

# Prescribe Safe

## SUBSTANCE USE GUIDE

Help for friends and family members.

### FIND INSIDE:

- Information on alcohol and commonly used drugs
- How to recognize when someone has a problem and how to get them help
- How to respond to an overdose



Prescribe Safe

Montage Health



## **How do I know if someone has a problem with drugs or alcohol?**

If someone starts showing any of the following, consider substance use may be an issue:

- Often missing/late for work, school, or other obligations
- No longer enjoying or participating in usual activities
- Secretive or unusual behavior
- Multiple unexpected cancellations of plans/obligations
- Decline in hygiene or grooming

If people are using drugs/alcohol, these behaviors suggest that their use may be a problem:

- Using more than planned or not being able to stop once started
- Using in dangerous situations (such as driving)
- Continued use after physical, legal, or social problems related to use (such as health problems, DUI, interpersonal violence)
- Increased amount of time spent obtaining or using the substance
- Getting sick when they stop using the substance (withdrawal)



## How to recognize an overdose.

Overdoses will look different based on the substance or substances that someone is using.

Here are signs and symptoms generally seen in an overdose:

- Unusual sleepiness or not able to awaken
- Confusion, agitation, or unexpected aggressive behavior
- Very slow or very fast heartbeat
- Breathing that is slow or absent
- Skin that is cold/sweaty or clammy
- Nails and lips may appear blue
- Pupils may be very small or very large
- Look for drugs or alcohol nearby (pill bottles, alcohol containers, syringes, etc.)





## What to do in case of an overdose.

### CALL 911

- If you have naloxone and understand how to use it, administer naloxone while waiting for the ambulance
- It is important to know how to use naloxone before you use it. Read the instructions on the box and/or visit [montagehealth.org/prescribewise](https://montagehealth.org/prescribewise) to view a training video
- If the person is unresponsive, roll them on their side while waiting for 911





## **How to talk to your loved one when you are concerned that they might have a problem**

- Choose the right time to speak — a time they have not been using drugs or alcohol
- Express your concerns without making accusations
- Specify what you noticed that made you worried
- Prepare for strong reactions and stay calm
- Reinforce how much you care about them and how you feel about drug and/or alcohol use
- Get help from experts. Contact school officials, family doctors, and resources on the following pages

# Alcohol

BOOZE, BREW, LIQUOR, SAUCE



## WHAT DOES IT DO?

Alcohol is a general depressant and decreases brain function. Depending on the dose, it can cause poor decision-making, sleepiness, or unresponsiveness.



## HOW IT IS DANGEROUS?

- Alcohol causes poor decision-making leading to unsafe behavior such as drinking and driving, unsafe sex, and accidents or injuries
- At high levels, alcohol will decrease breathing and slow heart rate to the point a person can become unresponsive and die. The risk increases when mixed with other substances
- Chronic, heavy alcohol use leads to liver damage and may result in permanent liver failure
- Rapidly stopping heavy alcohol use can result in seizures, confusion, and death
- Alcohol use can lead to addiction
- Slows reaction time increasing the risk of injuries and accidents



## WHAT DOES AN OVERDOSE LOOK LIKE?

- People who have overdosed on alcohol are very sleepy or unresponsive. They may have slow or absent breathing and heart rate

HELP

## WHAT TREATMENTS ARE AVAILABLE?

- There are medications to help with alcohol-use disorder
- Mutual support groups (Alcoholics Anonymous)
- Counseling and treatment programs

# Benzodiazepines

ALPRAZOLAM, XANAX, XANNIES, XANS, CLONAZEPAM, KLONOPIN, DIAZEPAM, VALIUM, BENZOS, DOWNERS, TRANKS



## WHAT DO THEY DO?

Similar to the effects of alcohol, benzodiazepines are a general depressant and decrease brain function.



## HOW ARE THEY DANGEROUS?

- Benzodiazepines act very similar to alcohol in the brain with poor decision-making leading to unsafe behavior such as intoxicated driving, unsafe sex, and accidents or injuries
- At high levels benzodiazepines will decrease breathing and slow the heart rate to the point a person can become unresponsive and die. The risk increases when mixed with other substances
- Rapidly stopping benzodiazepines can result in seizures and death
- When purchased on the street, they are usually laced with another drug which can increase risk
- Benzodiazepine use can lead to addiction
- Slows reaction time increasing the risk of injuries and accidents



## WHAT DOES AN OVERDOSE LOOK LIKE?

- People who have overdosed on benzodiazepines are very sleepy or unresponsive. They may have slow or absent breathing and heart rate



## WHAT TREATMENTS ARE AVAILABLE?

- Doctors can prescribe medications to help people stop using benzodiazepines or decrease use to a safe level
- Mutual support groups
- Counseling and treatment programs

# Marijuana

CANNABIS, WEED, POT, GRASS, REEFER, GANJA, MARY JANE, BLUNT, JOINT



## WHAT DOES IT DO?

Marijuana acts on multiple sites in the brain and disrupts normal brain function. In most circumstances, marijuana acts as a sedative and decreases brain activity



## HOW IS IT DANGEROUS?

- Marijuana smoke deposits more tar in the lungs and also has 50-70% more cancer-causing substances than tobacco smoke
- Chronic marijuana use can be associated with severe mental health disturbances such as schizophrenia, anxiety, and depression
- When purchased on the street, it may be laced with another drug which can increase risk
- Marijuana use can lead to addiction
- Slows reaction time increasing the risk of injuries and accidents



## WHAT DOES AN OVERDOSE LOOK LIKE?

- Marijuana alone is unlikely to cause a fatal overdose
- High doses can cause paranoia, anxiety, panic attacks, fast heart rate, hallucinations, and agitation



## WHAT TREATMENTS ARE AVAILABLE?

- There are limited medication options for treatment
- Mutual support groups
- Counseling and treatment programs



# Opioids

HYDROCODONE/VICODIN/VIKES, OXYCODONE/OXYS, PERCOCET/PERCS, MORPHINE, CODEINE/SIZZURP/PURPLE DRANK, FENTANYL, OXYMORPHONE

Some are prescription medications. Many are sold on the street as illegal drugs and often are added to street pills without the user's knowledge.



