

Do your
children
know more
about drugs
than you?



for further information and advice call

FRANK

0800 77 66 00

Introduction

Many people worry about children becoming involved with drugs. They feel they don't know enough about drugs to help prevent them from coming to harm. Sorting out fact from fiction is often difficult.

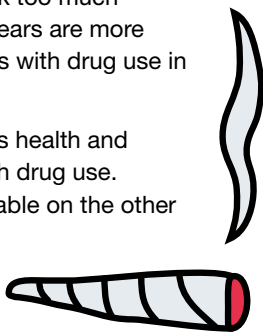
There are many stories in the media about young people drinking heavily or taking drugs leading to addiction, crime and death. It is important to remember that:

- most young people do not use drugs and, of those that do, most soon stop
- those who try illegal drugs do not usually suffer any long term harm to their health
- more young people experience problems from drinking too much alcohol than from taking drugs
- young people who drink too much alcohol in their teenage years are more likely to develop problems with drug use in later life.

However there are serious health and legal risks associated with drug use. These are set out in the table on the other side of this leaflet.

Why do young people use drugs?

Many parents don't understand why young people might want to try drugs. Many young people don't see drug taking as a big issue. Young people may be attracted to drugs in the same way that they are attracted to alcohol: because they enjoy the effects; it's what their friends do; they are bored; drugs may be easily available. There could be underlying worries or problems which could lead to young people taking drugs, but there are as many reasons as there are young people.



What can you do?

Educating yourself with the basic facts about drugs and alcohol will prepare you for the most important thing you can do... Talking with your family. And it is never too early, or too late, to start.

Talking to children and young people about drugs and alcohol may not be easy; however it is important to understand each others views. Do not accuse. Parents and children can both gain from having calm discussions. Also, remember this leaflet is very general. Every family is different, and the way you relate to your child is special to you.



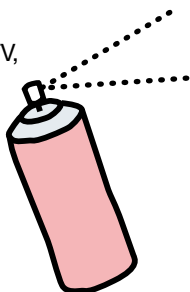
Discussing drugs and alcohol with children

Many parents feel that it is too early to talk to seven and eight year olds, or even younger, about drugs and alcohol. But there are benefits and these include:

- Helping to make it a subject they can raise.
- Making sure the information they have is accurate.
- They will know what your views are and will understand why you hold them (and vice versa).
- If they get into difficulties, they are more likely to talk to you about it.

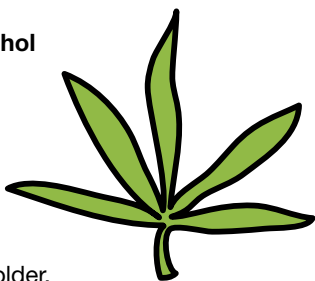
Some suggestions for bringing up the subject with your child (teaching moments):

- When you give your child some medicine, make sure they know that they should only take medicine if it is given to them by a responsible adult such as you or a trusted member of the family.
- If drugs are mentioned on TV, use the opportunity to have a discussion. Ask them what they know about drugs and the dangers.



Discussing drugs and alcohol with Young people

Build on the open and supportive approach suggested for children. If you can keep the discussion going, it will help you as your child gets older.



Remember the following:

- Before you discuss drugs and alcohol, decide what you want to say.
- Think about the best way of getting your message across.
- Discuss the issue, don't lecture.
- Try to put yourself in their shoes.
- Always try to make sure that they understand that it is their health and welfare you are interested in and that you are there to help and support them.

How do you know if your child is using drugs?

There are no easy answers. There are signs that might indicate there is a problem like changes in friends or interests, staying out late or not coming home. The best defence is your knowledge of your own child. You know when something is wrong. But don't jump to conclusions; they may be the wrong ones. However difficult, try to stay calm and act calmly.



What do you do if you suspect your child is using drugs?

Get all the information you can on the drugs they are using.

Get all the information you need. You will feel better for knowing and understanding what your child is experiencing.

