

Drugs And Your Body

Different drugs have different effects on your body. This chart details the effects and risks associated with some of the more commonly abused drugs.

Drug	Effect on the body	Risks
Cigarettes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> stimulate and sedate the central nervous system cause kidneys to secrete epinephrine, a stress hormone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can cause lung and heart disease, and cancer smoking while pregnant can cause birth defects
Cocaine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> central nervous system stimulant releases brain chemical dopamine temporarily increases energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can cause fatal heart and lung failure, seizures, and strokes sharing needles to inject a liquid form of the drug increases risk of contracting HIV, Hepatitis B and C, and other infectious diseases
Ecstasy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> overstimulates serotonin-producing nerve cells creates short-term feelings of pleasure and increases energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can cause nausea, fainting, and depression long-term use can cause memory problems and learning disabilities can cause a potentially fatal heat condition called hyperthermia
Heroin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> central nervous system depressant induces euphoria by releasing endorphins, hormones that block pain and anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can cause vomiting, respiratory failure, pneumonia, and miscarriage chronic users may develop collapsed veins, heart infections, and liver disease sharing needles to inject heroin increases risk of contracting HIV, Hepatitis B and C, and other infectious diseases
Inhalants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> stimulate the brain to give a temporary head rush, or high some inhalants dilate blood vessels, causing the heart to pump dangerously fast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can damage the cardiovascular and nervous systems, causing headache, nausea, slurred speech, loss of coordination, and breathing difficulties can cause depression and memory loss can cause death from suffocation and heart failure
Marijuana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> active ingredient THC creates feelings of mild euphoria and relaxation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> affects memory and coordination long-term use may cause lung disease

Methamphetamine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> causes the release of high levels of the brain chemical dopamine, which creates an intense rush and feelings of euphoria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can cause insomnia, confusion, tremors, convulsions, and aggressive behavior can damage blood vessels, cause respiratory problems, and irregular heartbeat damage to brain cells, over time, can result in a severe movement disorder
Steroids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> disrupt normal hormonal balance can draw out masculine traits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can cause aching joints, swollen feet, acne, balding, skin to yellow can stunt a teen's growth boys can develop breasts girls may sprout facial hair risk of heart failure and liver cancer

Test your knowledge of these commonly abused substances by answering the following:

1) Have you ever heard of steroids affecting a user's appearance? Give two examples.

2) What are some potential risks of sharing needles to inject drugs?

3) What are some common excuses for abusing substances? For example, "Smoking relaxes me."

4) Which bodily systems do inhalants damage?
