



A guide to conversations  
with young people about

# DRUGS & ALCOHOL



# DID YOU KNOW: ALCOHOL

While no use is safest, use these videos to explore the facts before discussing options.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...ONE STANDARD ALCOHOLIC DRINK TAKES AT LEAST ONE HOUR TO LEAVE YOUR BODY?

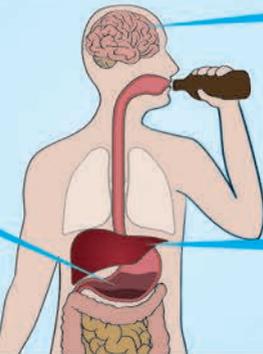
IN NEW ZEALAND ALL ALCOHOLIC DRINKS MUST BE LABELLED WITH THE STANDARD DRINKS THEY CONTAIN.



THE MORE YOU DRINK, THE LONGER IT TAKES TO BE SOBER AND SAFE.

## HOW IT WORKS

WHEN YOU DRINK, ALCOHOL GOES INTO YOUR STOMACH WHERE IT MIXES WITH ANY FOOD AND SOME ALCOHOL GOES INTO YOUR BLOODSTREAM. THE MIX THEN MOVES TO YOUR SMALL INTESTINE.



MOST OF THE ALCOHOL HEADS TO THE BRAIN FROM HERE, AFFECTING YOUR CO-ORDINATION, CONFIDENCE AND JUDGEMENT. FOOD SLOWS DOWN THIS PROCESS, WHICH IS WHY EATING BEFORE YOU DRINK IS A GREAT IDEA.

THE BLOOD THEN MOVES TO YOUR LIVER WHICH WORKS HARD TO GET RID OF THE ALCOHOL, BREAKING IT DOWN SO IT CAN LEAVE THE BODY IN URINE. IT'S ALSO A DIURETIC, MAKING YOU THIRSTY AND DEHYDRATED.

FIRST YOU CAN GET FLUSHED, ENERGETIC AND TALKATIVE



NEXT YOU COULD GET MORE CONFIDENT, EMOTIONAL AND UN-COORDINATED

THIS CAN LEAD TO RISK TAKING, MEMORY LOSS AND AGGRESSION



THEN YOUR BODY TRIES TO RID ITSELF OF THE ALCOHOL THROUGH VOMITING

YOU CAN EXPERIENCE BLACKOUTS, WET YOURSELF, AND YOUR VITAL ORGANS START TO SHUT DOWN.



DRINKING WHILE PREGNANT CAN CAUSE BIG PROBLEMS FOR BABY.



IT CAN ALSO CAUSE HANGOVERS, EMOTIONAL STRESS, MAKE IT HARDER TO ENJOY LIFE AND LEAD TO PHYSICAL AND MENTAL DAMAGE.

SO, REMEMBER TO

- EAT BEFORE YOU START DRINKING
- COUNT THE STANDARD DRINKS
- ALWAYS LOOK OUT FOR YOUR MATES



WANT TO FIND SUPPORT FOR A YOUNG PERSON IN NEW ZEALAND? CALL THE ALCOHOL AND DRUG HELPLINE ON 0800 787 797



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# DID YOU KNOW ALCOHOL

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## Conversations about drugs & alcohol

Key tips for conversations:



Eat before  
you drink



Count the  
standard drinks



Avoid drinking  
while pregnant

# DID YOU KNOW: CANNABIS

While no use is safest, use these videos to explore the facts before discussing options.

DID YOU KNOW THAT... CANNABIS IS NEW ZEALAND'S MOST POPULAR ILLEGAL DRUG?

BUT ONLY 3% OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS SAY THEY USE IT ON A WEEKLY BASIS.

## HOW IT WORKS

WHEN CANNABIS IS SMOKED THE ACTIVE CHEMICAL THC GOES INTO THE LUNGS, IS ABSORBED INTO THE BLOODSTREAM AND CARRIED TO THE BRAIN. THE EFFECTS START WITHIN MINUTES AND CAN LAST FOR HALF AN HOUR OR MORE

CANNABIS IS A DEPRESSANT AND CAN BE PHYSICALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY ADDICTIVE.

CANNABIS IS TAKEN TO THE BRAIN IN A DIFFERENT WAY WHEN EATEN THIS MEANS IT CAN BE HARDER TO KNOW HOW STRONG THE EFFECTS WILL BE, AND THE EFFECTS CAN LAST FOR LONGER, WHICH CAN BE AN UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCE

SMARTSCAN

CANNABIS AFFECTS DIFFERENT PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT WAYS.

