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
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[\(https://www.therecoveryvillage.com/drug-addiction/\)](https://www.therecoveryvillage.com/drug-addiction/)  [Types of Drugs](#)

Types of Drugs

Drugs can be categorized based upon their effects on users. There are essentially seven different drug types, each with its own set of characteristics, effects and dangers. Categories include stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, dissociatives, opioids, inhalants and cannabis.



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The 7 Types of Drugs

One of the most devastating truths about drug abuse [\(/drug-addiction/\)](/drug-addiction/) is that it doesn't just

affect the user; it also affects their friends and their families. Relationships strain and trust can break over the course of the substance abuse.

It's difficult to pinpoint when recreational drug use triggers an outright addiction, but the physical and psychological risks of drug use are many. It's important to understand the underlying causes addiction ([/drug-addiction/underlying-causes/](#)) – from prescription drug abuse ([/prescription-drug-addiction/](#)) to an attempt to self-medicate mental illness ([/mental-health/](#)).

Table of Contents

- Stimulants
- [Depressants](#)
- [Hallucinogens](#)
- [Dissociatives](#)
- [Opioids](#)
- [Inhalants](#)
- [Cannabis](#)
- [More on Specific Drugs](#)

Stimulants

Stimulants (or “uppers”) impact the body’s central nervous system (CNS), causing the user to feel as if they are “speeding up.” These drugs increase the user’s level of alertness, pumping up heart rate, blood pressure, breathing and blood glucose levels.



Doctors primarily prescribe stimulants for ADHD ([/mental-health/adhd/](#)), narcolepsy and asthma (because the drugs can open up breathing passages). The drugs can also help aid weight loss, as

they can decrease appetite in users. Stimulant abuse (/stimulant-addiction/) occurs in high school when teens wish to enhance performance in school or sports.

Stimulants often come in pill form but are also consumed via snorting or even as food and drink. For example, caffeine is found in many beverages, and cocaine is a powder that is snorted.

Examples of stimulants include:

- Adderall (/adderall-addiction/)
- Ritalin (/ritalin-addiction/)
- Synthetic Marijuana (/k2-spice-addiction/)
- Cocaine (/cocaine-addiction/)
- Methamphetamine (/meth-addiction/)
- Ecstasy (/ecstasy-mdma-addiction/)
- Caffeine

Risks of Stimulant Abuse

When abused, stimulants can cause a variety of undesirable consequences. These effects (/stimulant-addiction/side-effects/) can include:

- Anxiety (/mental-health/anxiety/)
- Paranoia (/mental-health/paranoid-personality-disorder/)
- Psychosis (/mental-health/psychosis/)
- High body temperature
- Depression (/mental-health/depression/)
- Heart failure
- Stroke
- Seizures

Depressants

Like stimulants, depressants (/depressant-addiction/) also impact the body's CNS, but with the opposite effect, making users feel as if things are "slowing down." Thus, they are often called "downers" on the street.

Doctors prescribe some depressants for anxiety (/mental-health/anxiety/), insomnia (/mental-health/insomnia/), obsessive-compulsive disorder (/mental-health/ocd/) and other medical

issues that prevent the sufferer from fully relaxing. These drugs often offer a sedative experience to users, making them a tempting choice for teens who wish to escape everyday stresses.

Examples of stimulants include:

- Rohypnol (/rohypnol-addiction/)
- Barbiturates (/barbiturate-addiction/)
- Xanax (/xanax-addiction/)
- Valium (/valium-addiction/)
- Benzodiazepines (/benzodiazepine-addiction/)

Alcohol as a Depressant

Alcohol acts as a depressant, making it a popular choice for users looking to relax. Although drinking is often associated with immediate bursts of energy after a sip, the user's vital functions inevitably slow down. Overdosing on alcohol (/alcohol-abuse/side-effects/alcohol-poisoning-signs-symptoms/) can cause severe toxicity and even death.

Tobacco as a Depressant

The active ingredient in tobacco is nicotine, a chemical that acts as both a stimulant and a depressant. Tobacco gives users a minor, immediate rush, followed by a feeling of relaxation. Nicotine is one of the most addictive substances known to man, and is dangerous for your teen to even try.

Risks of Depressant Abuse

Depressants can be useful when used properly, but depressant abuse can cause a host of issues in both the long and short term:

- Higher risk of high blood sugar, diabetes and weight gain
- Increased body temperature
- Delirium
- Sluggish thinking
- Low blood pressure
- Impaired memory
- Hallucinations

- Death from withdrawal

Hallucinogens

Depressants can be useful when used properly, but depressant abuse can cause a host of issues in both the long and short term:

- Higher risk of high blood sugar, diabetes and weight gain
- Increased body temperature
- Delirium
- Sluggish thinking
- Low blood pressure
- Impaired memory
- Hallucinations
- Death from withdrawal

Risks of Hallucinogen Abuse

Hallucinogen abuse can have devastating effects that can last a lifetime:

- Hallucinogen Persisting Perception Disorder, also known as flashbacks
- Fear
- Distorted cognition
- Paranoia
- Psychosis
- Anxiety
- Increased blood pressure
- Nausea

Dissociatives

Dissociatives distort the user's perception of reality, and cause users to "dissociate," or feel as if they are watching themselves from outside their own bodies. They may gain a false sense of invincibility, then engage in risky behavior such as driving under the influence or unsafe sex.

