

Identifying Individual Drugs: A Guide For Parents and Employers

LSD

LSD comes in liquid form and is applied to paper or pills and swallowed

LSD is an extremely powerful hallucinogen that was popular in the '60s and is becoming popular once again. It is an odorless and colorless chemically manufactured drug. Street names for the drug include acid, blotter acid, microdot, and white lightning, and the street name for the duration of the hallucinogenic effect or high is called a "trip."

Because LSD is so potent, the dosage needed for a trip is incredibly small. A microscopic drop of the drug can be put on paper, small gelatin squares, or any other absorbant material and ingested.

Anything that can be swallowed can be used as a carrier for LSD.

The hallucinogenic effect of LSD can last from two to twelve hours.

During this time, judgment may be impaired, visual perception may seem distorted, and hallucinations may occur (the sense of reality may become highly distorted).

Physical effects of LSD include dilated pupils, elevated body temperature, high blood pressure, hallucinations, and a disoriented sense of direction, distance, and time. Bad trips can result in panic, paranoia, anxiety, loss of control, confusion, and psychosis. If your child is under the influence of LSD, he or she should be closely supervised so they do not harm themselves or others.

One possible side effect of LSD is called a "flashback". For several years after taking the drug, the hallucinogenic effect of the drug may reappear temporarily and without warning.

Anabolic Steroids

Anabolic steroids are synthetic versions of the naturally occurring male hormone testosterone. Commonly called roids, sauce or juice,

anabolic steroids are available in tablet form that is taken beneath the tongue or in an oil-based liquid that is usually injected in the buttocks or thighs. The effects are anabolic (muscle building) and androgenic (masculine, i.e., aggressiveness, deep voice). Steroids are most often used by athletes seeking an edge over the competition. Others may use it for cosmetic reasons: to gain the "perfect" look. National survey results indicate that many adolescents and young adults illegally use or have used anabolic steroids.

Developed in the 1930s, anabolic steroids are used to treat rare diseases in males whose bodies do not produce enough testosterone, as well as for conditions such as rare types of anemia and kidney disease or inoperable breast cancer. Because of their serious side effects, anabolic steroids are prescribed by responsible doctors at the minimum dosage required to help their patients. Controlled by the Federal Food and Drug Administration, these drugs are legally available only by a doctor's prescription. However, a black market network of dealers accounts for an estimated 80% of the anabolic steroids used. The black market is supplied by illegally diverted pharmaceutical products, secret laboratories producing counterfeits of those products, or steroids smuggled in from other countries. These black market steroids are often sold in gyms, locker rooms, or through magazines.

The oral anabolic steroids continue to be the most popular with athletes because of their greater anabolic or muscle building effects. Primarily water-based, oral anabolic steroids pose an even greater danger to the liver than the oil-based liquid forms. The oral anabolic steroids include Anvar, Dianabol, Winstrol, Maxibolin, Halotestin and Androyd, and stay in the body up to 40 days. The liquid forms commonly called oils, which are intended for intramuscular injection, include Bolasterone, Deca Durabolin, Durabolin, Parabolan, Winstrol V and others. Because they are fat-soluble, they have a longer reaction time than the orals and remain in the body for months. Anabolic steroids are extremely unpredictable. Different dosages of different types of anabolic steroids interacting with an individual's unique biochemistry cause widely different and unpredictable results. If your teenager is using anabolic steroids, he or she may experience a sudden increase in body weight and muscular development, insomnia, irritability, aggressive combative behavior, puffy face, severe acne, bad breath, a yellowing of the eyes and skin, premature hair loss, hyperactivity, and exaggerated mood swings that include

uncontrollable outbursts of anger.

Males may also experience testicular shrinkage and can develop female breast tissue on the pectoral muscles. Females may also experience a deeper voice and decreased breast size. Continued use can result in life-threatening situations involving the liver, cardiovascular system, and brain.

Cocaine

Powdered cocaine and its derivatives, rock and crack

Cocaine is produced as a white chunky powder and is often called coke, blow, white, snow, snort, flake, nose candy, hubba, or cane. It is said most often in aluminum foil, plastic or paper packets, or small vials. Cocaine is usually chopped into a fine powder with a razor blade on a small mirror or some other hard surface, arranged into small rows called "lines," then quickly inhaled (or "snorted") through the nose with a short straw or rolled up paper money. It can also be injected into the blood stream.

