinking Alcohol:

- at first, the person feels more relaxed and less inhibited
- the person will not be able to think as clearly and judgments and decisions will be affected
- then the person's reflexes will become slower, they will have trouble working and doing things which require physical co-ordination
- the person's mood may change, they may become angry or more willing to take risks
- if the person drinks a large amount of alcohol very rapidly, their breathing may slow down seriously or even stop [alcohol poisoning], possibly causing death
- the effects of alcohol may increase if combined with certain other drugs (e.g. pain or cold medication) or high-caffeine energy drinks

Alcohol and Teens:

- recent evidence shows teens are more susceptible to the intoxicating effects of alcohol
- more than a third of older students report binge drinking – drinking 5 or more drinks on one occasion
- the risks associated with teen drinking include serious injuries, risky sexual behaviour and likelihood of using other drugs
- the more a teen drinks, the more these risks increase

Alcohol and Disease:

When alcohol is used heavily on a regular basis it is a factor in many different diseases. There is strong evidence linking heavy drinking with cancers of the upper digestive tract, including the esophagus, mouth and pharynx. As well, alcohol is a factor in liver disease. More than moderate drinking can lead to increased blood pressure and excessive drinking is a contributing factor in strokes.

Women and Alcohol:

Women are more susceptible to the effects of alcohol because:

- they generally have more fat, and less water in their bodies than men do. Alcohol is water soluble, so less water in the blood means higher blood alcohol concentration. This means that women will become impaired faster than men.
- they have less active alcohol dehydrogenase enzyme, which begins to break down alcohol in the stomach lining.
- women who drink regularly more than 7 drinks a week have an increased risk of developing breast cancer.

Cannabis is the third most popular drug used by youth. Marijuana (or “weed” or “pot”), hashish and hash oil are all from the cannabis plant. THC (delta-9-tetrahydro-cannabinol) is the active ingredient in cannabis that changes the mood and distorts the perceptions of the user. Levels of THC found in cannabis have more than doubled in the last twenty years; THC is more concentrated in hash and hash oil. As with any illicit drug, the exact strength of and additives to the drug can vary widely.

Methods of Use:

- Marijuana comes from the dried buds, leaves, stems and seeds of the plant and somewhat resembles the herb oregano. It is smoked in pipes or in hand-rolled cigarettes, called “joints” or filled into hollowed-out cigars called “blunts”. It is sometimes cooked in foods or baked goods.
- Hashish is a dried, caked resinous substance, found as soft or hard chunks which range in colour from “blonde” to black. It is usually mixed with tobacco and smoked in pipes or joints.
- Hash oil is an oily extract, usually stored in small glass containers called vials.

Cannabis Paraphernalia (Equipment and Accessories):

- Small smoking pipes, often ornate, made of metal, wood, stone or plastic
- Rolling papers which can be plain, coloured, decorated or flavoured
- Water pipes, called “bongs”, that are made with hollow cylinders or round bulbs or bubbles or a combination of the two
- Homemade smoking and water pipes made from pop cans or bottles
- Small “baggies” or sealable plastic bags for holding the dried leaves

Short-term Effects of Using Cannabis:

- the person will get a “high” feeling, often becoming more relaxed and talkative, less concerned about what he does or says
- the person’s pulse rate, heart beat and blood pressure will rise; his eyes may get red
- after a while, the person will become quiet and sleepy
- if the person is drinking or using other drugs as well as cannabis, he or she may not be able to think clearly and his or her behaviour may change in ways that are not consistent with the effects of cannabis use alone
- short-term memory, concentration and ability to think clearly will be impaired
- the person may become anxious, confused, restless, excited; he may start seeing things and become anxious or panicky

Cannabis and Teens:

- frequent marijuana use beginning in the teen years has been linked to lower IQ scores in adults
- with repeated use there is an increased risk of mental health problems, such as psychosis, depression and anxiety
- youth who are depressed or anxious are also more likely to use marijuana to deal with their symptoms
- nearly 12% of teenage drivers report driving after smoking marijuana – doubling their risk of a crash



Quick Info: Heroin and Methadone

from PAD's Parent & Community Handbook, 7th edition

HEROIN (SMACK, "H", SKAG, JUNK)

Heroin is an "opioid" drug, processed from morphine, a natural substance that is taken from the seed pod of the Asian poppy plant. It usually appears as a white or brown powder. Pure heroin is usually diluted with other powder substances, such as sugar, when it is sold on the street. As a powder, heroin can be sniffed through the nose or smoked or diluted with water and then injected into a vein or under the skin. Heroin abuse has been associated with the use of needles and, therefore, such serious health conditions as fatal overdoses, collapsed veins and infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and hepatitis. An overdose can cause death. Recently there has been a shift from injecting heroin to smoking or snorting (sniffing it through the nose). Heroin is a very addictive drug and all forms of using the drug can result in physical dependence. Withdrawal from the drug can be extremely painful and uncomfortable for the user.