SOME PEOPLE FEEL RELAXED, LIKE LISTENING TO BOB MARLEY AND GET THE MUNCHIES.



OTHERS CAN FEEL PARANOID, DEPRESSED AND CONFUSED, WITH A HIGHER RISK OF TRIGGERING MENTAL ILLNESS AND SEEING, HEARING OR FEELING THINGS THAT AREN'T THERE.

SMOKING A LOT OF CANNABIS CAN AFFECT YOUR HEALTH, MAKE IT HARDER TO CONCENTRATE, LEARN, PLAY SPORTS OR FIND WORK.



SO, REMEMBER TO

- STOP IF YOU START TO FEEL UNWELL OR UNCOMFORTABLE
- DON'T SMOKE AND DRIVE
- ALWAYS LOOK OUT FOR YOUR MATES



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# DID YOU KNOW CANNABIS

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## Conversations about drugs & alcohol

Key tips for conversations:



Smoking a lot of  
cannabis can affect  
your health



Stop if you start to feel  
unwell or uncomfortable



Don't smoke  
and drive

# DID YOU KNOW: VOLATILE SUBSTANCES

While no use is safest, use these videos to explore the facts before discussing options.

DID YOU KNOW THAT INHALING SUBSTANCES IS COMMONLY KNOWN AS 'HUFFING'? THERE IS NO SAFE LEVEL OF USE, WHICH CAN LEAD TO 'SUDDEN SNIFFING DEATH,' EVEN IF YOU ONLY TRY IT ONCE.

HUFFING IS NOT VERY COMMON IN NEW ZEALAND.

ONLY 1.2% OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE EVER TRIED HUFFING TO GET OUT OF IT, AND ALMOST TWO THIRDS OF THOSE HAD ONLY DONE IT ONCE.

HOWEVER, HUFFING LED TO THE DEATHS OF 25 YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER 17 WITHIN 10 YEARS.

MOST PEOPLE WILL EXPERIENCE A NASTY HANGOVER OR HEADACHE, WHICH CAN LAST FOR HOURS OR DAYS, DEPENDING ON HOW MUCH YOU INHALE.

INHALANTS ARE TAKEN INTO THE LUNGS AND DIRECTLY ABSORBED INTO THE BLOODSTREAM. THESE POISONOUS CHEMICALS IMMEDIATELY REACH THE BRAIN AND THE PEAK EFFECT IS FELT FOR AROUND A MINUTE.

POISONOUS

HUFFING CAN MAKE YOU FEEL FLOATY OR DROWSY, UNCOORDINATED AND SLOW TO REACT, WITH BLURRY VISION AND UNPLEASANT BREATH.

VOLATILE SUBSTANCES ARE ALSO HIGHLY FLAMMABLE AND CAN CAUSE DANGEROUS BURNS AND EXPLOSIONS.

IT CAN LEAD TO EXTREME AGGRESSION, DEPRESSION, IRREVERSIBLE BRAIN AND ORGAN DAMAGE, SEIZURES, COMA AND DEATH.

SO, REMEMBER

- THERE IS NO SAFE LEVEL FOR INHALING SOLVENTS OR VOLATILE SUBSTANCES
- HUFFING CAN CAUSE YOU SERIOUS HARM
- ALWAYS LOOK OUT FOR YOUR MATES

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Staying Sober

AT THE HEART OF THE MATTER.  
NZ DRUG FOUNDATION



# DID YOU KNOW VOLATILE SUBSTANCES

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## Conversations about drugs & alcohol

Key tips for conversations:



Huffing can cause you  
serious harm



Solvents are highly  
flammable and  
dangerous.



There is no safe level  
for inhaling solvents or  
volatile substances

# DID YOU KNOW: METHAMPHETAMINE

While no use is safest, use these videos to explore the facts before discussing options.

DID YOU KNOW THAT... METHAMPHETAMINE USE IS VERY UNCOMMON IN NEW ZEALAND. ONLY 0.6% OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE REPORTED EVER USING METH, AND HALF OF THOSE HAD ONLY USED IT ONCE.

BUT SOME PEOPLE WILL START USING METHAMPHETAMINE TO HELP DEAL WITH THINGS.

