

## Drug Overview

*22 million Americans are affected by drug or alcohol problems each year  
(Partnership For A Drug-Free America)*

### Facts

- 26.5% of Americans believe **addiction is the most serious health problem** in America, ahead of heart disease, cancer and depression
- Over the past five years, there has been an overall decline in teen drug use

### Types of Drugs

There are many types of drugs, some of which are “recreational”, and some of which are “performance-enhancing”. **Recreational drugs** include those such as nicotine, alcohol, amphetamines, marijuana, ecstasy, cocaine/crack, heroin, and hallucinogenics (i.e. LSD). They are used primarily for pleasure, or to cause a change in psychological or emotional state. **Performance-enhancing** drugs include steroids and supplements, and are used to enhance sport performance.

### What effect do drugs have?

All types of drug can have a severely negative impact on a person’s life. They can cause major physical and psychological problems such as liver or brain damage and suicidal depression. Drugs impair people’s judgment, causing users to do things they wouldn’t do while sober and putting other people’s lives at risk. **The bottom line is, drugs can kill.**

Drugs can be split into two further categories – stimulants and depressants. **Stimulants create false messages** in the brain, making it think it is under stress. This is dangerous because if a real stress occurs, the body won’t be able to respond. **Depressants slow messages** between the body and the brain. This results in the body being unable to either sense, or respond to environmental cues, which can be extremely dangerous.

### Alternatives to Drugs:

Listen to music, make up a song  
Participate in physical activity  
Write a story or letter to a friend, start a journal  
Surf the Internet, make a web page  
Read a book or magazine  
Learn how to play an instrument  
Make something, draw or paint a picture  
Play a game, play with a pet  
Go shopping  
Watch a movie or program on TV

For more information:

### **Facts on Drugs**

<http://teens.drugabuse.gov/facts/index.asp>

### **Highlights, Tools & Resources, Teen Drug Survey**

[www.drugfreeamerica.org](http://www.drugfreeamerica.org)

### **Types of Drugs**

<http://www.drugfreeaz.com/drug/index.html>

### **Alcohol Facts**

(Other Names: Beer, wine, liquor, cooler, booze, malt liquor)

*Type of Drug:* Depressant

*Form of Drug:* Liquid

#### *Short-term Effects:*

- feelings of restlessness, irritability, anxiety, depression, fatigue
- loss of appetite, dizziness, slurred speech
- insomnia, nausea, vomiting
- increased temperature, heart rate, blood pressure
- dilated pupils, constricted peripheral blood vessels

#### *Long-Term Effects:*

- depression, paranoia, aggressive paranoid behavior
- addiction, possible death (with high doses)

### Alcohol and other drugs

**Alcohol is especially dangerous when mixed with other drugs.** Alcohol slows the heart and respiratory system, and changes the way messages travel in the brain. Alcohol can also intensify the effects of drugs in the body. Mixed with painkillers (such as Vicodin) or depressants (such as Valium), alcohol can slow breathing, causing respiratory failure and death.