

# SIGNS OF OVERDOSE OR TOXICITY

Recognise common signs of overdose and toxicity from substance use



SUBSTANCE	SIGNS OF OVERDOSE/TOXICITY		
<b>CANNABIS</b> eg. Marijuana	Low blood pressure Increased heart-rate	Slower reflexes Impaired motor skills Trouble concentrating	Moderate anxiety and paranoia Persecutory delusions Panic attacks Blurred vision Confusion Visual and auditory hallucinations
<b>ALCOHOL</b>	Unconsciousness/coma Laboured and heavy breathing Seizures Snoring or gurgling sounds (blocked airway) High or low pulse rate	Cold or clammy skin Nausea, Vomiting Low body temperature Loss of co-ordination	Low mood Memory loss Confusion/disorientation Blurred vision Anxiety
<b>HEROIN &amp; OTHER OPIATES</b> eg. Morphine, Oxycodone	Hard to wake up/passing out Irregular heartbeat Slow breathing Snoring or gurgling sounds Death	Itchiness Difficulties urinating Cold, Clammy skin Floppy limbs, no response to stimulus Blue lips and fingertips	Trouble concentrating
<b>BENZODIAZEPINES</b> eg. Xanax, Valium	Over-sedation/sleep Slow, shallow breathing Snoring or gurgling sounds Unconsciousness	Stomach pains Floppy limbs, no response to stimulus	Mood swings and aggression Jitteriness and excitability
<b>INHALANTS</b> eg. aerosols and other volatile substances	Stupor or coma Irregular heartbeat	Chest pain Convulsions, Seizures	Blackouts and coma Hallucinations
<b>GHB</b>	Unconsciousness Seizures or convulsions Irregular, shallow breathing Snoring or gurgling sounds	Vomiting Sweating	Irritation and agitation Hallucinations Confusion Blackout and memory loss
<b>METHAMPHETAMINES</b> eg. Ice	Sudden and severe headaches Racing heart-rate Stroke, heart attack, death Chest pain Seizures, convulsions	Restlessness and agitation Tremors and muscle twitching Uncontrollable jerking Sweating	Paranoia, hallucinations, delusions Confusion/disorientation Hyper-arousal Bizarre, violent and erratic behaviour
<b>MDMA (ECSTASY)</b>	Seizures Racing heart	Vomiting High body temp Out of character, irrational behaviour	Anxiety, irritability Floating sensations Hallucinations Paranoia
<b>HALLUCINOGENS</b> eg. LSD, Magic Mushrooms	Seizures Vomiting	Increased risk-taking Diarrhoea	Psychosis Agitation Panic Paranoia

**DEPRESSANTS:** Substances that slow down the activity of the Central Nervous System (CNS) and the messages going between the brain and the body. Depressants can make people feel more relaxed and less inhibited. Using large quantities or multiple depressants can lead to death.

**STIMULANTS:** Substances that speed up the messages going between the brain and the body. They can make people feel more alert, confident and energetic. Large quantities can cause paranoia, seizures and cardiac arrest.

**HALLUCINOGENS:** Substances that distort a person's perception of reality. People who use them may see or hear things that aren't really there, or what they do see may be distorted in some way. The effects of hallucinogens vary greatly.

*This matrix is a basic guide to assist front line workers to recognise common signs of overdose and toxicity. How young people present may be affected by other substances, withdrawal symptoms, mental health, or general health conditions.*

*If you notice these signs, seek further medical advice or call an ambulance.*

*One of the most easily accessible sources of information is often the young person or their friends. If appropriate, ask them what they have taken.*



GOOD PRACTICE

Important - This guide has been designed to complement but not replace your organisational guidelines, policies and procedures – please refer to and follow them.

For further information call YoDAA 1800 458 685 or visit [yodaa.org.au](http://yodaa.org.au)