Cocaine paraphernalia, including scales dealers use to weigh the drug, and mirrors and razor blades used for preparing the drug before inhaling

Paraphernalia associated with inhaling cocaine include mirrors, razor blades, straws, and rolled paper money, while paraphernalia associated with injecting the drug include syringes, needles, spoons, and belts, bandanas or surgical tubing used to constrict the veins. Scales are used by dealers to weigh the drug. Sometimes substances such as baking soda or mannitol are used to "cut" cocaine in order to dilute the drug and increase the quantity of the drug for sale.

Cocaine powder is sold in plastic bags, glass vials, or in small cellophane or paper packets

The high from a typical inhaled dose of cocaine lasts for about 20 minutes. During this time your teenager may appear very alert, confident, energetic, and stimulated; physical signs include dilated eyes and a runny nose, and little or no appetite. The high from cocaine is followed by profound depression, an intense desire for another dose of the drug, mental fatigue, restlessness, and irritability. An overdose of cocaine can cause extreme agitation, respiratory failure, heart failure, or death.

Crack

Examples of two homemade rock or crack pipes

Crack and rock cocaine are forms of cocaine that are extremely addictive and very dangerous. (Crack and rock cocaine are nearly identical drugs, hence they will be referred to as crack only.) Crack has quickly become a major problem in this country because it is inexpensive, readily available, and highly addictive. Crack comes in white to tan pellets and is sold in small vials. It is smoked in glass pipes and makes a crackling sound when it is smoked. Paraphernalia associated with crack includes glass pipes called "base" pipes, homemade pipes, and small vials used to store the drug.

Crack is absorbed into the blood stream through the lungs in just a few seconds. If your teenager is using crack, he or she will temporarily appear euphoric, extremely alert, and highly energetic. Other symptoms include dilated pupils, loss of appetite, elevated heart rate, elevated respiration rate, and higher body temperature. The high lasts only a few minutes, leaving an intense depression called a "crash" and an immediate desire for more of the drug. The severe addiction associated with crack stems not only from a desire for the euphoria of the high but a desire to escape from the "crash" following the high. Prolonged use of crack can cause extreme irritability, depression, paranoia, convulsions or death.

Depressants

Depressants are often medically prescribed by doctors to treat anxiety, tension, insomnia, muscle spasms, and irritability. However, depressants are also abused for their intoxicating effects. They are obtained by theft, through illegal prescriptions, or they are purchased on the illicit market.

Drugs included in this classification are chloral hydrate, barbiturates, glutethimide, methaqualone (Quaaludes[®]), benzodiazepines, and antianxiety or sedative drugs such as Valium[®], Miltown[®], and Equanil[®]. Depressants are produced in pill or capsule form.

If your teenager is abusing depressants, he or she may appear to be in a state of intoxication much like that of alcohol, with impaired judgment, inebriation, slurred speech, and loss of motor coordination. Other symptoms include a weak and rapid pulse, slow or rapid but shallow breathing, and cold and clammy skin.

As with narcotics, the body acquires a need for increased doses of depressants in order to achieve the same high. If your teenager is unaware of an increased dependency on depressants, he or she may increase their intake to dangerous, toxic levels in order to achieve the same intoxicating effects. Mixing depressants with alcohol is a particularly dangerous combination that can cause an overdose and death.

Withdrawal from depressants can be extreme. After 24 hours without the drug, symptoms such as anxiety and agitation may develop. Depending on the potency of the drug, withdrawal will peak between two to eight days, causing appetite loss, nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, increased heart rate, and excessive sweating. Some severe symptoms of withdrawal may be delirium, convulsions, and in some cases, death.

Be aware that you may have prescription depressants in your medicine cabinet, such as Librium[®], Xanax[®], Valium[®], Dalmane[®], and Doriden[®], that have the potential to be abused by your child.

Barbiturates

Barbiturates were once among the most widely used depressants, prescribed by doctors to induce relaxation and sleep. Like other depressants, barbiturates are sold on the illicit market or are legally prescribed to addicts by physicians.

