

rate of their metabolism, diet and exercise can all affect how quickly the drug is cleared from their system.

Urine tests generally only identify whether cannabis has or has not been used in the recent past. They cannot accurately tell when or how much a person has used in a single test. Tests can also detect cannabis and its main metabolite in blood, strands of hair and saliva, but more research is needed to establish how accurately they can measure patterns of use.

Urine drug testing is becoming more common in many Australian workplaces.

Q. Cocaine is the most commonly used illegal drug in Australia.

False

Cannabis is the most commonly used of the illegal drugs. Around one third of Australians have tried it in their lifetime.

Q. Most regular cannabis users develop mental health problems.

False

The majority of people who use cannabis do not develop mental health problems. Some people who use cannabis, especially those with a genetic predisposition to schizophrenia, depression and anxiety are more prone to developing mental health problems. It is important to note, however, that:

- early and heavy use of cannabis – especially smoking three or more times per week before the age of 15 is associated with up to six times the risk of schizophrenia.
- cannabis may precipitate schizophrenia in vulnerable individuals and continued use worsens prognosis.

- chronic heavy cannabis use can lead to psychotic symptoms in vulnerable individuals, but symptoms usually recede after stopping.

Q. The effects of cannabis last longer if you eat the drug rather than smoke it.

True

Depending on how cannabis is used, the body absorbs, metabolizes (breaks down) and gets rid of THC differently. When cannabis is smoked, the effects come on quickly, because the THC is rapidly absorbed into the lungs and enters the bloodstream within minutes. Peak effects from smoking the drug will last about two hours; most people are no longer 'stoned/high' after four-six hours.

When it is eaten, THC takes much longer to be absorbed into the blood, so the effects come on more slowly (30-90 minutes depending on a person's metabolism). The effects of the drug will also last a lot longer than when it is smoked. The peak effects when eating the drug are more likely to last for five hours but can last up to 12. Some people who eat cannabis get impatient waiting for the effects to come on and often eat more. This can result in very unpleasant effects such as anxiety, paranoia, and feeling very out of control! It is much harder to regulate the desired dose and effects of the drug if you eat it.

Q. People who share implements to snort cocaine are at risk of blood borne viruses such as HIV.

True

Blood borne viruses such as Hepatitis C and HIV can be contacted from even minuscule amounts of blood a human eye can't see. Sharing bank notes or

metal implements to snort drugs can pass these specks of blood from one person to the next in the blood vessel-dense nasal passage.

Q. You can become addicted to cannabis.

True

Cannabis is a physically and mentally addictive drug, or a 'drug of dependence'. Someone who is addicted to cannabis will experience withdrawal symptoms when they attempt to quit – such as irritability and nightmares. People who are addicted to a drug need increasingly larger amounts to get the same 'high' or buzz from it (tolerance) with the core issue being loss of control over use.

See this factsheet for more: <https://ncpic.org.au/professionals/publications/factsheets/cannabis-and-dependence/>

Q. Heroin is safer if you drink alcohol at the same time.

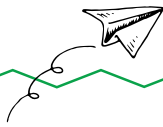
False

Alcohol and heroin are both depressant type drugs, meaning they slow down or depress the central nervous system. Taking them together means someone is more likely to overdose i.e. their central nervous system will be under more strain and they will find it difficult to continue breathing.

Q. Cannabis is legal for medical use in Australia.

False

Cannabis is not legal anywhere in Australia for any reason. That means you can't legally grow it, sell it, use it or possess it. The penalties for cannabis offences are different in each state and territory. In some states, if someone is caught with a 'small amount' of cannabis they may be given a \$50



fine, while in other states they may be charged with a criminal offence and receive a much larger fine, or even be sentenced to jail.

There are currently three clinical trials being planned in NSW to consider treating children with severe epilepsy, adults with terminal illnesses and people with nausea induced by chemotherapy with medical cannabis. The results will assess whether medical cannabis can be used safely and effectively with these groups.

See more here: <https://ncpic.org.au/professionals/publications/factsheets/cannabis-and-the-law/>

Q. Eating junk food, vomiting and having a shower will help get rid of alcohol from your body faster.

False

The only thing that works to eliminate alcohol from your blood stream is time. And it takes approximately one hour per standard drink for it to pass through your kidneys and exit as urine.

