

Many drugs don't belong to just one type. For example, cannabis can act like a depressant as well as causing feelings of happiness. Ecstasy can act as a stimulant and an hallucinogen.

There is also an extensive range of synthetic chemicals which people have access to, for example 'Spice', 'Ephedrine' and many others. These synthetic chemicals mimic the effects of better known drugs but the risks may be higher when consuming them.

KEEPING YOUR TEEN SAFE:

It is important to have conversations with your teen about the dangers of drugs and alcohol—the information should come from you as parents. It should also be supported by the wider community including their school settings. Find out what's being discussed at school and make good use of it.

Below is a checklist of what to do if you find a young person unconscious:-

- ◆ Stay Calm and call 999 or 112 and ask for an ambulance;
- ◆ Ensure the airway is clear, stay with them and keep them in the recovery position;
- ◆ If you find any powders or tablets, give them to the ambulance staff;
- ◆ Remember to put In Case of Emergency (ICE) number into your teen's mobile phone—this is **your** number and will make it easier for Emergency Services to contact you;

KNOW YOUR TEEN



To Contact the North West Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force:

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TEENAGERS

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL



Find time to talk to your teenager ...don't leave it to their peers/friends..... they may **not** have the right information.

Young people are curious about drugs



Drugs & Alcohol – the reality:

FACT - We live in a drug taking society.

FACT - While there is a lot of concern about illegal drugs, the most harm and the greatest risk to young people comes from using legal drugs such as alcohol, cigarettes and the inappropriate use of medication. **FACT** - For young people, part of growing up is about trying new things and pushing the boundaries.

FACT - A high percentage of young people will consume alcohol and a small percentage will try illegal drugs. Some will develop serious problems with these and other substances.

A drug : is any substance other than food that alters the way a person thinks, feels or acts. This includes alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, medicinal drugs as well as illegal drugs.

(Source: The Facts of Drugs –a parent's guide, HSE)



Young people experiment with drugs for a variety of reasons:- **peer pressure**, **curiosity**, **escaping from worries or boredom**. It can also be seen as glamorous. **Below are possible signs of drug use, such as mood swings. Ensure you talk to your teenager.**

Signs and symptom of drug use:

School.....

- general apathy
- negative attitude
- drop in grades
- many absences
- discipline issues

Social problems.....

a change in friends— who have a bad influence on your teen's attitude to school and life at home;

changes to less conventional styles of dress and music;

Anti social behaviour resulting in possible cautions/arrests by An Garda Síochana;

Emotional.....

- personality change
- mood changes
- irritability
- irresponsible behaviour
- low self-esteem
- poor judgment
- depression

Family.....

Withdrawing from family life;

Starting arguments;

Negative attitude;

Breaking the rules;

Being secretive;

Selling personal/family possessions;

Physical.....

- fatigue
- repeated health complaints
- red and glazed eyes
- lasting cough

TYPES OF DRUGS

Depressants: such as alcohol can cause a person to feel more relaxed and less inhibited. In large amounts, it can cause unconsciousness and possible death.

Minor tranquillisers: Are often prescribed to calm people down or help people sleep. They have the same general effects as depressants e.g benzodiazepines.

Opiates : Also known as narcotic analgesics, are strong painkillers that produce feelings of happiness (euphoria) and sleepiness. Morphine and heroin are examples of opiates with a high risk of overdose.

Stimulants: Are drugs that make people feel more awake, alert and energetic e.g Cocaine, amphetamines, nicotine, and caffeine are highly addictive.

Hallucinogens: Are drugs that produce strange and intense distortions of perception called hallucinations. These drugs include LSD (acid) and magic mushrooms.

Parents who talk to their teens about the dangers of drugs and alcohol, know what they are doing and who they are with, can and will reduce the chances of their children misusing substances.