
Families and Drugs

A guide to drugs commonly used in South Africa

Trinity Children's Centre - September 2020



For more information on drugs and the impacts they have on families visit our website: <https://tccinterventionsteam.org/addictions-2/>

The information in this brochure is to help you recognise the different types of drugs and the impacts they have on your loved ones. Often an addict will admit to taking a lesser drug (such as dagga) to deflect your attention away from the fact they are taking stronger ones such as heroin or tik.

We will start with the signs to look out for and then list the most popular drugs together with descriptions. If you would like to get in touch with our team our contact details are at the end of the is leaflet. We would be happy to chat with you about your concerns.

Signs to Look For

Appearance

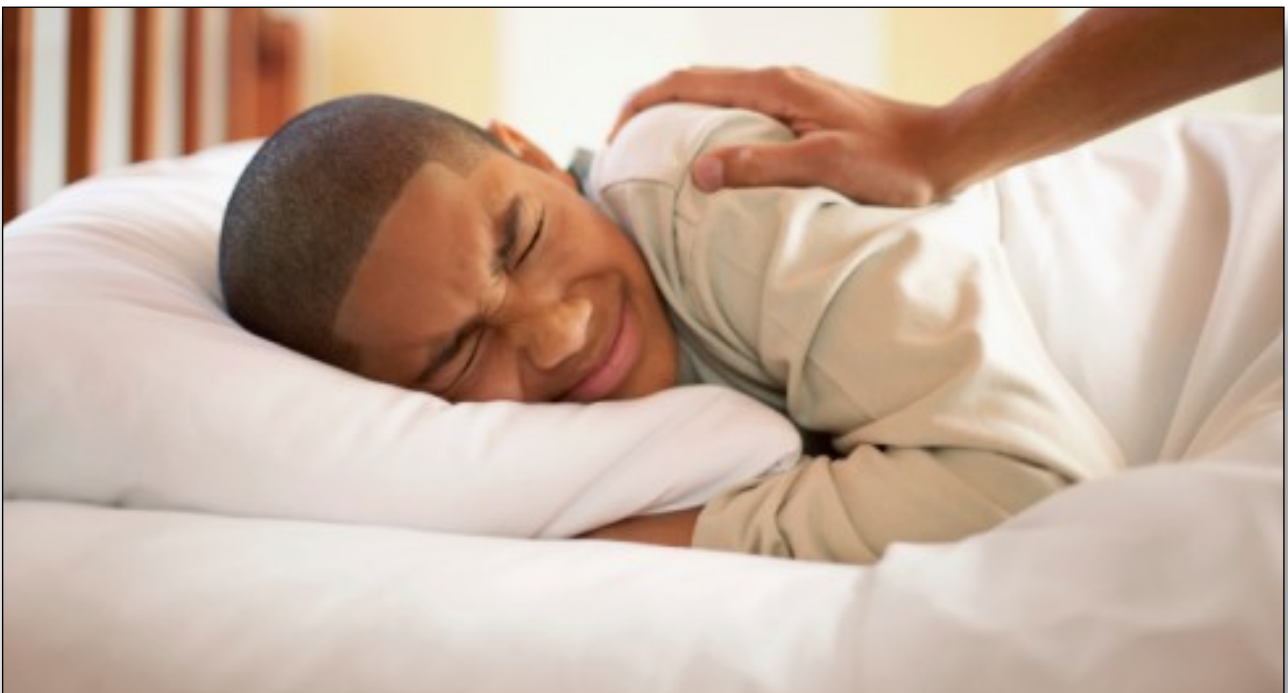
- Weight loss and a pale face
- Red eyes, with dark circles beneath
- Skin rashes
- Persistent cough and lots of colds
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Deterioration in personal hygiene
- Strange smells on them or clothing

Behaviour

- Always asking for money
- Not able to stay at school / keep a job
- New friends and being more secretive
- Mood swings (esp. aggression)
- Being alone more of the time
- Stop doing the thing they love
- Stealing from friends / family

Items to watch for

- Mouthwash, breath sprays and eye drops
- Bank bags, rolling papers and pieces of foil
- broken glass bottle necks, pipes of any sort
- Mirrors and razor blades
- Burns or stains on hands and clothing



Stimulants (Uppers)

Drugs

- Cocaine / Crack / Kat
- Tik
- Speed
- Ice
- Ecstasy

Effects

- Increased energy and sexual activity
- Faster speech and jumping from one topic to another
- Eating less
- Increased risk taking and unrealistic confidence

Withdrawal

*Generally short-lived and physical.
Users exaggerate symptoms to justify continuing.*

Depressants (Downers)

Drugs

- Alcohol
- Heroin
- Mandrax
- Inhalants

Effects

- Decreased energy and sexual activity
- Lack of co-ordination
- Eating less, and lower sex drive
- Increased sleeping and less alert

Withdrawal

Very physical and often requiring help (including medical assistance). Panic attacks are normal.

Hallucinogens

Drugs

- Dagga
- LSD

Effects

- Effects can be very mild and go unnoticed.
- May increase the chances of panic attacks
- May increase the likelihood of depression.

Withdrawal

These drugs are not physically addictive, but tolerance to the drug will develop over time.

Tik (Crystal Methamphetamine)

Tik and heroin are the top two presenting drugs in Mitchell's Plain right now.