Effects:

- the person may feel a surge of intense pleasure ("euphoria")
- the person may feel a warm flushing of the skin, a dry mouth and heaviness in their limbs
- the person then may experience a drowsy state and clouded mental functioning
- After repeated and long term use, the person may develop collapsed veins (from injections) or a nasal soreness (from snorting) The person may develop heart valve infections or liver disease

METHADONE

Methadone is also an "opioid" drug, but unlike heroin, it is synthetically produced in a lab. It is used to treat dependence on other opioid drugs. Methadone is increasingly prescribed as a treatment option for people who are addicted to heroin or abusing prescription pain relievers. A methadone maintenance program provides a medically safer alternative for people dealing with opioid addictions.



Quick Info: Prescription and OTC Medication

from PAD's Parent & Community Handbook, 7th edition

Young people have reported the non-medical use of prescription and over-the counter medicines for many years. Prescription drugs include stimulants and tranquilizers/sedatives such as Xanax, Valium and Ativan. Prescription pain relievers (used without a prescription) were the fourth most commonly used drug by Ontario students in 2011.

PRESCRIPTION PAIN RELIEVERS (OPIOIDS)

Of particular concern are the class of drugs known as “opioids” – the pain relievers like Percodan, Percocet, Tylenol #3, codeine and Demerol that are available with a prescription. The misuse of these drugs is a growing problem in Canada. Youth report that they are using prescription pain killers for non-medical purposes. The majority of them get them from home. One drug that has received increased attention is “OxyContin” which was the trademark name for a prescription time-released pain medication. The pill contains a large amount of its painkiller ingredient (oxycodone) and was effective to take when used as prescribed because it slowly released the active ingredient. However when the pill was crushed or chewed all the ingredients were released at once and the effects were very harmful. While OxyContin itself has been replaced by the manufacturer with a safer, tamper resistant alternative (OxyNeo), a generic form of slow-release oxycodone has been produced and there are concerns about abuse of these products.

Effects

- The person may feel a rush of intense pleasure (euphoria), similar to heroin
- The respiratory system may be depressed resulting in breathing problems- a severe respiratory reaction can cause death
- The person may experience constipation, nausea, dizziness, vomiting, dry mouth, sweating and weakness
- Long term use can result in physical dependence and addiction

STIMULANTS

Stimulants are a class of drugs that speed up the central nervous system and cause a boost of energy and alertness. They can be used to lose weight or to keep someone awake. Effects include feelings of restlessness, a sense of being powerful, anxiety and nervousness, and aggression. They increase the heart rate and blood pressure and can result in seizures and heart failure.

ADHD DRUGS

ADHD drugs are stimulants prescribed for people (usually children and youth) with ADHD (Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder). These drugs include Ritalin, Concerta, Adderall and Dexedrine. Used carefully for medical reasons, they can be effective in helping a child with ADHD focus better and control impulsive behaviour. They can, however, be misused as recreational drugs. Users can swallow the drug or crush it and snort it. It can cause euphoria, wakefulness and suppress a person's appetite.

OVER-THE-COUNTER COUGH AND COLD MEDICATION

A common ingredient in many cough and cold medicines available without a prescription is DXM or dextromethorphan, used as a cough suppressant. However, about 7% of students report using large doses of these medications to get high. High doses can cause hallucinations and feelings of being dissociated and lead to irrational and dangerous behaviour. As well, there is a risk of liver damage, heart attack and strokes.



Quick Info: Party Drugs, Ecstasy and Hallucinogens

from PAD's Parent & Community Handbook, 7th edition

PARTY DRUGS

The term party (or club) drug refers to a variety of drugs found at dance clubs and house parties. Party/Club drugs are sometimes referred to as “designer drugs”. The substances are typically produced in illegal laboratories, using a variety of chemicals. It is extremely difficult to predict their strength, what their effects will be and whether they contain poisonous ingredients. Therefore these drugs can pose serious risks to young people’s health and safety. Drugs, such as Rohypnol, GHB and Ketamine, have also been called “date rape drugs” because they have been used in situations of sexual assault. People can be sexually assaulted in this way by a stranger as well as someone they know or are “dating”. The victim can be a male or female. Because these drugs are colourless, tasteless and odourless, they can be added to drinks and used to intoxicate or sedate others without their knowledge. When used together, or in combination with alcohol, all of these drugs pose an even greater threat to health and safety.

