

What are Depressants?

Depressants are drugs which slow down the body's central nervous system (CNS). They slow down or interrupt messages sent both to and from the brain.



What does that actually mean?

- Depressants slow down both mind and body functions, like the ability to think, concentrate, and make decisions.

- They numb the senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling).
- They slow down heartbeat and breathing.
- They can also make it difficult to do simple things like walk or talk.



Is there anything else I should know?

YES!

- Depressants are addictive. That means people can become dependent on them.
- They can also cause unconsciousness or death if an overdose is taken!



So why do people use them?

- Some people use depressants to calm down or forget their problems when they are:
- Others like the temporary euphoria or extremely positive feelings these drugs can produce.



BUT... BUT... BUT... BUT... BUT... BUT... BUT... BUT... BUT...

- Depressants **WON'T** solve problems!
- Depressants **WON'T** make problems go away!
- Depressants **WON'T** make people feel good in the end!

Depressants

There are different kinds of depressants, including...

- Alcohol ([See Alcohol Learning Center.](#))
- Barbiturates
- Inhalants
- Opiates (also called Narcotics)
- Tranquilizers
- Over-the-counter cough medicines



How can you tell if someone is abusing depressants?

Most people don't carry a sign telling you they are abusing depressants but there are some signs you can look for:



Alcohol

- Slurred speech
- Alcohol odor on breath
- Lack of coordination
- Runny nose
- Chemical odor on breath
- Confusion
- Dizziness
- Hallucinations
- Skin irritation around nose and mouth

Inhalants

- Drowsiness
- Confusion
- Mood swings
- Lethargy (exhaustion, having no energy)

Tranquilizers

Barbiturates

- Slurred speech
- Drowsiness
- Confusion
- Lack of coordination
- Nausea
- Reduced hunger, thirst, & pain
- Slurred speech
- Needle marks on arms
- Lethargy

Opiates

Over-the-counter Cough Medicines

- Over-the-counter cough medicines contain dextromethorphan (known as "dm" or "dxm"), a cough suppressant. At high doses this can cause:
- Lack of coordination
 - Confusion
 - Mood swings
 - Drowsiness
 - Hallucinations
 - Delusions
- * Like all depressants, dextromethorphan can cause fatal overdose.

Remember!

These are only guidelines.
ANY change in behavior is worth checking out!!

Inhalants

Inhalants are chemicals which can be sniffed into the body or huffed through the mouth and nose, but aren't supposed to be. All 4 types slow down the central nervous system.

1) Solvents:



3) Nitrites:

Amyl Nitrite
Butyl Nitrite



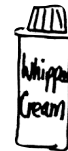
2) Aerosols:



hairspray
deodorant
cooking oil
spray paints

4) Nitrous Oxide:

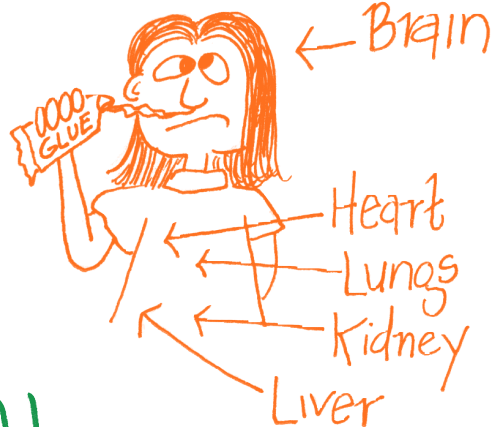
"whippets"



What happens when people inhale one of these chemicals?

In a matter of seconds (1...2...3) it affects....

It's like poison going into the body, changing the way the brain works, slowing the flow of oxygen in the bloodstream, and replacing it with the chemical. It makes people feel dizzy, drunk, and numb all at the same time. Sounds like fun!



NOT!!



- Slowed reflexes
- Double vision
- Ringing in ears
- Hallucinations (hearing or seeing things that aren't real)
- Delusions (believing things that aren't real)
- Long-term damage to vital organs
- Tolerance
- Suffocation
- Sudden Sniffing Death (SSD)

Tranquilizers

Tranquilizers are the most widely prescribed group of drugs in the U.S. They are also known as “sedatives” because they sedate or help people calm down.

Tranquilizers are prescribed by doctors primarily to reduce anxiety.

They also relax people and help them fall asleep. But this does not mean they are safe!!



People who use tranquilizers can become physically and psychologically dependent on them.



How are they generally taken?

Types:

Swallowed



Valium, Librium, Xanax, Ativan, Tranxene, Klonopin, Serax



SLANG

“tranqs,” “vals,” “xannies,”
“vitamin V,” “Vs,” “bars”

Warning!

Drinking alcohol while on tranquilizers can be DANGEROUS!
Since the liver tries to break down alcohol first, tranquilizers can circulate in the body longer, having a double or even triple effect!

Remember:

Laughter is a tranquilizer with no negative side effects!

Illegal Tranquilizers

Some tranquilizers are not legally available in the U.S. including:

Methaqualone — “ludes”
Rohypnol — “Roofies”
GHB — “Liquid X”

These are pills or capsules available in other countries which have produced unconsciousness, coma, and death. They are more dangerous if combined with alcohol.

More about “Roofies”

Because “Roofies” are very powerful, it only takes a small amount to cause sedation. At some parties, young people have had crushed up “Roofies” added to soft drinks without their knowledge. This decreases their ability to think, act, make decisions, and even remember. When this happens, others can take advantage of them. People can easily be robbed, beaten up, or worse!