Focus on your child, not on the drug

The drug may be part of a lifestyle. Try to understand your child's world. This will assist you in providing the kind of help they will need.

Don't lecture them

Experimenting with drugs can be dangerous. Lecturing them does not usually help the situation.



Don't blame yourself

Many young people experiment with drugs. Just because your child is using them it does not mean you have failed as a parent. Blaming yourself won't help.

Be supportive...

Your child may be experimenting or they may be seriously involved. They need your support to get through. So it is important to keep a positive attitude and be there for them.

Get help for your child

If you think the issue is serious, there is help available. Don't panic! Pick up some leaflets, or call the FRANK HELPLINE on 0800 77 66 00 for expert and impartial advice.

Get help and support for yourself

You will have worries and concerns yourself. So talk to your family and friends when ever possible and make sure you have support.

See the back of this leaflet for further sources of support and information

Alcohol

Other names include

Booze, Bevy, Drink, Ethyl Alcohol, Ethanol, Methylated Spirits, Beer, Cider, Sherry, Wine, Spirits, Liqueurs

What it looks like and how it is taken

- available in various liquid forms including attractively flavoured alcopops and cocktails
- mixing different types of alcoholic drinks can make it difficult to know how much has been consumed

The effects

- immediate effects dependent upon amount used, age, gender, physical build, mental state and other factors
- short term users feel relaxed with lowered inhibitions and reaction times and decision making affected
- heavier use can lead to emotional highs and lows, uncoordinated movement, blackouts and unconsciousness
- nausea and sickness at any point
- drinking alcohol may be an acceptable social pastime but it can lead to social and physical difficulties
- alcohol is a depressant

The health risks

- addiction
- liver damage
- delirium tremens (the 'shakes' or DTs)
- risk of suffocation from inhaling vomit when unconscious
- overdose is a particular risk if mixed with other drugs and can lead to death
- stomach disorders



Legal status

- can be sold to people over 18 yrs old in licensed premises.
- people over 14 yrs of age may visit licensed premises but cannot consume alcohol
- 16 yr olds can consume some alcohol (e.g. beer, cider or sherry) with a meal in a restaurant but not in a bar
- it's illegal to give alcohol to a child under the age of 5
- being drunk in a public place and driving under the influence of drink or drugs are offences in law

Tobacco

Fags, Rollies, Smokes, Cigges, Snuff, Snout

- leaves of the tobacco plant are dried then rubbed to produce a brown, flakey mixture
 - it can be bought loose as rolling tobacco or in ready made cigarettes
 - tobacco is most often smoked but some people chew it or sniff it (snuff)
-
- nicotine speeds up the heart rate and increases blood pressure
 - first time smokers often feel sick and dizzy
 - regular smokers say it helps them relax and feel less hungry

- tobacco is highly addictive
- smokers are more likely to get coughs and chest infections
- long term addiction can lead to cancer or heart disease
- smoking has been linked to the amputation of over 2000 limbs a year in the UK
- it is estimated that smoking contributes to 120,000 premature deaths in the UK every year
- other people breathing in second-hand cigarette smoke could end up with health problems



- It is illegal for shopkeepers to sell tobacco or tobacco products to anyone under the age of 18

Amphetamines

Speed, Whizz, Uppers, Amph, Billy, Sulphate, Crystal, Ice

- grey or white powder that is snorted, swallowed, smoked, injected or dissolved in a drink
 - tablets which are swallowed
 - crystals can be smoked
-
- excitement – the mind races and users can feel confident and energetic
 - while on the drug, some users become tense and anxious



- leaves users feeling tired and depressed for one or two days and sometimes longer
- high doses repeated over a few days may cause panic and hallucinations
- long-term use puts a strain on the heart
- heavy, long-term use can lead to mental illness
- sharing injecting equipment puts users at risk of dangerous infections like hepatitis B or C and HIV/AIDS