ECSTASY (E, XTC, Adam, Euphoria, “X”, MDM, Love Doves)

Ecstasy is a recreational drug, most popular among teenagers and young adults, and is often found in environments where alcohol is not permitted. It has certain effects in common with hallucinogens and the party drugs but is related to amphetamines (a stimulant). It is produced in illegal laboratories and can often be contaminated by substances such as caffeine or ephedrine or other toxic drugs. It is usually taken by mouth in capsules or tablets, which are often stamped with a logo, making them look like candy. It may also be a powder that is sniffed. There have been deaths which have been attributed to the use of ecstasy.

ROHYPNOL (rophies, ruffies, roofies)

Rohypnol is the manufacturer’s trade name for a drug that belongs to the same family of sedative drugs that includes drugs such as Valium (trade name). It is not approved for use in Canada or the USA. The person may experience lack of memory, impaired judgment, dizziness, and periods of blackout. Sedation begins in about 30 minutes, peaks within 2 hours and lasts for about 8 hours.

KETAMINE (Special K, baby food)

Ketamine is also a drug that is available at clubs and raves and has been reported in cases of sexual assault. It is a relative of PCP and has been used as an anesthetic in medical and veterinary practice. The drug is found in the form of capsules, powder, crystals and solutions. Effects include temporary amnesia and hallucinations which may be intense or terrifying, dizziness, numbness, and blurred vision. The person may feel sleepy, withdrawn, or confused. They may experience “disassociation”, feeling as though the mind is separated from the body.

GHB (Liquid Ecstasy, Liquid X)

GHB, (gamma hydroxy butyrate) has surfaced as a drug at clubs and rave parties and also has been found in cases of sexual assault. It is an illegally manufactured drug mostly prepared as an odourless and tasteless liquid. It is quickly absorbed in the body and peaks in 20-60 minutes. At low doses, the person may feel sociable and less inhibited. With a slightly higher dose the person may experience dizziness, nausea, vomiting, drowsiness, amnesia and vertigo. At higher doses, the person may experience loss of consciousness, seizures, depressed breathing and coma.

HALLUCINOGENS

The term “hallucinogens” refers to a class of drugs that have the effect of changing the user’s perception of reality. These drugs can make people hear or see things that aren’t really there (“hallucinate”), change the way they feel time is passing, distort colours and sounds, and make people feel their minds are separated from their bodies. A person using these drugs may find these feelings pleasant and exciting or threatening and disturbing, sometimes resulting in panic and depression, injuries or even accidental deaths. Other effects include numbness, weakened muscles and nausea. The response can vary each time.

PSYLOCYBIN/MUSHROOMS (magic mushrooms, shrooms, shroomies)

This drug usually comes in a form of dried mushrooms which are swallowed. However, it also can come as a powder in capsules. The powder can be sniffed, smoked, injected or mixed with liquid, such as juice, and swallowed.

LSD (acid, blotter, cid, microdot, windowpane)

LSD, (lysergic acid diethylamide) is a white, odourless, crystalline powder made in illegal laboratories. The pure drug is almost invisible. It is usually taken by mouth. To be sold on the streets it is packaged in tablets, capsules, gelatin sheets or pieces of blotting paper, often with cartoon drawings on them.

MESCALINE is derived from “buttons” of the peyote cactus, which are chopped or ground and sold in capsules or prepared chemically.

PCP comes in the form of a white or coloured crystal or powder or tablet. It is usually mixed with tobacco or marijuana and smoked. Effects can last as long as two weeks. Users can become violent.

SALVIA DIVINORUM (magic mint, Sally D, salvia)

This is a form of sage from the mint family. Despite being restricted from being sold in stores, it is available for purchase online or in drug paraphernalia or “head shops”. The leaves are chewed or made into a juice or dried and smoked. The effects of this drug include hallucinations, out-of-body experiences, loss of consciousness and memory, and lack of physical coordination. Very little is known about the long term effects of this drug.

JIMSON WEED (stinkweed, locoweed, Angel’s Trumpet, Datura)

This is a legal, but poisonous plant that grows wild and in many gardens in southern Canada. Users can eat the seeds, brew the leaves as a tea, or smoke the dried leaves to experience the hallucinogenic and euphoric effects. The plant, however, has caused poisoning and even death in animals and humans.