METHAMPHETAMINE IS A STIMULANT THAT CAN BE FOUND IN MANY FORMS.

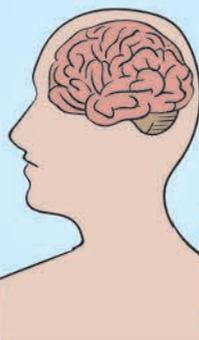
HOWEVER IT CAN BE HIGHLY ADDICTIVE AND EXPENSIVE

## HOW IT WORKS

IT SPEEDS UP THE BODY, AND AFFECTS THE REWARD PATHWAY IN THE BRAIN

THIS PATHWAY USES DOPAMINE TO MAKE A PERSON FEEL GOOD WHEN THEY ARE DOING THINGS LIKE EATING, HAVING FUN, OR HANGING OUT WITH FRIENDS

METH **FORCES** THE RELEASE OF DOPAMINE IN THE BRAIN, TO CREATE FEELINGS OF PLEASURE AND CONFIDENCE



**WARNING!**

THESE FEELINGS DON'T LAST, AND ARE USUALLY FOLLOWED BY A NASTY COMEDOWN WITH CRAVINGS FOR MORE

PHYSICAL SIGNS OF METHAMPHETAMINE USE INCLUDE ENLARGED PUPILS, ITCHY SKIN, INCREASED ENERGY, AND APPETITE LOSS

USING METH IN LARGE AMOUNTS OR FOR A LONG TIME MAY LEAD TO PARANOIA, HALLUCINATIONS, AND AGGRESSIVE OR VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR.

METHAMPHETAMINE CAN CHANGE HOW YOUR BRAIN EXPERIENCES THINGS LIKE EXCITEMENT, AFFECT YOUR DECISION-MAKING, ATTENTION, LEARNING AND MEMORY

ALSO BEING HYPERACTIVE, AND VERY TALKATIVE.

SHARING EQUIPMENT ALSO INCREASES CHANCES OF INFECTION.

SO. STOP AND THINK....

- IS THIS ME?
- HOW IS MY USE AFFECTING THE PEOPLE AROUND ME?
- AND REMEMBER, ALWAYS LOOK OUT FOR YOUR MATES.



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# DID YOU KNOW METHAMPHETAMINE

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## Conversations about drugs & alcohol

Key tips for conversations:



Methamphetamine  
can affect how you  
make decisions



Using a lot or for a  
long time can change  
how you feel and act



Avoid sharing  
equipment

# DID YOU KNOW: SYNTHETIC PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

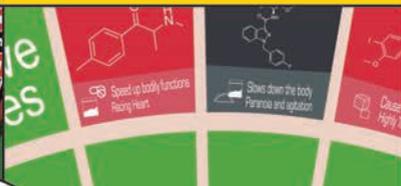
While no use is safest, use these videos to explore the facts before discussing options.

DID YOU KNOW... THAT SYNTHETIC PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES ARE A LARGE AND GROWING GROUP OF MANUFACTURED CHEMICALS FOUND IN NEW ZEALAND.



SOME SPEED UP BODILY FUNCTIONS AND ARE USUALLY FOUND AS PILLS OR POWDERS. SOME, USUALLY SMOKED, SLOW THE BRAIN AND BODY DOWN, AND SOME CAUSE HALLUCINATIONS.

THESE CHEMICALS OFTEN HAVE MUCH MORE UNPLEASANT EFFECTS AND DANGEROUS SIDE-EFFECTS, THAN THE TRADITIONAL DRUGS THEY MIMIC, SUCH AS CANNABIS, MDMA, LSD AND SPEED.



THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF MANUFACTURED CHEMICALS AVAILABLE ON THE BLACK MARKET.

NONE OF THESE CHEMICALS HAVE BEEN TESTED AS BEING SAFE, AND IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW HOW YOU WILL BE AFFECTED.



THOUGH THEY MAY LOOK SIMILAR TO THE DRUGS THEY MIMIC THEY SMELL DIFFERENT, AND CAN BE A LOT STRONGER WITH VERY DIFFERENT EFFECTS.