- class B (but class A if prepared for injection) (*Misuse of Drugs Act 1971*)

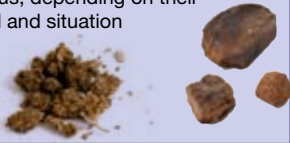
Cannabis

Marijuana, Draw, Blow, Weed, Puff, Shit, Hash, Ganja, Spliff, Wacky backy, Green, Skunk (a stronger form of cannabis)

- a solid, dark lump known as 'resin'
- leaves, stalks and seeds called 'grass'
- a sticky, dark oil
- can be rolled (usually with tobacco) in a spliff or joint, smoked on its own in a special pipe, or cooked and eaten in food

- users feel relaxed and talkative
- cooking the drug then eating it makes the effects more intense and harder to control
- may bring on a craving for food (this is often referred to as having the 'munchies')

- smoking it has similar risks to tobacco
- links to mental illness
- impairs the ability to learn and concentrate
- can leave people tired and lacking energy
- users may lack motivation and feel apathetic
- can make users paranoid and anxious, depending on their mood and situation



- class B (*Misuse of Drugs Act 1971*)



Cocaine & crack

Cocaine

Coke, Charlie, Snow, C

Crack (a smokeable form of cocaine)

Rock wash, Stone

- **Cocaine:** white powder that is snorted up the nose, sometimes dissolved and injected

- **Crack:** small raisin-sized crystals which are smoked



- sense of well-being, alertness, confidence
- cocaine effects last at least 30 minutes

- users are often left craving more
- crack has the same effects as cocaine, but with a more intense and shorter 'high' of about 5 to 10 minutes.

- cocaine and crack are addictive
- leave users feeling tired and depressed for one or two days and sometimes longer
- can cause chest pain and heart problems that can be fatal
- heavy use can cause convulsions
- a habit can be expensive and hard to control
- crack and cocaine carry the same risks, but as the high can be so intense, crack use is even more difficult to control
- sharing equipment puts users at risk of infections like hepatitis B or C and HIV/AIDS


- class A (*Misuse of Drugs Act 1971*)

Ecstasy

E, Doves, XTC, Disco biscuits, Echoes, Hug drug, Burgers, Fantasy,
Chemical name: MDMA (currently many tablets contain MDEA, MDA, MBDB)

- tablets of different shapes, size and colour (but often white) which are swallowed

- users feel alert and in tune with their surroundings
- sound, colour and emotions seem much more intense
- users may dance for hours
- the effects last from three to six hours
- can cause anxiety




- can leave users feeling tired and depressed for days
- risk of overheating and dehydration if users dance energetically without taking breaks or drinking enough fluids (users should sip about a pint of non-alcoholic fluid such as fruit juice, sports drinks or water every hour)
- use has been linked to liver and kidney problems
- some experts are concerned that use of ecstasy can lead to brain damage causing depression in later life

- class A (*Misuse of Drugs Act 1971*)

Gases, glues & aerosols

Products such as lighter gas refills, aerosols containing products such as hairspray, deodorants & air fresheners, tins or tubes of glue, some paints, thinners and correcting fluids

- sniffed or inhaled into the lungs
- gas products are sometimes squirted directly into the back of the throat



- effects feel similar to being very drunk
- users feel thick-headed, dizzy, giggly and dreamy
- users may hallucinate
- effects don't last very long, but users can remain intoxicated all day by repeating the dose

- nausea, vomiting, black-outs and heart problems that can be fatal
- squirting gas products down the throat can cause instant death – even on first use
- risk of suffocation if the substance is inhaled from a plastic bag over the head
- accidents can happen when the user is high because their senses are affected
- long-term abuse of glue can damage the brain, liver and kidneys

- it is illegal for shopkeepers to sell gas lighter refills to anyone under 18, and it is illegal to sell gases, glues and aerosols to under-18s, or to people acting for them, if they suspect the product is intended for abuse

