

Drugs Facts Teacher Guide

Names and types of drugs

There are many different drugs and each drug can have up to five or more different names. The 'Drugs A to Z' section of the Talk to Frank website (www.talktofrank.com) has an extensive list, which is regularly updated and provides detailed information on each drug.

Drugs Facts – Risks and Effects

Drug	Effects	Risks
Tobacco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This drug gets it to the brain quickly. Users say it helps them relax and feel less hungry. This drug stimulates the heart to beat faster and cause blood pressure to rise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long term use of this drug can damage the lungs, heart, stomach, circulation, bones, mouth and throat. It can make the user look older, stain their fingers and teeth yellow. Users may have a limited sense of taste and smell, bad breath and their clothes may smell. This drug can cause cancer.
Alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This drug will often exaggerate whatever mood you're in. This drug makes you relax so a small amount can make a person feel less anxious and more sociable. This drug may make a person become irrational and aggressive. A user may take risks and do things they would not normally do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This drug may make a person do things they might not normally do. Accidents often occur when using this drug. Large amounts of this drug can make people be sick and forget things This drug can damage the heart and liver and may cause cancer. This drug can cause depression, memory loss, brain damage or dementia. This drug is often linked to unwanted sexual activity.
Volatile Substances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People say it's like being drunk. You might feel dizzy. It can be difficult to think straight. Some people feel like they have a hangover after use. It can cause bad headaches and make you very tired. Depending on the substance, it can leave a red rash around the mouth. Users might hallucinate. This can last for up to 45 minutes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People can be physically sick and black out. Too much can result in a coma. There's a risk of heart problems which have been known to kill users on first time use. It can make the throat swell, which restricts breathing and slows down the heart rate. This can affect judgment and can lead to dangerous risk taking. Using this with alcohol can lead to an increased risk of death.
Cannabis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This drug may make you feel relaxed and happy. Some people get the giggles and may become more talkative. Some will have one puff and feel sick. Being hungry is common and is known as 'getting the munchies'. Some people become more aware of their senses or get a feeling of slowing of time, which are due to its hallucinogenic effects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This drug can make you become anxious, panicky, suspicious or paranoid. There is a risk of developing mental health problems. This drug can affect your coordination. It can make you feel tired all the time and lacking in motivation. Regular, heavy use makes it difficult to learn and concentrate.

Drugs Facts Teacher Guide

Drug	Effects	Risks
Cocaine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This drug makes users feel wide-awake, confident and on top of their game. • This drug raises the body's temperature, makes the heart beat faster and stops people feeling hungry. • The effects last for about 20-30 minutes. • This drug is very addictive. It can be difficult to resist the craving due to changes in the brain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people are over-confident on this drug and so may take very careless risks. • Users have died from overdoses. Risk of overdosing increases if this drug is mixed with alcohol. • It can cause mental health problems. • This drug is highly risky for anybody with high blood pressure or a heart condition.
Heroin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This drug slows down body functioning and reduces physical and mental pain. • Most users get a rush or buzz a few minutes after taking it. It gives the user a feeling of warmth and well-being. Bigger doses can make the user sleepy and very relaxed. • The first time you take this you may become dizzy and be sick. • This drug is highly addictive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overdoses can lead to coma and even death, if breathing stops. • Overdose is more likely if this is taken with other drugs, including alcohol and medicines. • Sharing needles increases the risk of getting infections like hepatitis and HIV/AIDS.
Ecstasy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This drug gives people an energy that makes them feel alert and alive. • It heightens senses; sounds and colours are more intense. • Users often feel great love for the people they're with and the strangers around them. On its own, it's not a drug that makes people violent. • It can make people talkative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This drug can cause anxiety, panic attacks, and confusion. It can make users feel down after use. • Raised body temperature increases the chances of overheating and dehydration. However, compensating by drinking too much can also be dangerous or even fatal. • This drug has been linked to liver, kidney and heart problems.

Cannabis - Additional Facts

Cannabis is the most commonly used illegal drug. Some people think cannabis is harmless just because it's a plant – but it isn't harmless. Cannabis, like tobacco, has lots of chemical 'nasties', which can cause lung disease and possibly cancer with long-term or heavy use, especially as it is often mixed with tobacco and smoked without a filter. It can also make asthma worse, and cause wheezing in non-asthma sufferers. Regular use of cannabis can increase the risk of later developing mental health problems. Stronger cannabis, such as 'skunk', is becoming more common and can have more powerful effects.

The law

- Cannabis is a Class B drug - illegal to have, give away or sell.
- Possession can get you up to five years in jail plus an unlimited fine. If you're under 18, you'll get a reprimand and your parent or guardian will also be contacted. The police are more likely to arrest you if: you are blatantly smoking in public and/or have been caught with cannabis before. If you're under 18, the second time you get caught you're likely to get a final warning and be referred to a Youth Offending Team. If you're caught with cannabis for a third time it's likely you will be arrested.

