

The Power of Knowledge

Tackling Drugs in the Community

Here is a quote from **Drug Misuse at Work** issued by the Health and Safety Executive of the UK:

“Drugs can affect the brain and the body in a number of ways. They can alter the way a person thinks, perceives and feels, and this can lead to either impaired judgement or concentration. Drug misuse can also bring about the neglect of general health and well-being. This may adversely influence performance at work, even when the misuse takes place outside the workplace.”

Aside from the wisdom of raising understanding by bringing good drug education to the workplace, it is in the interests of all employers to be able to spot indicators of drug mis-use by employees and to be able to take steps to help them.

We concur with the health and safety executive in the above publication that the following are signs of possible drug misuse (**But please bear in mind that all these indicators may be caused by other factors, such as stress and physical illness and should be regarded only as indications that an employee *may* be misusing drugs**):

- impaired job performance
- a deterioration in relationships with colleagues, customers or management
- dishonesty and theft (arising from the need to maintain an expensive habit)
- increased short-term sickness absence
- sudden mood changes
- unusual irritability or aggression
- a tendency to become confused
- abnormal fluctuations in concentration and energy
- poor time-keeping

We include below a table of the most commonly mis-used drugs that should give you further clues as to what to look for and what an employee, colleague or friend may be going through.

We hope this information is of help both for employers, colleagues, friends and family in general.



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Commonly Abused Drugs (includes street drugs *and* abuse of medical drugs)

Drug	Street or Brand Names	How people usually take it	Short-term effects (usually the desirable effects sought by the user) include:	Harmful/undesirable effects of the drug include but are not necessarily limited to the following:
Alcohol	booze, brew, chug, gargle, goof, giggle juice, hard stuff, hooch, jack, juice, kool aid, mouthwash, poison, sauce, shine, swish, vino; plus a great many trade names	Drunk as a liquid	Impaired physical and mental faculties, confusion, relaxation and confidence, sense of well-being, loss of inhibitions, aggression; impaired judgement, reflexes and impulse control	Accidents, violent behaviour, relationship problems and broken marriages, alcohol poisoning, high blood pressure, strokes, heart diseases, liver disease, nerve damage, sexual problems, permanent brain damage, amnesia, apathy, disorientation, ulcers, cancer of the mouth and throat; drinking alcohol while pregnant can damage the foetus; an overdose of alcohol can cause vomiting (to get rid of the poison), unconsciousness or even coma and death. Addiction - withdrawal can be dangerous and very unpleasant.
Amphetamines	amp, billy, speed, sulph, uppers, whizz	Dissolved in drinks, injected, sniffed or snorted.	Stimulation, alertness, feeling of energy and confidence, cheerfulness, less bored or tired. With high doses users can experience a rapid flow of ideas and feel they have increased physical and mental powers.	Anxiety, irritability and restlessness, paranoia, insomnia, mood swings (sometimes extreme or violent), irritability, panic, aggression, depression, delusions, panic attacks, a feeling of being 'wired' and hallucinations. The come-down can be severe and last for several days.
Anabolic steroids	have a great number of trade names	Injected or swallowed as tablets	With exercise can help to increase muscle size but there is controversy over whether this improves muscle power and athletic performance	For men: erection problems, risk of heart attack or liver problems. For women: development of male characteristics. Injecting equipment brings risk of HIV or hepatitis infection
Antidepressants	Paxil, Prozac, Zoloft, Celexa, Luvox, Cymbalta, Effexor, Lexapro, Elavil, Remeron, Sarafem,	Swallowed as tablets	Elevation of mood, increased confidence	Abnormal thoughts, agitation, severe restlessness, anxiety, coma, confusion, worsened memory or concentration, delirium, delusions, depression, difficulty breathing or swallowing, emotional numbing, hallucinations, heart attacks, hostility, hyperactivity, insomnia, lethargy, liver problems, mania, mood swings, muscle spasms, nervousness, nightmares, panic attacks, paranoia, psychotic episodes, seizures, sexual dysfunction, shakiness, shuffling walk, slow/difficult speech, stroke, suicidal thoughts or behaviour, violent behaviour, yellowing of skin/eyes