And GHB — Another Date Rape Drug

GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyrate or gamma-hydroxybutyric acid) is a clear liquid with very little taste or smell.

It can be put into people's drinks without their knowledge, shutting down the parts of the brain that deal with thinking and feeling. That means someone could be raped ... or robbed ... and not even know how it happened !!

Barbiturates

Barbiturates are used by doctors to treat epilepsy (seizures). They cause sleep and reduced anxiety. They are also used in some pain relievers.

Barbiturates are addictive. Because people often use them incorrectly, they also are a major factor in many accidental overdoses.

Just because a doctor prescribes them doesn't mean you can't get hooked on them !!



How are they generally taken ?

Swallowed



Snorted



Injected



Types:

Seconal, Nembutal, Phenobarbital, Amobarbital, Butalbital, Pentobarbital



SLANG

“barbs,” “downers,” “red devils,” “blue devils,” “goofballs,” “yellow jackets,” “sleeping pills”

Warning!

Combining alcohol and barbiturates can be

DEADLY!

... Just like combining alcohol and tranquilizers!

Opiates

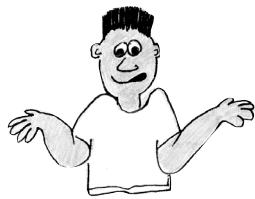
Opiates are also known as “narcotics.” Some opiates like opium, Morphine, Codeine, and heroin are derived from the opium poppy plant. Others like Demerol, Methadone, Percodan, Vicodin, Oxycontin, Dilaudid, and other prescribed medications are synthetic (that means man-made) or semi-synthetic. These drugs are very effective pain killers. If it is necessary, doctors sometimes prescribe some of them, in small doses, for a short period of time.



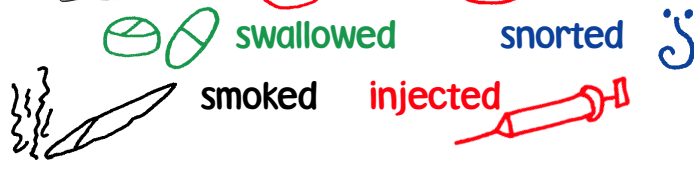
Heroin is NOT prescribed by doctors in the USA... but it can be obtained illegally and is a source of drug abuse in our country!



Heroin is **HIGHLY ADDICTIVE** and withdrawing from it is extremely painful, both physically and emotionally. That's why it is very hard for people to quit using it.



How are opiates generally taken?



Anytime people share needles or other equipment to inject drugs, they increase the risk of transmitting the HIV virus which can cause AIDS. Sharing a needle - even ONCE - puts one at risk for getting AIDS!!

Types:



- Opium..... “O.P.,” “Dopium,” “Guma,” “Zero”
- Morphine..... “morph”
- Codeine “school boy,” “dean”
- Heroin “H,” “horse,” “junk,” “smack,” “dope”
- Methadone “dolly”
- Percodan..... “percs”
- Vicodin..... “vikes”
- Oxycontin “Oxy,” “OC,” “cotton”

Some Questions About Depressants

Q Why do some people use depressants?

A To feel good, calm down, relax, induce sleep, kill pain (physical or emotional), or escape reality. Also because of negative feelings and low self-esteem.



Q Since depressants make it difficult to concentrate, walk, or talk, what everyday activities become dangerous?

A Things like driving a car, riding a bike or motorcycle, crossing the street...

Q Can people overdose on depressants?

A Yes. Unconsciousness or death can occur with high doses or, especially with Oxycontin, even with small doses if people are not used to taking the drug.

Q Why is taking alcohol plus another depressant at the same time extremely dangerous?

A They multiply each other's effects, increasing the potential harm. Also, the outcome is usually unexpected and uncontrollable, like $1 + 1 = 4$

Q Why do kids use inhalants?

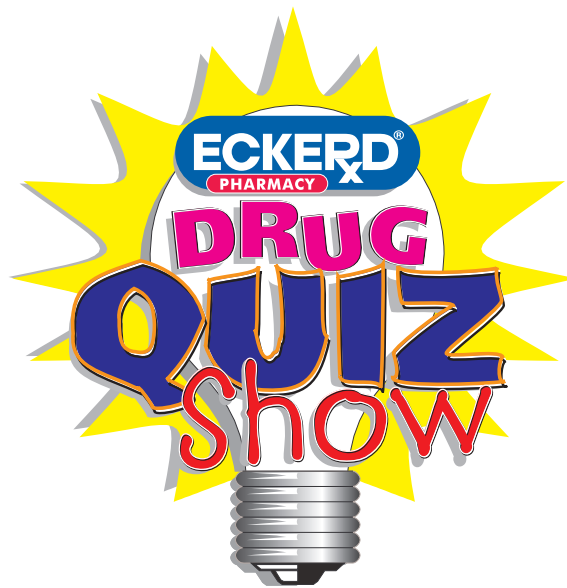
A Many inhalants are legal items which people use in ways they were never intended. Since they can be bought in stores, these items are often cheap and easy to get. Also, because they're sold legally, many kids think they are not dangerous. **WRONG!**

Q What are some things you can do without using drugs, when you're uptight, can't fall asleep, or are feeling sad?

A Exercise, talk to someone, read, do relaxation exercises, take some deep breaths, play a sport, check out the [Stress Learning Center](#), call a friend...



Having fun with a friend can
kill pain better than any drug!!



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