## WHAT DO THEY DO?

Opioids are used medically to relieve pain. Even when used as prescribed by a doctor, they are a general depressant that decreases brain function.



## HOW ARE THEY DANGEROUS?

- Opioids have the highest risk of any substance to cause a fatal overdose. They decrease breathing, and during an overdose, breathing stops. Risk of death increases when mixed with any other substances, but a single dose of an opiate can be enough to kill an adult
- Regular use leads to increased perception of pain, chronic abdominal pain, constipation, nausea, and mood changes
- When purchased on the street, they are usually laced with another drug which can increase risk
- Opiate use can lead to addiction
- Rapidly stopping opiates can result in vomiting, diarrhea, chills, and abdominal pain
- Slows reaction time increasing the risk of injuries and accidents



## WHAT DOES AN OVERDOSE LOOK LIKE?

- Extreme drowsiness or inability to awaken
- Small pupils
- Decreased or absent breathing
- Blue or purple discoloration to lips or fingers



## WHAT TREATMENTS ARE AVAILABLE?

- There are medications to treat opiate use disorder (medications for addiction treatment, MAT)
- Mutual support groups
- Counseling and treatment programs

# Stimulants

METHAMPHETAMINE, METH, SPEED, CRYSTAL, CRANK, ICE, UPPERS, DEXIES, COCAINE, COKE, CRACK, BLOW, SNOW, BUMP



## WHAT DO THEY DO?

- Stimulants increase brain activity, and depending on the dose, they can cause hyperactivity of the brain
- Depending on the dose stimulants can cause a feeling of increased attention including agitation and severe hallucinations



## HOW ARE THEY DANGEROUS?

- Severely increased brain activity can lead to hallucinations, seizures and strokes
- Increased heart activity is associated with heart attacks
- Stimulants severely interfere with judgement leading to potentially fatal injuries and accidents
- Hallucinations from stimulants can cause people to be violent and aggressive
- When purchased on the street they can be laced with another drug which can increase risk
- Stimulant use can lead to addiction



## WHAT DOES AN OVERDOSE LOOK LIKE?

- Fast heart rate
- Dilated pupils
- Sweaty skin
- Confusion, agitation, hallucinations
- Violent activity
- Chest pain and difficulty breathing



## WHAT TREATMENTS ARE AVAILABLE?

- There are limited medication options for treatment
- Mutual support groups
- Counseling and ongoing treatment programs

# Other substances

HALLUCINOGENS AND PARTY DRUGS, MUSHROOMS, SHROOMS, LSD, ACID, ECSTASY, MDMA, MOLLY, INHALANTS, NITROUS



## WHAT DO THEY DO?

Overall this group of substances has varied effects. In general, they alter the person's perception – some more than others.



## HOW ARE THEY DANGEROUS?

- These drugs alone are less likely to cause a fatal overdose
- High doses cause paranoia, anxiety, panic attacks, fast heart rate, hallucinations, and agitation
- The confusion and agitation can lead to injuries and accidents
- When purchased on the street, they can be laced with another drug which can increase risk
- These substances may also be addictive and can alter brain function long term



## WHAT DOES AN OVERDOSE LOOK LIKE?

- Paranoia
- Anxiety/panic attacks
- Hallucinations/agitation
- Fast heart rate
- Dilated pupils

HELP

## WHAT TREATMENTS ARE AVAILABLE?

- There are limited medication options for treatment
- Mutual support groups
- Counseling and treatment programs

# RESOURCES

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**United Way Monterey County resource line**

**Call 211 | [211montereycounty.org](https://211montereycounty.org)**

**Poison Control | (800) 222-1222**

**Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula**

■ **Outpatient Behavioral Health Counseling Services**

(831) 625-4600

■ **Alcohol and drug recovery services | (831) 373-0924**

[montagehealth.org](https://montagehealth.org)

**Community Human Services**

■ **Outpatient Treatment Center for Substance Abuse**

(831) 658-3811

■ **Drug and Alcohol Intervention Services for Youth**

(DAISY) | (831) 233-9029

[chservices.org](https://chservices.org)

**Door to Hope**

(831) 758-0181 | [doortohope.org](https://doortohope.org)

**Monterey County Behavioral Health | (888) 258-6029**

■ **Mobile response team for youth**

(831) 687-4379 | [co.monterey.ca.us](https://co.monterey.ca.us)

**Nar-Anon Family Group**

[naranoncentralca.org](https://naranoncentralca.org) | [outreach@naranoncentralca.org](mailto:outreach@naranoncentralca.org)

**Narcotics Anonymous**

[na.org](https://na.org) | Monterey (831) 624-2055 | Salinas (831) 758-1630

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services**

(800) 662-HELP (4357) | [samhsa.gov](https://samhsa.gov)

**Sun Street Centers**

(831) 899-6577 | [sunstreetcenters.org](https://sunstreetcenters.org)

**Teen Challenge Monterey Bay**

(831) 722-2074 | [teenchallengemb.org](https://teenchallengemb.org)

**Valley Health Associates**

(831) 424-6655 | [valleyhealthassociates.com](https://valleyhealthassociates.com)

**Young People in Recovery (YPR)**

[youngpeopleinrecovery.org](https://youngpeopleinrecovery.org)

**[montagehealth.org/prescribesome](https://montagehealth.org/prescribesome)**