The three most abused barbiturates are Nembutalr, Seconalr, and Amytalr, which are capsules or pills that may be red, blue, yellow, or white. Their street names include downers, barbs, red devils, blue devils, and yellows. They are usually sold in plastic bags or pill bottles. Barbiturates are taken orally and their effects may last up to six hours.

The physical effects of barbiturates include intoxication much like that of alcohol, slurred speech, and disorientation. An overdose can cause dilated pupils, shallow breathing, clammy skin, weak and rapid pulse, coma, and death.

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Heroin

Heroin comes in a white to brown powder or a dark tar-like substance, and is sold in a variety of packaging

The most dangerous and addictive narcotic is heroin. While receiving less publicity today than newer, more popular drugs, it continues to be a major problem in this country. Not only is heroin extremely addictive and dangerous, but as with cocaine and methamphetamines, addicts often resort to crimes such as burglary, grand theft, robbery, or prostitution to support their habits. Sometimes called black tar, mud, smack, China white, or Mexican brown, heroin is derived from opium poppies. In its powder form, it may range in color from white to a very dark brown. The most popular form of heroin is a dark tar-like substance called black tar, which is sold in small foil or cellophane packets or in small toy balloons. The most common use of heroin is by injection (called "mainlining" or "shooting"), but in its powder form it can be inhaled through the nose or smoked. Paraphernalia for injecting heroin include hypodermic needles, small cotton balls used to strain the drug, and water and spoons or bottle caps used for "cooking" or liquefying the heroin. Paraphernalia for inhaling or smoking heroin includes razor blades, straws, rolled dollar bills, and pipes. The high from the drug usually lasts from four to six hours.

Black tar heroin and the paraphernalia for injecting and storing the drug

If your child is under the influence of heroin, he or she may have constricted pupils, droopy eyelids, depression, apathy, decreased physical activity, and nausea. A frequent user may nod or appear sleepy, and repeatedly scratch or touch their face and nose. Larger doses of heroin may induce sleep, vomiting, and shallow breathing. An overdose can cause slow and shallow breathing, clammy skin, convulsions, coma, or death.

In addition, there is a family of chemically manufactured drugs often

referred to as "designer drugs". These drugs have been falsely represented as "synthetic heroin." The most prevalent of these "designer drugs" is fentanyl citrate, also called China white, which is many times more powerful than heroin and has caused a number of deaths among addicts. Fentanyl citrate is used in the same manner as heroin.

Ice

Ice comes in clear rock crystals of varying sizes and is sold in clear, heat sealed cellophane packets

Ice is the translucent crystal, smokable form of methamphetamine. It is also commonly called glass or crystal and, like other stimulants, is highly addictive. (In terms of molecular structure, ice and methamphetamine are the same). The use of ice results in a longer, more intense high and an enhanced and more rapid onset of the negative effects of other forms of methamphetamine.

Similar in appearance to rock candy or rock salt, ice is sold in clear, heat sealed cellophane packets. It is smoked by using a one-chamber pipe (bong) where the ice is heated until it turns to a gas, and then inhaled by the user.

If your teenager is using ice, he or she may experience increased alertness, euphoria, appetite loss, dilated pupils, elevated heart rate, increased respiration, and elevated body temperature. Prolonged use can cause blurred vision, dizziness, loss of coordination, collapse and toxic psychosis. Prolonged use of ice will also cause damage to other organs, particularly the lungs, liver and kidneys. Heavy short-term or prolonged use can also cause delusional states or even a toxic psychosis similar to paranoid schizophrenia. Acute depression and fatigue may result when the use of ice is stopped. An overdose can result in high blood pressure, fever, stroke, heart failure and death.

Ice and the pocket micro-torch, and the glass pipe used to smoke the drug

Some law enforcement and treatment professionals see ice as a growing problem because of its purity and its immediate and intense effect, which may, depending on the dose, last from 2-14 hours. In addition, its use may become popular because the smoking of ice eliminates the use of a needle, thereby reducing the risk of AIDS and other blood diseases; while the low cost of production results in large profits for the dealers who sell ice and the clan lab operators who produce it.

