

THE DANGERS OF DRUG USE



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Damaged Relationships: Using drugs can really get in the way of close relationships when people begin to value the drug more than those around them. People who use drugs may also withdrawal from relationships due to feeling shame and guilt.

Damage to Important Organs: there are several organs that are essential to keep living that can be damaged by drug use. Read more about the specific organs and how they're damaged on the next page.

Chronic Infections: Infections like HIV and Hepatitis C are likely to be acquired when using drugs due to the transfer of blood from person to person when using needles or even glass pipes.

Addiction/Withdrawal: Becoming dependent or addicted to a drug is always a risk. When you become dependent or addicted to a drug, you don't feel very well without it and may exhibit signs of withdrawal. Some cases are more serious than others. Symptoms of withdrawal can range from mild headaches to seizures and hospitalization.

Overdose: Perhaps the biggest danger associated with drug use is the risk of overdosing. Nearly every drug, including alcohol, carries a risk of overdosing. Drug overdose is extra dangerous as it can result in almost immediate death. Some substances require a lot more than others to cause an overdose – so be extra careful with the amount you use.

Risk Taking: When people use drugs, their minds are not the same as they are without the drugs which may lead them to take risks they normally wouldn't take.

SOME DRUGS ARE MORE DANGEROUS THAN OTHERS

	Upper/ Downer	Risk of Addiction	Risk of Getting HIV/Hep C	Risk of Overdose	Antidote to Overdose
Alcohol	↓	●	●	●	✓
Cocaine	↑	●	●	●	✗
Opioids	↓	●	●	●	✓
Marijuana	↓	●	●	●	✗
Meth	↑	●	●	●	✓
MDMA	↑	●	●	●	✗

● = Low ● = Moderate ● = High

SOME WAYS OF USING DRUGS ARE MORE DANGEROUS THAN OTHERS

More Dangerous ↑	Injection	is by far the most dangerous way to use drugs as you can get HIV and Hep C this way. Also, the risk of overdosing is higher because of how quickly the drugs enter the blood stream.
	Smoking	is dangerous because of how bad it is on the lungs. You can also get Hep C from sharing pipes.
	Snorting	you can injure the inside of your nasal passage by snorting but there's not many other risks.
Less Dangerous ↓	Eating/ Drinking	is the safest way to use drugs because they are broken down by the stomach acid and spread to the rest of the body slowly.

DRUGS ARE DANGEROUS TO OUR ORGANS



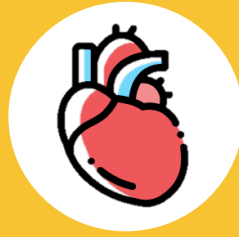
The Brain

Many drugs permanently alter brain structure and cause changes in behavior



The Liver

Alcohol in particular damages the liver, as does an excess of prescription drugs



The Heart

Some drugs can cause irregular heart beats or drastically changed heart rates (too fast or too slow).



The Lungs

Smoking physically damages lungs. Opioids damage brain stem which affects breathing



Your Veins

Injection drugs damage your veins and can lead to blockages causing strokes

PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM THE DANGERS OF DRUG USE

1 Don't Mix Drugs

Mixing more than one drug at a time increases risk of overdose. Uppers and downers don't cancel each other out but rather increase risk of overdose.

2 Use a Safer Route

On the previous page there is a list of routes of drug use and a ranking of the danger of different routes. Choose one of the safer routes if possible.

3 Be Aware of Your History

People who have overdosed before are the most likely to overdose again.

4 Don't Use Alone

Make sure you use with someone around that can call 911 if you overdose. Don't use in an isolated space.

5 Know the Quality of Your Supply

The actual amount of the active drug may vary depending on how much it has been cut or buffed, making it hard to determine how much drug you should take when using a new or different stash.

6 Don't Share Supplies

With supplies available in many towns, there is no reason to reuse or share supplies. Visit your local health clinic and ask for new supplies. This will lower your chance of getting Hepatitis C or HIV dramatically.

7 Use As Little As Possible

This is very important for people who have taken a break in their drug use – do not use as much as you did before. Use as little as possible to lessen your risk of overdose.

HOW DOES DRUG USE LEAD TO INFECTIONS

Partners

Impaired inhibitions can lead to contact with partners who may have STIs

Equipment

Equipment for drug use, like needles and pipes, can carry blood which contains viruses

Condoms

Impaired inhibitions can lead to forgetfulness in using condoms and unsafe sexual contact

Assault

Substance use is highly linked to sexual assault (through no fault of the victim)

Type

Impaired inhibitions can lead to types of sexual contact that carry a higher risk for transmitting infections

Immune System

Both drugs and alcohol weaken the immune system (which protects you from infections)

self care MENU

Self care means taking care of your own health and needs without the help of a professional (councilor, therapist, etc). There are many different ways to practice self care – find what works best for you.