SOME OF THESE CHEMICALS MAY MAKE YOU FEEL RELAXED, OTHERS CAN MAKE YOU ENERGETIC AND TALKATIVE, HOWEVER THEY CAN ALSO CAUSE YOU TO FEEL AGITATED, PARANOID, AND UNCOORDINATED

THE COMEDOWN FROM SYNTHETIC PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES CAN LAST FOR SEVERAL DAYS

USING LARGER AMOUNTS OR LONG TERM USE WILL INCREASE THE UNPLEASANT EFFECTS

ALSO MIXING PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES WITH MEDICATION OR OTHER DRUGS CAN HAVE UNPREDICTABLE AND HARMFUL RESULTS.

- Anxiety
- Body Aches
- Difficulty Sleeping
- Strong Craving
- Numbness



- Vomiting
- Psychosis
- Seizures
- Organ Failure
- Death



SO, REMEMBER, IT'S BEST TO AVOID USING SYNTHETIC PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES AS THEY CAN BE UNPREDICTABLE AND UNPLEASANT

IF YOU CHOOSE TO USE THEM, THEN

- ONLY USE A SMALL AMOUNT
- TAKE BREAKS TO EAT AND SLEEP
- ALWAYS LOOK OUT FOR YOUR MATES



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AT THE HEART OF THE MATTER, NZ DRUG FOUNDATION.

Te Tūpapa Tarukino o Aotearoa

# DID YOU KNOW PSYCHOACTIVE SUB- STANCES

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## Conversations about drugs & alcohol

Key tips for conversations:



It's best to avoid using synthetic psychoactive substances



Using a lot, or for a long time will increase the unpleasant effects



Chemicals, effects and dosage are unpredictable, and none have been tested as safe

# DID YOU KNOW: MDMA

While no use is safest, use these videos to explore the facts before discussing options.

DID YOU KNOW THAT MDMA, KNOWN AS MD, PINGERS, MOLLY OR ECSTASY IS AN ILLEGAL DRUG, OFTEN SOLD AS PILLS, POWDERS, OR CRYSTALS.

HOWEVER A LOT OF SUBSTANCES TESTED AS 'MDMA' IN NEW ZEALAND RECENTLY CONTAINED SYNTHETIC CATHINONES, AND SOME CONTAINED NO MDMA AT ALL.



MDMA FORCES YOUR BRAIN TO RELEASE CHEMICALS THAT MAKE YOU HAPPY, HIGH AND HORNY.

MDMA CAN ALSO MAKE YOU FEEL DIZZY, DEHYDRATED, ANXIOUS AND AGITATED, AND LARGE DOSES CAN BE MORE UNPLEASANT

YOU MIGHT FEEL MORE ENERGETIC, CONFIDENT, EMOTIONAL, EMPATHIC AND CONNECTED TO OTHER PEOPLE



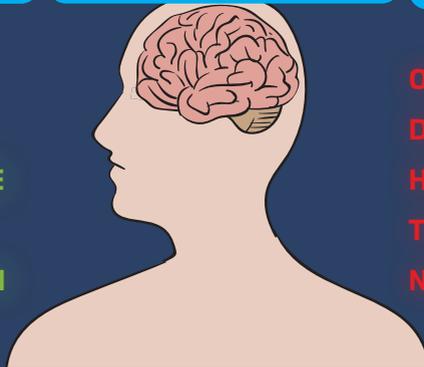
MDMA AFFECTS NEUROTRANSMITTERS IN THE BRAIN SUCH AS DOPAMINE, NORADRENALINE AND SEROTONIN, WHICH REGULATES MOOD, SLEEP AND APPETITE.

TAKING MDMA FLOODS THE BRAIN WITH SEROTONIN FROM NATURAL RESERVES WHICH IS THEN BROKEN DOWN. TAKING MORE WON'T HELP AS THE SEROTONIN STORES HAVE BEEN USED UP.

THIS CAN LEAD TO A HANGOVER OR COMEDOWN LASTING A FEW DAYS, WHERE YOU FEEL TIRED, IRRITABLE AND LOW.

## HOW IT WORKS

**EUPHORIA**  
**ENERGY**  
**CONFIDENCE**  
**EMPATHY**  
**CONNECTION**



**OVERHEATING**  
**DEHYDRATION**  
**HEADACHES**  
**TEETH GRINDING**  
**NAUSEA**

IT TAKES TIME FOR THE BRAIN TO REFILL THE SEROTONIN STORES, SO FREQUENT MDMA USE WON'T HAVE THE SAME EFFECT AND SHOULD BE AVOIDED.