Drugs Facts Teacher Guide

- Supplying someone else, including your friends, can get you fourteen years and an unlimited fine. Dealing is a very serious offence. In the eyes of the law, this includes giving drugs to friends. People who grow cannabis in their homes or carry large amounts on them also risk being charged with intent to supply.

Other facts

- If you get a criminal record it could affect your chances of getting a job. It could also affect whether you can go on holiday to some countries.
- Drug driving is as illegal as drink driving. You could go to prison, get a heavy fine or be disqualified.
- Allowing people to take cannabis in your house or any other premises is illegal. If the police catch someone smoking cannabis in a club they can prosecute the landlord, club owner or person holding the party.
- Using cannabis to relieve pain is also an offence. Possession is illegal whatever you're using it for.

Volatile Substances – Additional Facts

Most homes contain over 50 products that are volatile substances. These include gas lighter refills, aerosols containing hairspray, deodorants and air fresheners, tins or tubes of glue, some paints, thinners and correcting fluids, cleaning fluids, surgical spirit, dry-cleaning fluids and petroleum products.

Volatile substance abuse kills an average of one person every week in the UK. It kills more children and young people aged 10-15 than all illegal drugs put together. It is one of the most important drugs to cover in Drug Education because of the very high level of risk associated with even the first time use of VSA. Further information about VSA can be found on the Re-Solv website: www.re-solv.org.

The law

- Possessing solvents, unlike some other drugs, is not illegal.
- It is an offence for shop keepers to sell a cigarette lighter refill containing butane to anyone under the age of 18 years.
- It is an offence to supply a product to a person under the age of 18 years knowing or suspecting that it is going to be abused.
- The number of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders due to volatile substance abuse is increasing.
- Crimes committed whilst high include assaults, thefts and vandalism and more serious crimes

Drug User Facts

In recent years to 2012, the most commonly used drugs among young people aged 11-15 are alcohol, tobacco and cannabis. The NHS produce a report each year called 'Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use Amongst Young People in England'. The data is compiled from a survey of over 7,000 eleven to fifteen year olds. Statistics are updated annually so that longer term trends can be monitored effectively. The report is free to download and has a summary version available from the NHS Information Centre website: <http://www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs/sdd>.

Gender

- Women are not nearly as likely to use drugs as men.
- Men more likely to use illegal drugs in greater amounts.
- However - women are catching up with men, especially with alcohol.
- Women more likely to smoke cigarettes and use medicines.

Disability

- Although disabled people may be prescribed medicines, some do use illegal drugs to self-medicate, for example cannabis for multiple sclerosis.

Drugs Facts Teacher Guide

Age

- The vast majority of children do not use drugs. Children use medicines for illnesses, drink caffeine in cola, some taste alcohol at a young age.
- Not all teenagers drink and use drugs. By the age of 15, 4 out of 5 teenagers have never taken an illegal drug and half have never had an alcoholic drink.

Ethnicity

- Black and African Caribbean people are no more likely to use drugs than white people.
- People from the Asian Sub-Continent are less likely to use drugs than other groups.

Why Young People Don't Use Drugs

Young people identified the following reasons for choosing not to use drugs:

- Significant people in the young people's lives disapprove of drug use;
- Fear of legal consequences, which ranged from not wanting to break the law, to fear of the impact of a possible criminal record on their life aspirations;
- Incompatibility with achieving career aspirations, young people thought, for example, it could prevent them from obtaining qualifications or affect the physical fitness required for certain career paths;
- Being too busy – these young people made extensive use of their spare time to follow hobbies, do part time jobs and undertake voluntary work;
- Being a parent was not perceived to be compatible with using drugs. Those who were already parents did not have time to engage in drug use and did not want to place their child at risk. Others who wanted to become parents in the future wanted to stay healthy and be good role models for their children;
- Previous negative experience with cannabis had made some decide not to use again;
- Fear of damaging health now and in the future was noted as another reason not to use drugs;
- Fear of addiction was noted by some. While this tended to be associated with Class A drugs, it also seemed to discourage young people from experimenting with other drugs too;
- Not wishing to lose control of themselves and do something they would regret;
- Having alternative sources of getting the 'buzz' that users got from drugs – these included drinking alcohol and certain hobbies;
- Having alternative sources of support meant that young people did not need drugs as a way of coping with their problems. The sources of support included alcohol or tobacco, supportive relationships, and other sources of stress relief such as using a punch bag, going for a bike ride, or going to the beach or park to 'chill out'.

Young people usually cited several reasons for shaping their decision not to use drugs rather than a single one.