Q. Speed, base and ice are all the same drug, just in different potencies or strengths and forms.

True

They are all amphetamines – they speed up a person's breathing

and heart rate. Immediate effects include alertness, concentration, energy, and in high doses, euphoria. People may also experience stomach cramps, difficulty sleeping, twitching and irregular heartbeat. In higher doses, or for some people who have an existing vulnerability, using this drug can lead to a psychosis where the person becomes aggressive and agitated or violent.

Q. Ecstasy contains rat poison, cyanide and sometimes heroin.

False

Because the manufacture of ecstasy is illegal and not regulated it can contain substances such as sugar, caffeine, ephedrine or other 'cutting agents'. It would rarely contain the poisons listed above as drug dealers a) don't want their clients dying – they are their income stream! and b) adding heroin would be expensive and not give a user the effect they anticipate, it would probably just make them feel sick. Despite this, users may not know what exactly is in the pill they are taking, so reaction can't always be known in advance.

Q. When someone has 'the munchies' they crave sugary, fatty foods such as chips, pizza and lollies.

True.

Cannabis stimulates the CB1 receptors into thinking they are hungry, especially for novice and irregular users. This effect diminishes in regular users.

Q. Most Australians mix tobacco in with their cannabis.

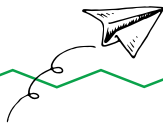
True

About two thirds of Australians mix tobacco or chopped up cigarettes in with their joints or bongs as they perceive this to be more cost effective or they like the taste sensation of the two mixed together. This obviously increases the risk of respiratory harms and nicotine addiction.

Q. Alcohol contributes to approximately \$6 billion in annual productivity losses.

True

According to the Australian Drug Foundation, alcohol is a hidden cost when it comes to the workplace, with misuse resulting in billions of dollars of loss in productivity every year. This loss is felt by individuals and the company and extends into the wider economy.



Name that drug

Type: whole group activity.

Purpose: introduction to drugs and alcohol – (a warm up activity for drug education sessions in the corporate context). Questions give a general overview of drugs.

Timing: up to twenty minutes.

Materials required: facilitator writes the names of the three drugs on large pieces of paper and place them on headbands. Facilitator needs the drugs and information answer sheet.

Facilitation instructions:

- The facilitator picks three audience members to sit at the front of the room, each wearing a headband with the name of a drug on it (like celebrity heads).
- The facilitator gives the first participant one piece of information about their drug. The candidate can then guess their drug or pass. If anyone guesses their drug incorrectly, they are eliminated. The person who guesses their drug correctly first wins the game.

Tips to facilitators: The information about the drugs is included in this pack. Pick the most difficult clues first, moving towards the easier clues last. Avoid having similar drugs in the same round. We suggest these combinations:

Round 1: Cannabis, ecstasy, LSD

Round 2: Methamphetamine, cocaine, GHB or ketamine

Alternative: pick one drug and progressively read out the clues to the whole group. Whoever guesses correctly first wins. Any incorrect guessers are eliminated.

Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA/Ecstasy)

- I'm mostly a stimulant drug but can also have hallucinogenic effects.
- Negative effects include: increased blood pressure and heart rate, dilated pupils, loss of appetite, jaw clenching, teeth grinding, sweating.
- Because my manufacture is illegal and not regulated I can contain substances such as sugar, caffeine, ephedrine or other 'cutting agents'.
- Because I increase body temperature and am often taken in hot nightclub settings you are more prone to dehydration.
- I am associated with three phases 'coming up', 'plateauing' and 'coming down'.
- Positive effects include: increased feeling of wellbeing, feeling happy, open, confident, talkative, having more energy or wanting to dance.
- Pills, pingers, E, XTC, disco biscuits are my street names.

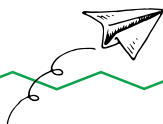
Methamphetamine

- Negative effects include: stomach cramps, paranoia and agitation at higher doses, difficulty sleeping, aggression, sweating and overheating, twitching, irregular heart beat.
- Positive immediate effects: Alertness, concentration, energy, and in high doses, can induce euphoria, enhance self-esteem, and increase libido.
- Drug campaigns often use scare tactics of images of people's faces aged with scabs, spots and missing teeth.
- This drug can make people think they have bugs under their skin and cause scratching and scabs.
- In higher doses, or for some people who have an existing vulnerability, using this drug can lead to a psychosis where the person becomes aggressive and agitated or violent.
- When people take this drug it can make them feel invincible and increase the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviour, such as drug driving, unsafe sex or thinking they are superman and jumping off buildings!