AVOID TAKING MDMA WITH OTHER DRUGS, ESPECIALLY ANXIETY OR DEPRESSION MEDICATIONS, AS THIS CAN LEAD TO DANGEROUS SEROTONIN SYNDROME.

IF YOU CHOOSE TO USE WHAT YOU THINK IS MDMA, IT'S BEST TO TEST IT FIRST. YOU CAN DO THIS BY USING DRUG CHECKING SERVICES OR PURCHASING REAGENT TESTING KITS.



REAGENT TESTING KITS CAN SHOW IF MDMA IS PRESENT, BUT NOT IF IT HAS BEEN MIXED WITH OTHER SUBSTANCES.

AFTER TAKING MDMA IT CAN TAKE AN HOUR OR MORE TO FEEL THE EFFECTS. TAKING MORE OR DRINKING ALCOHOL MAY NOT MAKE YOU FEEL ANY HIGHER, AND CAN LEAD TO A WORSE COMEDOWN.



SNORTING CAN DAMAGE YOUR NOSE, AND PILLS ARE OFTEN MIXED WITH OTHER SUBSTANCES AND FILLERS LIKE CHALK

DRINKING 250ML OF WATER AN HOUR WILL HELP, ALONG WITH TAKING REGULAR BREAKS TO COOL DOWN.



AFTERWARDS LOOK OUT FOR YOUR MATES, REST, EAT WELL, DRINK PLENTY OF WATER AND HAVE FRIENDS AROUND TO SUPPORT YOU.

SO, REMEMBER...

- IF YOU CHOOSE TO USE, LESS IS BEST
- AVOID MIXING MDMA WITH OTHER DRUGS OR ALCOHOL, AND
- ALWAYS LOOK OUT FOR YOUR MATES



WANT TO FIND SUPPORT FOR A YOUNG PERSON IN NEW ZEALAND? CALL THE ALCOHOL AND DRUG HELPLINE ON 0800 787 797

  
**WHĀRAURAU**  
Empower the Workforce | Manaaki Mōkōpuna

**AT THE HEART OF THE MATTER,  
NZ DRUG FOUNDATION.**

Te Tūšpapa Tarukino o Aotearoa

# DID YOU KNOW MDMA

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## Conversations about drugs & alcohol

Key tips for conversations:



If you choose to use MDMA, test it first to make sure it isn't a different drug



Less is best



Avoid mixing MDMA with other drugs or alcohol

# TALKING TIPS FOR ADULTS

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## **Get the facts on alcohol and other drug use by young people.**

**Every** young person will make a decision about whether or not to use alcohol and other drugs.

**Many** will try alcohol and other drugs

**Some** will experience short-term harms

**A few** will develop long-term problems

Having an early, rational conversation gives your young person confidence that if something comes up, they can speak to you. Having the conversation is more important than the outcome.

## **Tips for conversations**

- Listen to what they have to say
- Avoid interrupting or having a strong reaction
- Let them know you care about them
- Set clear expectations, with realistic consequences if these expectations are broken. This is especially important for younger children, who are just beginning to develop more control over what they do.

## **Also remember**

If you are a parent or caregiver, have fun with your young person without drugs and alcohol. This makes it easier for them to learn to relax, reward themselves, or address feelings in ways that don't involve drugs and alcohol.

# CONVERSATION PLANNER

**Now that you have the key facts about each drug, make some notes to prepare for a conversation with your young person. Here are the main things you need to be prepared for.**

## **1. When?**

An opportunity to start a conversation may emerge naturally. For example, if drug use is shown on TV, ask your child or young person what they think about it. This technique works well for children, as it helps them understand what they see around them without providing too much information for their age.

You might need to initiate a conversation. Try to do this in an uninterrupted time when you can give your full attention to what your young person is saying.

*Make a note of when you plan to have this conversation*

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# USING THE **DID YOU KNOW?** VIDEOS

- Watch them together.
- Ask open ended questions like:
  - “What do you think about these substances?”
  - “What stood out to you?”
  - “What was in these videos that you would want your friends to know?”
- Listen to what they have to say
- Offer any support they need.

**Remember**, starting a conversation is the most important thing, and it can be revisited in the future.

You can call the alcohol and drug helpline on **0800 787 797** for information on how to get extra support.



Watch the videos at  
[drugfoundation.org.nz/didyouknow](https://drugfoundation.org.nz/didyouknow)

**AT THE HEART  
OF THE MATTER,  
NZ DRUG  
FOUNDATION.**

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