EFFECTS OF DRUG ABUSE IN OUR SOCIETY

A drug is any substance which has a psysiological effect when ingested or otherwise introduced into the body.  Different drugs can have different effects. Some effects of drugs include health consequences that are long-lasting and permanent. They can even continue after a person has stopped taking the substance.

There are a few ways a person can take drugs, including injection, inhalation and ingestion. The effects of the drug on the body can depend on how the drug is delivered. For example, the injection of drugs directly into the bloodstream has an immediate impact, while ingestion has a delayed effect. But all misused drugs affect the brain. They cause large amounts of dopamine, a neurotransmitter that helps regulate our emotions, motivation and feelings of pleasure, to flood the brain and produce a “high.” Eventually, drugs can change how the brain works and interfere with a person’s ability to make choices, leading to intense cravings and compulsive drug use. Over time, this behavior can turn into a substance dependency, or drug addiction.

Today, more than 7 million people suffer from an illicit drug disorder, and one in four deaths results from illicit drug use. In fact, more deaths, illnesses and disabilities are associated with drug abuse than any other preventable health condition. People suffering from drug and alcohol addiction also have a higher risk of unintentional injuries, accidents and domestic violence incidents. Substance use disorders are associated with a wide range of short- and long-term health effects. They can vary depending on the type of drug, how much and how often it’s taken and the person’s general health. Overall, the effects of drug abuse and dependence can be far-reaching. They can impact almost every organ in the human body.

**Side effects of drug addiction may include:**

* A weakened immune system, increasing the risk of illness and infection
* Heart conditions ranging from abnormal heart rates to heart attacks and collapsed veins and blood vessel infections from injected drugs
* Nausea and abdominal pain, which can also lead to changes in appetite and weight loss
* Increased strain on the liver, which puts the person at risk of significant liver damage or liver failure
* Seizures, stroke, mental confusion and brain damage
* Lung disease
* Problems with memory, attention and decision-making, which make daily living more difficult
* Global effects of drugs on the body, such as breast development in men and increase in body temperature,which can lead to other health problems
* All drugs–nicotine, cocaine, marijuana and others–affect the brain’s “reward” circuit, which is part of the limbic system. This area of the brain affects instinct and mood. Drugs target this system, which causes large amounts of dopamine—a brain chemical that helps regulate emotions and feelings of pleasure—to flood the brain. This flood of dopamine is what causes a “high.” It’s one of the main causes of drug addiction.
* Although initial drug use may be voluntary, drugs can alter brain chemistry. This can actually change how the brain performs and interfere with a person’s ability to make choices. It can lead to intense cravings and compulsive drug use. Over time, this behavior can turn into a substance dependency or drug and alcohol addiction.
* Alcohol can have short- and long-term effects on the brain and disrupts the brain’s communication pathways. These can influence mood, behavior and other cognitive function.
* Brain damage may also occur through alcohol-induced nutrition deficiencies, alcohol-induced seizures and liver disease. In pregnant women, alcohol exposure can impact the brains of unborn babies, resulting in fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.
* It is reported that alcohol-induced brain problems can often be corrected with proper treatment. Abstinence from alcohol for months or years can help partially repair thinking abilities, like memory skills.

Substance use disorders can lead to multiple behavioral problems, both in the short- and long-term, which can include:

* 1PARANOIA
* 2AGGRESSIVENESS
* 3HALLUCINATIONS
* 4ADDICTION
* 5IMPAIRED JUDGMENT
* 6IMPULSIVENESS
* 7LOSS OF SELF-CONTROL

These effects of drug abuse have serious consequences, like missed work, punishable offenses, accidents and injuries. In fact, alcohol and drugs are partly to blame in an estimated 80 percent of offenses leading to jail time in the U.S. These incidents include domestic violence, driving while intoxicated and offenses related to damaged property. Legal and illegal drugs excluding alcohol are involved in about [16 percent of motor vehicle crashes](https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/impaired_driving/impaired-drv_factsheet.html). Those closest to a drug-addicted individual are the hardest hit. Common patterns emerge within families where at least one individual is addicted to drugs. These patterns include high levels of criticism or negativism within households, parental inconsistency, or in the case of parents coping with a drug-addicted child, denial. Misdirected anger between drug-addicted and non-addicted family members is common as is self-medication as a strategy in coping with family dysfunction.

[Co-dependent relationships](https://www.addictioncampuses.com/blog/codependency-and-addiction/) often form between partners, where at least one partner is addicted to drugs and the majority of domestic disputes involve the use of alcohol or drugs. Children with one or more parents abusing drugs are more likely to take on the responsibility of the parental role, often functioning in denial of their parents’ addiction or behaviors relating to the addiction. These children commonly lack necessities, including shelter, and have little to no health care. Similarly, families with at least one drug-addicted parent are more likely to end up homeless or in poverty and are less likely to have adequate health care, representing a common barrier in obtaining treatment for the addiction. Drug or alcohol abuse is the primary cause of more than 75 percent of all foster placements, and 80 percent of all child abuse and neglect cases cite drug or alcohol abuse as a primary factor. Rates of substance abuse among youth in foster care are significantly higher than in comparative populations.

Specific drug types are associated with higher rates of child custody losses. For example, fewer than 10 percent of babies born to untreated heroin addicted mothers reside their biological mothers at five years of age. And sadly, children of drug addicted individuals are eight times as likely to abuse drugs as adults.

What is drug abuse?

Clinically known as substance use disorder, drug abuse or addiction is caused by the habitual taking of addictive substances. Drugs include alcohol, marijuana, hallucinogens and opioids. Substance use disorder is a disease, causing people to compulsively use drugs despitconsequences.