Barbiturates	barbs, downers	Swallowed as tablets or capsules, injected	Calm and relaxed state. Large doses can produce a drunken effect	Dependency and tolerance, overdose can lead to coma or even death. Severely unpleasant withdrawal symptoms
Cannabis	blow, dope, ganja, grass, hash, Herb, marijuana, Mary Jane pot, puff, reefer, shit, skunk, weed,	Rolled into a cigarette (spliff, joint or reefer) and smoked, smoked in a pipe or eaten	Relaxed, talkative state, sense of wellbeing, heightened and/or distorted sense of sound and colour; uncontrolled mirth and laughter, but also paranoia and fear. Impossible to control whether desired effects or undesired effects will turn on	Impaired co-ordination and increased risk of accidents, poor concentration, loss of drive, anxiety, depression, increased risk of respiratory diseases; distortions of time sense, vision and hearing; sleeplessness, poorer health, relationship problems, poorer school performance, poorer memory, difficulty in thinking and problem solving, lowered IQ, anxiety, psychotic symptoms, panic attacks
Cocaine	blow, C, charlie, coke, snow	Usually snorted in powder form, sometimes injected	Alertness and confidence, sense of well-being	Hallucinations; insomnia and restlessness; damage to nasal membranes; paranoia; anxiety; irritability; erratic, bizarre or violent behaviour; malnutrition and weight loss; severe tooth decay; liver, kidney and lung damage; breathing failure; heart attack; strokes and bleeding in the brain; children of cocaine users can be born addicts
Crack	freebase, rock, stone, wash	This is a form of cocaine that can be smoked	Similar to those of snorted Cocaine (see above) but much more intense	As for cocaine (see above) but much more intense. Addiction can occur almost immediately
Ecstasy	doves, disco biscuits, E, echoes, scooby doos, XTC.	Usually swallowed in tablet form	Alertness, energy, calmness, sense of well-being towards others, sense of sound and colour heightened	If dancing, fatal overheating and dehydration can occur. Nausea and panic; liver and kidney problems. Long-term effects can include mental illness and depression
Ketamine	Bump, K, Special K, super acid, super c, Vitamin K	Can be slipped into drinks or injected	Psychedelic effects similar to LSD but nowhere near as long-lasting	Rapid tolerance, addiction, slowed thought, blurred vision, slowed reactions, amnesia, insomnia, impaired judgement, speech difficulties, paralysis, panic attacks, loss of memory, black-outs, terror, mental disorders, amnesia, severe confusion, paranoia, terrifying hallucinations, depression, respiratory problems, heart problems, unconsciousness, death

LSD	acid, blotters, dots, microdots, tabs, trips	Swallowed	Often very vivid and "real" audio and visual hallucinations, with distorted or confused time sense. An LSD trip can last as long as 8-12 hours	A bad trip can be a terrifying and horrific but convincingly real experience. The nature of a trip is very hard if not impossible to control. A trip cannot be stopped once started. Increased risk of accidents or harm to self and others due to hallucination. Brain damage and long-term mental illness problems
Magic mushrooms	Mushies, shrooms	Eaten raw or dried, cooked in food or brewed in a tea	Similar effects to LSD but the trip is often milder and shorter	As for LSD, plus the additional risk of sickness and poisoning
Metamphetamines	blue mollies, chalk, crank, crystal meth, crystal shabu, glass, go-fast speed, , ice, stove top, methlies, quartz, quick, mexican crack, sketch and speed	taken orally, injected, smoked, or snorted	Elevated mood, increased alertness, increased energy	Brain damage (sometimes immediate); Addiction (very rapid) ; loss of appetite, tremors, nausea, headaches, dizziness, talkativeness, paranoia, increased physical activity, euphoria, irritability, anxiety, confusion, aggressive, insomnia, psychosis including hallucinations and delusions, convulsions, dangerously high body temperature, stroke, cardiac arrhythmia, stomach cramps, and shaking
Painkillers	Many brand names and street names such as hillbilly heroin, hydros, pinks, demmies	Usually taken as pills or injected	Short-term euphoria	Highly addictive with often horrendous withdrawal symptoms. Constipation, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness, respiratory depression, increased risk of heart attack, coma, death.
Poppers	alkyl nitrates, including amyl nitrate with trade names such as Ram, Thrust, TNT	Vapours from small bottle of liquid breathed in through mouth or nose	Brief and intense head-rush caused by sudden surge of blood through the brain	Nausea and headaches, fainting, loss of balance, skin problems around the mouth and nose, particularly dangerous for those with glaucoma, anaemia, breathing or heart problems
Stimulants	Adderall, Benzedrine, Concerta, Desoxyn, Dexedrine, Dextrostat, Equasym, Metadate, Methylin, Provigil, Ritalin, Vyvanse	Usually in tablet form	Increased calm, increased energy and focus, ability to stay awake for unnaturally long periods.	visual hallucinations, suicidal ideation, psychotic behaviour, aggression and violent behaviour, sudden deaths, strokes, heart attacks and hypertension, cardiovascular problems, addiction and dependence.

Solvents	including lighter gas refills, aerosols, glues, some painter thinners etc	Sniffed or breathed into the lungs	Short-lived effects similar to being drunk, thick-headed, dizziness, possible hallucinations	Nausea, blackouts, increased risk of accidents. Fatal heart problems can cause instant death
Tranquillizers	Barbiturates: Amytal, Nembutal, Seconal, Tuinal Benzodiazepines: Xanax, Librium, Klonopin, Halcion, Valium, Versed, Ativan Sleep aids: Ambien, Lunesta, Sonata Also: Altivan, Mogadon (moggies), Temazepam (wobblies, mazzies, jellies)	Swallowed as tablets or capsules, injected	Prescribed for the relief of anxiety and to treat insomnia, high doses cause drowsiness	Dependency and tolerance, increased risk of accidents, overdose can be fatal, severe withdrawal symptoms