- Whiz, go-ee, snow, gas, shabu, glass, tina are my street names.
- I'm a stimulant. I speed up your breathing and heart rate.
- The broader technical name refers to speed, base and ice which are all the same drug, just in different potencies or strengths and forms.

Gamma Hydroxybutyrate (GHB)

- Negative effects include drowsiness and grogginess, slowed heart rate, nausea, difficulty focussing eyes, you can 'drop' and stop breathing when on this drug
- Some immediate effects include euphoria, reduced inhibitions and enhanced sensuality. This drug also relaxes muscles and can be used in sexual contexts.
- There is a fine line between how much you need to 'get high' and the amount that will cause you to pass out or even go into a coma.
- Mixing this drug with alcohol, Valium, heroin or other depressants can make overdose more likely as it doubles the effect on your central nervous system.



- I have a mild salty flavour so if someone tries to spike your drink using this drug it will taste funny. Don't drink it!.
- I'm a depressant meaning I slow down your breathing and heart rate.
- Sometimes people refer to me by the nickname 'grievous bodily harm' but the initials of this nickname are not in the right order of the drug's real name. Drug users are sometimes not the smartest people!

Ketamine

- Immediate effects: euphoria and relaxation, feelings of dissociation (being detached from the body), reduced sensitivity to pain and numbness of the extremities. disorganised thoughts, confusion and difficulty concentrating, thinking or maintaining attention, impaired motor coordination, breathing rate increased but shallow can also experience nausea and vomiting.
- This drug can be used in medical and veterinary settings as a short-acting anaesthetic and pain killer. The danger of using it recreationally is you may hurt yourself and not realise.
- People who use this drug can "fall into a k-hole". The experience of being in a k-hole varies but generally involves being socially detached, having hallucinations and experiencing a distorted sense of time and space.
- Due to its anaesthetic qualities, larger doses of this drug may result in loss of muscle coordination or even temporary paralysis. The paralysis will pass but may be quite frightening.
- Special K, K, vitamin K, super K are my street names

Cocaine

- I am very addictive and people develop a tolerance to me quickly, meaning they need to take larger doses of the drug to feel the effects.
- Immediate effects include: exhilaration, increased talkativeness, increased libido and elevated sexual arousal, feelings of wellbeing.
- Immediate negative effects: Increased heart rate and breathing rate, anxiety, dry mouth, overheating and sweating. In larger quantities I can lead to irregular heartbeat, chest pain, seizures and stroke.
- This drug is relatively expensive and has a reputation as being 'exclusive' and 'fashionable'. It is taken by a wide variety of social classes and circles.
- I can make you prone to nose bleeds and nasal collapse because of snorting.
- When mixed with alcohol the effects are enhanced especially damage to the heart.
- I'm classified as a stimulant meaning I speed up your breathing and heart rate.
- Coke, Charlie, blow and nose candy are my street names.

LSD/Acid

- Immediate effects include: disorganised thoughts, confusion and difficulty concentrating, thinking or maintaining attention, trance like state, paranoia, insomnia, dizziness, impaired coordination, numbness
- This drug is a white, odourless powder. It usually comes in the form of squares of gelatine or blotting paper that have been infused with the drug.

- Lysergic acid diethylamide is my technical name.
- This drug works on the brain to distort the senses, causing you to experience sights, sounds, tastes and feelings that aren't actually there.
- Days, weeks or even years later, some people re-experience the effects of the drug as flashbacks. The person may see intense colours and experience hallucinations. Flashbacks can be triggered by the use of other drugs, or by stress, fatigue or physical exercise.

Cannabis

- In the long term, I can cause memory and learning problems and lead to reduced motivation, addiction and worsened mental health.
- I'm mostly a 'depressant' drug, but in higher doses I can also make you hallucinate.
- Immediate desired effects: Sense of relaxation and feeling of wellbeing, laughing easily, feeling 'mellow'.
- Immediate negative effects: slow thinking and reflexes, blood shot eyes, dry mouth, and increased appetite. For some anxiety, paranoia or even psychotic effects at high doses
- You may get 'the munchies' and crave fatty, sugary foods such as chips, lollies and pizza while under my influence.
- Many people who use this drug also mix it with tobacco, often not contemplating the damage the tobacco is doing to their respiratory system.
- I'm classified as a cannabinoid (the name is a clue).
- Marijuana, pot, gunja, grass, weed, mull, dope are my street names.