Quick Info: Methamphetamine and Cocaine

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“CRYSTAL METH”/METHAMPHETAMINE (speed, meth, chalk, ice, crystal, glass, tina, jib, crank)

In the 1960's methamphetamine was a common street drug usually taken in pill form. Referred to as “speed” it was known for its unpredictable and harmful effects. Since the 1990's a smokeable form (“crystal”) has been available. This form has extremely damaging short term and long term effects. Smoking or injecting “meth” causes a stronger reaction than inhaling or taking it in pill form. Another recent cause for concern is the way crystal meth is produced. It is made by combining household items, such as ammonia and lithium from batteries, with pseudoephedrine which is found in several common cold medicines. The illegal home laboratories which produce the drug are extremely dangerous because of the chemicals involved.

While the use of crystal meth is not on the rise among the mainstream high school population, there may be concern about how much it is used among certain populations, such as street youth, or within particular communities.

Effects

- it causes feelings of an intense sensation of pleasure; when smoked or injected there is a brief “rush” or “flash” although the drug stays in the body for up to 12 hours
- it causes increased heart rate, blood pressure and can cause damage to blood vessels in the brain and convulsions
- the person may experience loss of appetite, become anxious, aggressive or confused
- long-term effects include; possible irreversible damage to brain cell-endings, associated with thinking, memory and movement, insomnia, anorexia, paranoia, bizarre violent behaviour and skin sores.

COCAINE AND “CRACK” (“C”, coke, flake, snow, stardust, blow, nose candy)

Cocaine is a stimulant drug that comes from the coca bush that grows in South America. The leaves are soaked, mashed and filtered to create a paste that is treated with chemicals. It ends up as a powder that has other powders added to it.

“Crack” or “rock” is cocaine which is chemically changed so it can be smoked and inhaled into the lungs. Crack cocaine is particularly addictive and very dangerous. People are attracted to it because smoking provides a much quicker and more intense “high” than sniffing or “snorting” cocaine into the nostrils. The immediate, intense euphoria of smoking crack cocaine wears off more quickly than when the drug is sniffed. Then the user becomes anxious, irritable and deeply depressed and craves another dose to relieve the depression. Cocaine can be snorted into the nose as a powder or injected by needle. It can be smoked in the form of crack or rock.

Effects:

- the person's appetite will decrease
- the person will be more alert and have more energy and will not get tired easily
- the person's heart rate, blood pressure breathing will speed up and there is a risk of burst blood vessels or heart failure
- the person's pupils will be enlarged and their appetite decreased
- the person may act bizarre or be violent; they may experience paranoid psychosis, like feeling a sensation of having something crawling under their skin

STEROIDS

The most common are the “anabolic steroids” which are a chemically made form of the male sex hormone, testosterone. Young people, particularly males, use steroids to help them perform better in athletics, increase their muscle size, and change their appearance.

Short-term Effects

- the person may become aggressive, edgy, impatient and paranoid
- the person may experience mood swings
- the person may experience headaches, nosebleeds, stomach aches, acne, increased blood pressure and heart beat

Long-term Effects

- females may become more masculine looking, including body hair; some have been unable to bear children
- males may experience breast development, decrease in the size of their testicles and sperm count
- long and heavy use of steroids can cause irreversible liver damage and hardening of the arteries that may end in a heart attack or stroke
- long and heavy use of steroids can cause uncontrollable violent anger called ‘roid rage’



Quick Info: Solvents, Glue and other Inhalants

from PAD's Parent & Community Handbook, 7th edition

SOLVENTS, GLUE AND OTHER INHALANTS

The use of glue and other solvents is more popular with younger teens (in grades seven and eight) than older youth. These drugs are readily available in the form of household and commercial products and include nail polish remover, lighter fluid, cleaning fluids, paint thinner, gasoline, and model airplane cement. The users inhale fumes by holding a bag or cloth containing the substance over the face.

Short-term Effects

- the person may experience a euphoric feeling, light-headedness, exhilaration and vivid fantasies
- the person may experience nausea, drooling, sneezing and coughing, poor muscular control

Long-term Effects

- the person may experience thirst, weight loss, nosebleeds, fatigue
- the person may experience feelings of hostility and feelings of persecution
- “Sudden sniffing death” can follow strenuous exercise or undue stress after the person has inhaled deeply, caused by heart failure. Death by suffocation has occurred after users have become unconscious with a plastic bag over nose and mouth.
- with some substances such as leaded gasoline there are signs of brain damage
- kidney and liver damage can also occur