Street Names: Speed, ice, choef, and straws

What is it? It is a stimulant that makes the heart beat faster and causes hallucinations. Often causes paranoia and violent outbursts.

How is it taken? The crystals are heated in a light bulb or a glass pipe and then breathed in. It may be injected or sniffed for a faster, more intense high. Users '*crash & binge*' (use a lot, go into withdrawal and then use again to stop the withdrawal symptoms).

Addiction: Tolerance develops quickly, so users need more and more, going on increasingly longer binges.

Withdrawal Symptoms

- Nausea
- Aggression
- Anxiety
- Stomach Cramps
- Drowsiness
- Depression
- Fatigue
- Cravings
- Back Pain
- Increased appetite



Cocaine / Crack

Street Names: Coke (Cocaine) and Rocks (Crack)

What is it? Cocaine is a bitter tasting white powder. It works on the pleasure centres of the brain. It is mixed with talc or teething powder to increase its quantity (approx 20% pure).

Crack is a crystal form of cocaine and is mixed with things like bicarb to a form a rock and (approx 90% pure, so more intense).

How is it taken? Cocaine is cut into lines and snorted through a banknote or a straw, whilst Crack is smoked through a glass or metal pipe. The rock is melted on a copper gauze and then inhaled.

Addiction Addiction is primarily psychological, and because the first hit is so pleasurable the addict is always chasing that first high.

Withdrawal Symptoms

- Increased cravings
- Anxiety & Depression
- Fatigue
- Aggression
- Nausea & Vomiting
- Muscle Pain



Kat / Khat

Street Names: Mirraa, Quat, Gat.

What is it? The artificial form is stronger (methcathinone) and is in powder form, whilst the original Kat is a leaf.

How is it taken? The leaves are chewed or made into a tea, whilst the powder is usually snorted or injected.

Addiction Addiction is rapid and daily use increases as a tolerance develops.

Withdrawal Symptoms

- Anxiety & Depression
- Irritability
- Lack of Energy.
- Trouble sleeping
- Trembling
- Trouble coping with life

Ecstasy (Amphetamine)

They are often cut with other substances including other drugs, rat poison & chalk.

Street Names: E, XTC, Domes, White Diamonds.

What is it? It is psychologically addictive, meaning the user is always seeking the 'party' high when they go clubbing or to enhance sex.

How is it taken? Usually swallowed as a tablet or capsule, but may be crushed and sniffed or dissolved into a liquid and then drunk.

Addiction Is not physically addictive, but it's effects can last up to 24 hours. Tolerance to the drug will develop over time.

Withdrawal Symptoms

- Anxiety & Depression
- Paranoia
- Trouble eating
- Trouble sleeping

Heroin (Benzodiazepines)

Tik and heroin are the top two presenting drugs in Mitchell's Plain right now.

Street Names: Unga.

What is it? Dealers mix methadone (pain killer) with various chemicals to make a white powder which is then cut with other things like talc to make it go further.

How is it taken? It can be injected, sniffed, inhaled or smoked.

Look for: *Constricted pupils, mood swings, constipation, dramatic personality changes, loss of appetite, dramatic weight loss, decreased sex drive and slurred speech.*

Addiction Physically and psychologically addictive. When stopping users feel like they are actually going to die - this is called turkying (going cold turkey).

Withdrawal Symptoms

- Cold & sweaty
- Trembling & shaking
- Short of breath / dizzy
- Pounding heart
- Stomach cramps
- Diarrhoea
- Muscular aches & pains
- Nausea and vomiting
- Feeling like death



Mandrax (Benzodiazepines)

Street Names: Buttons.

What is it? A tablet

How is it taken? The tablet is crushed, mixed with dagga and then smoked through a pipe or broken bottleneck. It can be swallowed or injected.

Addiction Tolerance is built up rapidly.

Withdrawal Symptoms

- Hangover type of feeling
- Irritability & aggression
- Trouble sleeping
- Change in appetite
- Anxiety & nerves

Tranquilisers (Benzodiazepines)

These are medications prescribed to relieve anxiety or for insomnia.

What is it? A tablet.

How is it taken? Taken as a tablet.

Addiction When prescribed by a doctor they are not normally taken for more than four weeks (due to their addictive nature). Stopping usage should always be done slowly and with the assistance of a doctor.

Withdrawal Symptoms

- Dizziness
- Panic attacks
- Dry mouth
- Sweating
- Memory loss
- Insomnia (sleep problems)

Inhalants

Breathable chemical vapours that produce a 'high'.

What is it? The most common are glue, petrol, cleaning fluids and nail polish remover.

How is it taken? It is spread on a cloth and placed over the mouth and nose else, placed in a paper bag then held tightly and breathed in.

Addiction Both physically and psychologically addictive.

Withdrawal Symptoms

- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Insomnia (sleep problems)
- Nervousness

Dagga (Marijuana / Cannabis)

A hallucinogen

Street Names Ganja, Pot, Weed, Dope, Spliff, Zol, Skyf, Grass.

What is it? Derived from hemp plants, with a variety of strengths.

How is it taken? Most commonly will be smoked, but can also be made into a tea or baked into cakes.

Addiction Psychologically addictive over a long period of time.

Withdrawal Symptoms

- Anxiety & Depression
- Irritability
- Trouble sleeping
- Cravings

The majority of the information detailed within this booklet is based on information provided by the Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre (www.drugcentre.org.za). If you need to speak to somebody here are some helpful numbers:



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