

## Substance Abuse Definitions and Symptoms

The following pages list a definition, symptoms and effects of the most common substances of abuse. Substances not only affect your social behavior but can permanently damage your health. This is by no means a comprehensive listing of all substances that are abused.

### ALCOHOL - Abuse/ Dependency

#### Definition:

Alcoholism, also known as "alcohol dependence," is a disease that includes four symptoms:

- Craving: A strong need, or compulsion, to drink.
- Loss of control: The inability to limit one's drinking on any given occasion.
- Physical dependence: Withdrawal symptoms, such as nausea, sweating, shakiness, and anxiety, occur when alcohol use is stopped after a period of heavy drinking.
- Tolerance: The need to drink greater amounts of alcohol in order to "get high."

#### Symptoms:

- ❖ Cannot control drinking (Salience of drinking)
- ❖ Increased tolerance
- ❖ Withdrawal symptoms
- ❖ Relief or avoidance of withdrawal symptoms by further drinking
- ❖ Cravings
- ❖ Relapse

#### Effects:

- Elated mood
- Impaired judgment
- Anger (Belligerence)
- Impaired social and occupational functioning
- Mood swings (Mood liability)
- Brain Damage (Cognitive impairment)
- Reduced attention span
- Slurred speech
- In coordination
- Loss of balance (Unsteady gait)
- Non-functioning (Stupor)
- Coma
- Alcohol induced amnesia
- Hallucinations
- Depression and suicide

#### Effects on Alimentary Tract:

- Liver Damage: hepatitis, liver cirrhosis, liver cancer
- Gastritis
- Peptic Ulcer
- Esophageal Varices
- Pancreatitis

- Cancers of the mouth, pharynx and esophagus

## ***GHB - "Date Rape Drug"***

### **Definition:**

GHB (gammahydroxybutyrate or gammahydroxybutyric acid) is a fast-acting central nervous system depressant and anabolic steroid generally classed as a club drug because of its popularity among teens attending all-night dance parties (raves). It comes in powder, capsule, and liquid forms, with the liquid form being colorless, odorless, and slightly salty in taste.

GHB is an illegal substance used frequently as a recreational drug among youth attending raves, or all-night dance parties. Previously, GHB was marketed to bodybuilders and athletes as a health food product able to promote weight loss and muscle development. Health food stores and pharmacies also have sold GHB over the counter as a dietary supplement.

### **Psychological Effects:**

- ❖ Euphoria
- ❖ Relaxed
- ❖ Non-caring (Disinhibition)
- ❖ Drowsiness
- ❖ Confusion
- ❖ Hallucination
- ❖ Temporary amnesia
- ❖ Sleepwalking

### **Physical Effects:**

- Dizziness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Weakness
- Loss of peripheral vision
- Agitation
- Slowing of heart rate
- Lack of coordination
- Loss of balance (Unsteady gait)
- Urinary incontinence
- Seizure
- Respiratory depression
- Coma

## ***Methamphetamine -(Ice)***

### **Definition:**

Methamphetamine is a stimulant drug chemically related to amphetamine but with stronger effects on the central nervous system. Street names for the drug include "speed," "meth," and "crank." Methamphetamine is used in pill form, or in powdered form by snorting or injecting. Crystallized methamphetamine known as "ice," "crystal," or "glass," is a smokable and more powerful form of the drug.

**Symptoms:**

- ❖ Worry (Anxiety)
- ❖ Elated mood
- ❖ Agitation
- ❖ Panic
- ❖ Irritated
- ❖ Paranoid state
- ❖ Psychosis

**Effects:**

- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Insomnia
- Rapid heart rate (Tachycardia)
- Increased blood pressure
- Muscle twitching
- Altered body temperature (Hypothermia)
- Irregular heart (Cardiac arrhythmia)
- Increased blood pressure
- Heart failure
- Stroke

## ***Benzodiazepines***

**Definition:**

Benzodiazepines are medicines that help relieve nervousness, tension, and other symptoms by slowing the central nervous system. Benzodiazepines are a type of anti-anxiety drugs. While anxiety is a normal response to stressful situations, some people have unusually high levels of anxiety that can interfere with everyday life. For these people, benzodiazepines can help bring their feelings under control. The medicine can also relieve troubling symptoms of anxiety, such as pounding heartbeat, breathing problems, irritability, nausea, and faintness.