TO START

Deep Breaths 2 minutes

Inhale for 5 seconds and exhale for 5 seconds. Repeat 10 times. Deep breathing helps to clear the head and calm you down.

Stretch 10 minutes

Take some time to stretch out problem areas – does your lower back hurt? Try a stretch that targets that area. Look up some full body stretches to do.

Listen to Music 5 minutes

Did you know that your blood flows more freely when music is playing? Music elevates the mood, reduces stress and even eases pain.

Journal 10 minutes

Journaling can help organize the thoughts in our head. Journaling can help if you're overwhelmed, emotional or looking for self-improvement. Look below for some prompts.

HANDS - ON

Get Crafty 30+ minutes

Doing a craft allows you to express yourself without finding words. It can help improve mood, maintain fine motor skills and gives a sense of accomplishment.

Cook/Bake 30+ minutes

Cooking and baking, similar to crafting, allow you to focus on a task and provides a sense of accomplishment. As a bonus, some people forget to eat so cooking/baking can provide nourishment as well as something to distract the mind with.

MAINS

Spa Time 45+ minutes

Run a bath (add bubbles, salts, bath bombs, etc), do a facemask, clean your nails (paint them too!). Taking care of yourself can help you feel beautiful and confident – improving your mental well-being.

Get Outside 1 hour

There might be nothing better for your mental health than to spend some time in nature. Try a low impact activity like a picnic or a walk outside. Reconnecting with nature improves mood and health.

HOMMADE BATH BOMBS

What You'll Need:

- 1 Cup Baking Soda
- >1 Tsp Water
- ½ Cup Citric Acid
- ½ Cup Corn Starch
- ½ Cup Epsom Salt
- Food Colouring
- 8 – 15 Drops Essential Oils
- 2 ½ Tsp Melted Coconut Oil or Baby Oil



Steps:

- 1 Combine baking soda, citric acid, Epsom salt and corn starch. Wisk to remove any lumps
- 2 Stir together essential oil, oil and food colouring (1 – 3 drops)
- 3 VERY slowly pour the liquid into the dry ingredients. If it starts to fizz, slow down.
- 4 Lightly wed your hands with water and squeeze a handful of the bath bomb mixture tightly, like making a snowball. If it doesn't stick, use a little more water.

Fun Tip: Use plastic easter eggs to mold the bath bombs!

Journaling Prompts

Prompts for Feeling Overwhelmed

What is your biggest fear in this moment?
 What emotions are you feeling right now?
 What big situation or several small situations are causing you to feel overwhelmed?

Prompts for When You're Feeling Down

What are 3 good things that happened this week?
 What are ten things you are grateful for?
 What day was your favourite day ever and why?

Prompts for Self-Improvement

What is one thing you can do today that will make tomorrow easier?
 What are goals you have for the next day, week, month and year?
 What is preventing you from living your best life?

Fun Tip: Get a notebook and a pen you're excited to use!

Campfire Word Search

N H T S E R O F P L I X C J U Y A D
 C K Q H Z X S V N O B F S E K O M S
 S Y L E N G A J S U M M E R X F W H
 T G B V O T K C G D R Q A Z I O P C
 A X N D J E H S Y F N U B G L A T M
 R W T I U Q P G M C Z S O L B S H L
 S O F X K R N O I T A C A V E N U C
 H O S E A O L B S N R M J W D A Q Z
 V D G Y T P O X U M H U P S T C X I
 T A N J R G W C Q S O Z L F M K B J
 I P O T M A B H R V P R D X I S Y T
 B Z L C V S T A F O K G E N Q R S W
 E M A L F E M I T X O Y V S U N E P
 J U G P Q H R W U B R D K H Z L I K
 X E N S K C I T S G N I T S A O R F
 L V I R D T Z A Q P J H M U W G O Y
 F M S B L A N K E T X W L C O J T N
 D J Z W G M Y P H E R U T A N V S G

Words List

Blanket
 Bug Spray
 Campfire
 Chairs
 Flame
 Forest
 Guitar
 Hot Dogs
 Log
 Matches
 Nature
 Night
 Outdoor
 Roasting
 Sticks
 S'mores
 Smoke
 Sing Along
 Snacks
 Stars
 Stories
 Summer
 Vacation
 Wood



Bonus Word: Find a summer word not on the words list. Hint: it's a food and its 11 letters long.

I'M READY



"I'm Ready" is providing free HIV self-test kits to Canadians, shipped right to your door.

The HIV self-test kit involves a drop of your own blood and provides a result within minutes!

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