

# Drug Safety - First Aid

Drugs affect everyone differently. Sometimes people take too much or suffer a bad reaction. If it all goes horribly wrong, don't be the one who stands back helpless. In an emergency, here's how to help if someone...

## ...gets TENSE and PANICS

This can occur with LSD, magic mushrooms, speed, and ecstasy.

- Calm them and be reassuring
- Explain that the feelings will pass
- Steer them clear of crowds, noisy music and bright lights
- If they're hyperventilating (over breathing) encourage them to relax

## ...gets really DROWSY

A risk with tranquillisers, heroin, alcohol, and misuse of gases, aerosols & glue

- Call an ambulance immediately
- Keep them awake
- Place them in the recovery position (see picture) and talk to them
- NEVER give coffee to rouse them. This can make the drug in them work even faster.

## ...gets TOO HOT and DEHYDRATES

Ecstasy and speed affects the body temperature control. If users dance energetically without taking regular breaks or keeping up fluids there's a real danger that their bodies can overheat and dehydrate (lose too much body fluid). Warning signs include: cramps, fainting, headache or sudden tiredness.

- Move them to a cooler quiet area (outside is often best)
- Remove excess clothing and try to cool them down
- Encourage them to sip non-alcoholic fluids like water and soft drinks

If symptoms persist call an ambulance, but make sure someone stays with them.

## FAINTS or LOSES CONSCIOUSNESS

A danger for someone on heroin, tranquillisers, alcohol, poppers, gases, aerosols or glue.

- People who suffer a bad reaction to ecstasy.
- Ecstasy users who dance and don't keep up fluids (more info below)
- Place them in the recovery position
- Check breathing. Be prepared to do mouth-to-mouth resuscitation (see below)
- Call an ambulance

Keep them warm, but not too hot

## THE RECOVERY POSITION

If someone has collapsed, and they're still breathing:

- Turn them onto their front, with their head sideways.
- Bend their upper arm and leg.
- Straighten the other arm.
- Stay with him/her and ask someone to call for help.

## HANDS-ON HELP

If someone's heart has stopped and they've stopped breathing, you need to act fast:

- Tilt their head back and lift the chin slightly.
- Close their nostrils with your thumb and finger.
- Take a deep breath and place your mouth over their mouth.
- Blow into their mouth until their chest expands.
- Repeat one more time
- Feel with your fingers for a pulse
- If there is no sign, perform CARDIAC MASSAGE:
  - Locate the notch at the bottom of the breastbone.
  - Measure 2 finger-widths above this.
  - Place both hands on the breastbone and press down firmly and smoothly 15 times, at a rate of about 80 times per minute.
  - Keep repeating MOUTH-TO-MOUTH and CARDIAC MASSAGE until you get a pulse and breathing.

## **AMBULANCE ALERT**

If someone's taken a bad turn and you're worried about his or her condition, then call an ambulance immediately. When the crew arrive list the symptoms, and tell them if you know what drugs have been taken. It might save a life and you won't get into trouble.

**HELPLINE 151**