Inhalants

Anything that emits fumes or that is in an aerosol form can be inhaled by your child to produce a high. There are many types of inhalants, including nitrous oxide (laughing gas), amyl nitrite (poppers, snappers), and butyl nitrite (rush, bolt, locker room, bullet, climax). Also included in this group are aerosol sprays (e.g. spray paint and cleaning fluid), and hydrocarbons such as gasoline, glue and paint thinner. The fumes from many household products can be inhaled to produce a high, such as lighter fluid, hair spray, whipped cream cannisters, typewriter correction fluid, paint, and nail polish remover. The effects of inhalants on your child's body depend on which type of inhalant has been taken. Solvents and aerosol sprays decrease the heart and respiratory rates and impair judgement. Amyl and butyl nitrite cause rapid pulse, headaches, and involuntary passing of urine or feces. Other immediate effects of inhalants include nausea, sneezing, coughing, nosebleeds, fatigue, lack of coordination, and loss of appetite. Long-term use may result in weight loss, electrolyte imbalance, muscle fatigue, hepatitis or brain hemorrhage. Repeated sniffing of concentrated vapors over time can permanently damage the brain, nervous system, lungs, and nasal passages. Deeply inhaling vapors or using large amounts over a short period of time may result in disorientation, violent behavior, unconsciousness, or death. High concentrations of inhalants can cause suffocation by displacing the oxygen in the lungs or by depressing the central nervous system to the point that breathing stops.

Marijuana

Marijuana is sold in plastic bags or in hand rolled cigarettes known as joints.

Following alcohol, marijuana is the second most popular drug with youth. It consists of the leaves, flowers, stems, and seeds of the cannabis plant, which are dried and chopped into small amounts. Marijuana can also be found as Sinsemilla, the potent flowering tops of the female marijuana plant.

Commonly referred to as grass, pot, weed, Acapulco Gold, ganja, and smoke, marijuana is usually sold and stored in small plastic bags, aluminum foil, or small rolled cigarettes. Marijuana is usually smoked in hand-rolled cigarettes called "joints," and has a strong, pungent odor when smoked. Once the marijuana cigarette is partially smoked, it is often held by a small clip called a "roach clip." (Roach clips are made from many items, such as tweezers or electrical clips.) The leaves can also be smoked in small wooden pipes or water-filled pipes called "bongs." And finally, marijuana can also be blended into food, then cooked and eaten, most often in brownies.

Marijuana is smoked in small pipes or rolled into cigarettes which are sometimes held by "roach clips".

Paraphernalia associated with marijuana includes pipes, bangs, rolling papers, plastic bags, roach clips, "stash boxes" (decorative boxes designed to conceal and store marijuana), and eye drops and breath fresheners used to cover up signs of use of the drug.

Common ways to store and conceal marijuana.

In low doses, marijuana can induce restlessness, a dreamy state of relaxation, red or bloodshot eyes, and increased appetite. Stronger doses can cause shifting sensory images, rapidly fluctuating emotions, a loss of self-identity, fantasies, and hallucinations or image distortions.

Methamphetamines

Methamphetamine is sold in pill or powder form, and can be swallowed, inhaled, or injected

Methamphetamines and amphetamines are also highly addictive and dangerous stimulants. Commonly referred to as uppers and speed, these drugs are sold in powder, pill, and capsule forms that can be inhaled through the nose, swallowed, or injected.

Like cocaine and crack, the physical effects of methamphetamines and amphetamines are increased alertness, euphoria, appetite loss, dilated pupils, elevated heart rate, increased respiration, and elevated body temperature. Prolonged use of these drugs can cause blurred vision, dizziness, loss of coordination, and collapse. An overdose can result in high blood pressure, fever, stroke, and heart failure.

The most popular of the two drugs are methamphetamines, commonly called speed, meth, crank, crystal, or crystal meth or in its smokable form, ice, glass or crystal. Methamphetamines are usually found in powder form in colors ranging from white to tan, and can be swallowed, inhaled through the nose, or injected. It is sold in small plastic or paper packets or plastic bags. The paraphernalia associated with inhaling the drug are razor blades, mirrors, straws, and rolled dollar bills; the paraphernalia associated with injecting the drug include syringes, spoons, and surgical tubing, bandanas, or a belt used to constrict the vein.

