

Cannabis

Effects:

- In low doses its effects are similar to those of alcohol.
- In higher doses the drug is a hallucinogen – you start to see, hear and feel things that are not real.

Likelihood of dependence:

- Mild immediate psychological dependence.
- Some physical dependence.
- The more you use, the more your body will want.

Specific Physical Risks:

- Regular use can lead to greater risks of infection and cancer of the respiratory tract, such as your throat and lungs.
- Clouds your mind
- Reduces your memory and concentration
- Interferes with decision-making processes
- Reduces attention span
- Causes paranoid ideas and depression
- Loss of interest and motivation in life, including important areas such as work, health and relationships.

Cocaine

Effects:

- Users become nervous and speeded-up
- Feel euphoria
- Decrease in hunger
- Ignoring pain and fatigue
- Feeling superior to and stronger than everyone and everything
- Effect is short-lived
- Quickly repeated doses can lead to bizarre, erratic and violent behaviour, characterised by agitation and anxiety and perhaps hallucination.
- Chronic frequent use can lead to unpleasant symptoms such as nausea, insomnia, weight loss and paranoia.

Likelihood of dependence:

- Physical and psychological dependence high whether sniffed, injected or smoked.

Specific physical risks:

- Infection if injected via dirty syringe.
- Can cause death from respiratory or heart failure.
- Rots your nose and teeth.
- Causes rapid increase in blood pressure, which may lead to strokes, seizures and coma.

Withdrawal symptoms:

- Withdrawals can take the form of lethargy and depression.
- The more you use, the more your body will want.
- Repeated use can make you become more responsive, even to smaller doses. So the risk of overdose is greater.