Heroin

Smack, Brown, Horse, Gear, Junk, H, Jack, Scag

- brownish-white powder which is smoked, snorted or dissolved and injected

- small doses give the user a sense of warmth and well-being
- larger doses can make them drowsy and relaxed

- heroin is highly addictive (even when smoked)
- users who form a habit may end up taking the drug just to feel normal
- excessive amounts can result in overdose, coma and in some cases death
- injecting can damage veins
- sharing injecting equipment puts users at risk of dangerous infections like hepatitis B or C and HIV/AIDS



- class A (*Misuse of Drugs Act 1971*)

LSD & magic mushrooms, hallucinogens

LSD

Acid, Trips, Tabs, Blotters, Microdots, Dots

Magic mushrooms

'shrooms, Mushies

LSD

- 1/4 inch squares of paper, often with a picture on one side, which are swallowed. Microdots and dots are tiny tablets

Magic mushrooms

- these mushrooms are eaten raw, dried, cooked in food, or stewed into a tea

- effects are known as a 'trip' and can last for eight to 12 hours
- users will experience their surroundings in a very different way
- sense of movement and time may speed up or slow down
- objects, colours and sounds may be distorted
- **magic mushrooms:** similar effects to LSD, but the trip is often milder and shorter (about four hours)

- once a trip starts it cannot be stopped
- users may have a 'bad trip', which can be terrifying
- 'flashbacks' may be experienced where parts of a trip are re-lived some time after the event
- can complicate mental health problems
- magic mushrooms can cause stomach pains, sickness and diarrhoea
- eating the wrong kind of mushroom can cause serious illness and even fatal poisoning

- class A (*Misuse of Drugs Act 1971*)

- magic mushrooms became class A in July 2005 even in their raw state if containing psilocybin



Ketamine

K, Special K, Super K, Vitamin K

- a white powder that is snorted or in tablet form or more rarely as a clear liquid which can be injected

- causes physical numbness
- causes hallucinations and out of body sensations
- trips can last for up to an hour, but the effects can be felt for hours after



- difficulty in co-ordination and speech
- panic attacks and depression
- temporary paralysis and feeling sick
- users risk injury because they may not realise that they are hurt due to the pain killing properties of Ketamine
- high doses can lead to death caused by unconsciousness and the inhalation of vomit, especially when taken with depressants such as alcohol
- users can also experience bladder problems such as an increased need to urinate, pain during urination or passing blood in the urine

- class C (*Misuse of Drugs Act 1971*)

Over-the-counter or prescribed

Pain killers, cold medication, hay fever remedies, tranquilizers, caffeine tablets, stimulants, depressants, amyl nitrate, butyl nitrate (poppers), steroids

- tablets, capsules or liquids that are swallowed, sometimes inhaled or injected



- will do what it says on the packet
- calm users and slow them down mentally
- give them a short term energy rush
- make them drowsy or sleepy

- if any medication is taken without medical advice you do not know what the side effects may be
- each individual may react differently depending on their own medical situation
- some of these drugs can be addictive
- many drugs or medicines pose a real risk, especially when mixed with alcohol or other drugs

- depending on the substance these are controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act, the Medicines Act or other regulations

Support and information

Adfam

Adfam is the voice of families affected by someone else's drug or alcohol use, and the leading national organisation providing support, information and services for these families. To find advice, information and family support services in your area, visit the Adfam website.

Adfam 020 7553 7640 www.adfam.org.uk

DrugScope

Comprehensive information on drugs and a local service finder.

DrugScope 020 7520 7550 www.drugscope.org.uk

National Family and Parenting Institute

Information for parents on family support services and advice about living with teenagers.

www.familyandparenting.org

Drinkline National Helpline

Provides information and help to callers worried about their own or someone else's drinking.

Drinkline 0800 9178282

Alcohol Concern

Comprehensive information on alcohol use and a local service finder.

020 7264 0510 www.alcoholconcern.org.uk



www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/dpf