These drugs work by interfering with the brain's receptors for the chemical glutamate, which plays a significant role in cognition, emotionality and pain perception. Dissociatives can be taken as liquids, powders, solids or gases. The drugs include:

- Ketamine (/ketamine-addiction/)
- DXM (/dxm-addiction/) (Dextromethorphan)

- PCP (/pcp-addiction/) (phencyclidine)

Risks of Dissociative Abuse

Dissociatives are very dangerous, especially when used over extended periods of time. However, their immediate impact can be quite distressing as well:

- Depression (/mental-health/depression/)
- Anxiety (/mental-health/anxiety/)
- Suicidal thoughts
- Speech difficulties
- Social withdrawal
- Hallucinations
- Detachment from reality
- Numbness
- Memory loss

Opioids

Opioids (/opiate-addiction/) are powerful painkillers that produce a sense of euphoria in users. Derived from the poppy plant, opioids are often prescribed by doctors to patients who are suffering from intense pain. They are extremely habit-forming, sometimes even causing addiction in as little as three days.



Opioids can be smoked, eaten, drunk, injected or taken as pills. Examples of opioids include:

- Heroin (/heroin-addiction/)
- Morphine (/morphine-addiction/)
- Hydrocodone (/hydrocodone-addiction/)
- Opium
- Vicodin (/vicodin-addiction/)
- Oxycontin (/oxycontin-addiction/)
- Percocet (/percocet-addiction/)
- Codeine (/codeine-addiction/)

Risks of Opioid Abuse

RISKS OF OPIOID ABUSE

Opioid abuse (/opiate-addiction/) can devastate the life of a user. Unfortunately, when someone decides to stop using opioids, they suffer tremendously then, as well. For example, hydrocodone withdrawal can be especially nasty, riddlings sufferers with flu-like symptoms for weeks on end. Other effects (/opiate-addiction/side-effects/) include:

- Constipation
- Liver damage
- Brain impairment
- Euphoria
- Drowsiness
- Sedation
- Pupil dilation
- Cardiac arrest (if dose is too high)

Inhalants

Mostly made up of everyday household items, these drugs cause brief feelings of euphoria. As the name suggests, inhalants (/inhalant-addiction/) are always inhaled as gases or fumes. The “highs” slightly differ from inhalant to inhalant, but most abusers are willing to huff whatever inhalant they can acquire.

Examples of inhalants include:

- Fumes of markers, paint, paint thinner, gasoline and glue
- Nitrous oxide
- Aerosol sprays
- Room deodorizers

Risks of Inhalant Abuse

Inhalant abuse can have devastating effects, both immediate and in the long run:

- Loss of smell
- Brain damage
- Nosebleeds
- Weakness
- Euphoria

- Increased heart rate
- Loss of consciousness
- Hallucinations
- Slurred speech

Cannabis

Most commonly recognized as marijuana (/marijuana-addiction/), cannabis acts like a hallucinogen, but also produces depressant-like effects. It is a Schedule I drug (/drug-addiction/drug-schedules/) (i.e. it has a high potential for addiction) but has increasing medicinal uses in the United States. Still, marijuana is often abused by those who do not medically require it.



Cannabis can be smoked, vaporized, and even eaten, if the THC is first rendered from the plant matter. Examples of cannabis include:

- Marijuana leaves
- Hashish
- Hash oil
- Cannabis-based medicines, such as Sativex

Risks of Cannabis Abuse

Cannabis abuse (/marijuana-addiction/) can destroy lives and can have both short- and long-term impacts on users:

- Lowered immunity to illness
- Depression (/mental-health/depression/)
- Chronic anxiety (/mental-health/anxiety/)
- Reduced sperm count in men
- Sedation
- Slowed reaction times
- Enhanced senses, such as seeing brighter colors
- Impaired sense of time


More on Specific Drugs

No matter the type, all drugs have the potential to be dangerous. It is important to talk to your loved ones (</family-friend-portal/>) about drugs, and the ways in which these substances can negatively impact their lives. We offer a number of free resources to help facilitate discussion, including our comprehensive Drug Index A-Z (</drug-index/>) .

▶ **Sources:** ()

▶ **Medical Disclaimer** ()

Ready to start? We're here for you.

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<https://www.qualitycheck.org/quality-report/?bsnid=545008>



<http://www.naatp.org/resources/addiction-industry-directory/581>

Proud Supporter (<https://www.samhsa.gov/>)

SAMHSA (<https://www.samhsa.gov/>)

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