Narcotics

Well known for their medical use of relieving severe pain, narcotics are commonly abused drugs because of their euphoric effect and highly addictive quality. Most of the drugs in this category are administered orally or through intramuscular injection, and can be legally obtained under medical supervision. But narcotics such as heroin, opium, morphine, and codeine are frequently sold on the illicit market to addicts. (Not as well known are the narcotics hydromorphone, meperidine, and methadone.)

When narcotics are regularly used, the body eventually demands

more of the drug in order to achieve the same high, which is known as developing a drug tolerance. Withdrawal symptoms such as watery eyes, runny nose, yawning and perspiration will develop only six to eight hours following the last use of the drug. Within 48 to 72 hours, more severe withdrawal symptoms may develop, including restlessness, irritability, appetite loss, tremors, stomach cramps, diarrhea, and chills alternating with excessive sweating. It may take one to two weeks for the body to return to "normal."

PCP

PCP is applied to cigarettes or marijuana and smoked

Phencyclidine, commonly known as PCP, is the most dangerous of the hallucinogens. It is sold on the streets under at least fifty other names that reflect its range of bizarre and volatile effects. Included in those names are angel dust, supergrass, killer weed, K J, embalming fluid, rocket fuel and sherms. In some areas of the country, it is called crystal (not to be confused with methamphetamines). PCP is sometimes passed off as other drugs such as mescaline, LSD, THC, or cocaine.

In its pure form, PCP is a white, crystalline powder that readily dissolves in water. Most PCP is manufactured in makeshift laboratories containing contaminants that cause the drug's color to range from tan to brown and the consistency from powder to a gummy mass. It is seen most often in powder or liquid form, and is commonly applied to dark brown cigarettes or leafy materials such as parsley, mint, oregano, marijuana, or tobacco, and then smoked. When in its liquid form, PCP is packaged in small vials or other small glass containers.

If your child is under the influence of PCP, he or she may show many of the signs of LSD use, such as appearing detached from reality or estranged from his or her surroundings. Other symptoms include rapid and involuntary eye movement, an exaggerated walk, numbness, slurred speech, blocked speech, and a loss of coordination.

PCP is unique because of its power to produce psychosis indistinguishable from schizophrenia. It can cause extraordinary

strength, a sense of invulnerability, and extreme image distortion. The user may become violent, causing injury to himself or others.

Although such extreme psychotic reactions are usually associated with repeated use of the drug, they have been known to occur in some cases after only one dose. As with LSD, if your child is under the influence of PCP, he or she should be closely supervised so they do not harm themselves or others.

PCP episodes, or flashbacks, may occur long after the drug has left the body.

Stimulants

Young people use stimulants to feel stronger, more energetic, and more decisive. As with other drugs, some stimulants are legally prescribed by doctors for various reasons, such as for weight loss, hyperactive children, or a rare disease called narcolepsy. Examples of stimulants are amphetamines, methamphetamines, Ritaline and Preludine. Included in this category are cocaine and rock cocaine or crack, a deadly and highly addictive form of cocaine. Also included is ice, a translucent crystal that is a smokable form of methamphetamine.

If your teenager is using stimulants, at first he or she may seem exhilarated and hyperactive, will have dilated pupils and have little or no appetite. Other symptoms may include irritability, anxiety, apprehension, and insomnia. Cocaine and crack produce a high for a shorter period of time than other stimulants; however, as with all drugs, the highs vary according to the strength of the drug and the rate of administration.

Large doses of stimulants can cause repetitive grinding of the teeth, weight loss, touching and picking of the face, and paranoia. An overdose can result in dizziness, tremors, agitation, panic, hostility, abdominal cramps, chest pains and palpitations. Extreme overdoses can result in cardiac arrest, strokes or death.

After extended use, withdrawal symptoms may occur if that use is discontinued. The signs of withdrawal are profound depression, apathy, fatigue, long periods of sleep, a lingering impairment of perception, disorientation, and anxiety.

The most commonly abused stimulants are cocaine, crack or rock cocaine, and methamphetamines.