**Withdrawal Reaction of Benzodiazepine:**

- ❖ Tremor
- ❖ Fatigue
- ❖ Loss of appetite
- ❖ Nausea and vomiting
- ❖ Restlessness
- ❖ Worry (Anxiety)
- ❖ Headache and muscle pain
- ❖ Depression
- ❖ Increased blood pressure
- ❖ Palpitation
- ❖ Insomnia
- ❖ 1 Poor memory
- ❖ 1 Impaired attention
- ❖ 1 Delusion

- ❖ 1 Suspiciousness
- ❖ 1 Convulsion
- ❖ 1 Loss of consciousness

**Psychological Effects:**

- Risk of dependency
- Confusion
- Loss of memory (Amnesia)

**Physiological Effects:**

- No function (Sedation)
- Dizziness
- Respiratory depression
- Accidents, e.g., traffic accidents, falls

## *Heroin*

**Definition:**

Heroin is an addictive drug, and its use is a serious problem in America. Recent studies suggest a shift from injecting heroin to snorting or smoking because of increased purity and the misconception that these forms are safer.

Heroin is processed from morphine, a naturally occurring substance extracted from the seedpod of the Asian poppy plant. Heroin usually appears as a white or brown powder. Street names for heroin include "smack," "H," "skag," and "junk."

**Psychological Effects:**

- ❖ Respiratory depression
- ❖ Nausea and vomiting
- ❖ Constipation
- ❖ Loss of appetite
- ❖ Weight loss
- ❖ Increased risk of having infections
- ❖ Increased risk of intrauterine death, stillbirth, low birth weight and opiate withdrawal symptoms in the newborn.

**Psychological Effects of Intravenous Injection:**

- Swelling, inflammation (Cellulitis)
- Sores (Pustules)
- Inflammation/veins (Vasculitis)
- Blood clot (Thrombosis)
- Myositis
- Enlarged, inflamed weak heart (Endocarditis)
- Death
- Hepatitis B, C and HIV can be transmitted through sharing of needles or syringes.

## *MARIJUANA -(Cannabis)*

### **Definition:**

Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug in the United States. A dry, shredded green/brown mix of flowers, stems, seeds, and leaves of the hemp plant *Cannabis sativa*, it usually is smoked as a cigarette (joint, nail), or in a pipe (bong). It also is smoked in blunts, which are cigars that have been emptied of tobacco and refilled with marijuana, often in combination with another drug. Use also might include mixing marijuana in food or brewing it as a tea.

As a more concentrated, resinous form it is called hashish and, as a sticky black liquid, hash oil. Marijuana smoke has a pungent and distinctive, usually sweet-and-sour odor. There are countless street terms for marijuana including pot, herb, weed, grass, widow, ganja, and hash, as well as terms derived from trademarked varieties of cannabis, such as Bubble Gum®, Northern Lights®, Juicy Fruit®, Afghani #1®, and a number of Skunk varieties.

### **Symptoms:**

- ❖ Loss of memory (Amnesia)
- ❖ Impaired concentration
- ❖ Distorted perception
- ❖ Paranoid reaction
- ❖ Hallucination
- ❖ Avoident (Depersonalization)
- ❖ Lack of motivation - chronic cannabis syndrome (*also known as motivational syndrome*)
- ❖ Muddled thinking
- ❖ Panic
- ❖ Depression
- ❖ Schizophrenia
- ❖ Confusion (Dementia)
- ❖ Risk of dependency

### **Physical Effects:**

- Dry mouth
- Increased appetite
- Rapid heart rate (Tachycardia)
- Decreased blood pressure

## *MDMA - Ecstasy*

### **Definition:**

Ecstasy is a slang or street name for Methylenedioxymethamphetamines (MDMA) It is a synthetic, psychoactive mind-altering drug with hallucinogenic and amphetamine (stimulant) like effects. It alters perception of time and distance. MDMA was first developed in 1914 as an appetite suppressant or diet drug. It was a legal substance up until 1985. MDMA/ Ecstasy produces less

stimulation than cocaine or amphetamines and is taken for its hallucinogenic rather than its stimulant properties.

### **Psychological Effects:**

- ❖ Feeling relatedness to others
- ❖ Increased empathy
- ❖ Altered perception of time
- ❖ Increased libido, but diminished ability to achieve arousal and orgasm.
- ❖ Increased emotional expressiveness
- ❖ Reduced ability and desire to perform mental tasks
- ❖ Anxiety
- ❖ Restlessness
- ❖ High state of anxiety (Euphoria)
- ❖ Reduced defensiveness and decreased aggression
- ❖ Disinhibition and increased awareness of emotion
- ❖ Perceptual distortion and hallucination
- ❖ Confusion
- ❖ Flashback
- ❖ Paranoid psychosis
- ❖ Hangover Effects: depressed mood, loss of energy, sleepiness, fatigue and lack of motivation.

### **Physical Effects:**

- Restlessness
- Teeth-grinding
- Tightening of jaw
- Loss of appetite
- Sweating
- Hot flashes
- Tremor
- Goose Bumps
- Increased or decreased body temperature
- Severe changes in blood pressure
- Increased heart rate
- Arrhythmia
- Acute renal failure
- Liver toxicity
- Intracerebral hemorrhage (Brain clot)
- Dehydration
- Death