Several forms of drugs can be abused.

**Prescription drugs** are medicine that is prescribed by a doctor as a treatment for a health problem.

**Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs** are medicine that can be found at your local pharmacy, supermarket, or convenience store.
Types & Effects of Drugs

OTC drugs include cough and cold medication. These drugs can be effective for treating medical problems when you follow the directions from your doctor or on the labeling. However, they can be dangerous and even deadly when you overdose on them.

Illegal drugs, also known as street drugs, serve no medical purpose, and it is against the law for people of any age to manufacture, possess, buy, or sell illegal drugs.
Types & Effects of Drugs

Some drugs occur naturally by extracting them from plants, animals, or minerals.

Others are made in a laboratory; these are known as synthetic drugs.

Both illegal and synthetic drugs can be especially dangerous because there are no regulators checking the content of the drug. The drug can be supplemented with other things that are even more dangerous than the drug itself.
Alcohol and nicotine are considered gateway drugs.

*Gateway drugs* are drugs that often lead to other serious and dangerous drug use.

**Psychoactive drugs** are drugs that affect the function of the brain.

There are four main types of psychoactive drugs:

1) Stimulants
2) Depressants
3) Narcotics
4) Hallucinogens
Types & Effects of Drugs

Psychoactive Drugs

Stimulants, depressants, and narcotics have medical purposes when used properly. However, hallucinogens have no medical value.

When abused, any of these drugs can lead to serious health problems or even death.

Commonly abused stimulants include:

- Amphetamines
- Methamphetamine
- Cocaine
Types & Effects of Drugs

Symptoms of stimulants include:

- Sweating
- Headaches
- Blurred vision
- Dizziness
- Sleeplessness
- Moodiness
- Restlessness
- Anxiety

Cocaine is a stimulant drug that usually is in the form of a white powder made from coca leaves.

Cocaine is so addictive that you can become addicted after your first use.

Cocaine produces an immediate high, but it only lasts for a few minutes. Afterwards, you feel tired and depressed.
Types & Effects of Drugs

If you snort cocaine, it leads to other problems, such as a loss of smell, nosebleeds, hoarseness, problems swallowing, and a constant runny nose. You also have an increased risk of dying from a heart attack, even in your youth.

Commonly abused depressants include:

- Barbiturates
- Tranquilizers
- Methaqualone
- Alcohol
Symptoms of depressants include:
- Sleepiness
- Relaxed condition
- Muscle spasms
- Mood changes

GHB is an odorless, tasteless depressant drug that is usually available as a pill, powder, or in a liquid form.

It takes about 10-20 minutes after it is ingested to see the effects on the body, but the drug’s influence can last up to four hours.

GHB impacts an individual’s self-control. Therefore, it is often used in date rape or other assaults.
Commonly abused narcotics include:

- Morphine
- Heroin
- Codeine

Symptoms of narcotics include:

- Drowsiness
- Relief from pain
- Suppressed appetite
**Heroin** is a white or brown narcotic made from opium poppies. It can be snorted, smoked, or injected, which cause it to enter the brain almost immediately.

Heroin users build up a tolerance very quickly, leaving the person chasing after the feeling they had after that initial use.

Heroin is also associated with fatal overdoses and is one of the top three frequently reported drugs in illicit drug abuse deaths.
Commonly abused hallucinogens include:

- PCP
- LSD
- Mescaline

Symptoms of hallucinogens include:

- Hallucinations
- Distorted perceptions of the world
- Altered mood, thoughts, and sense perceptions
LSD, or “acid”, is a hallucinogen that can be sold as tablets, capsules, liquid, or absorbent paper.

LSD affects your brain, which skews your perception of time, reality, and the environment around you. You can feel suspicious, anxious, and disoriented.

Hallucinogens can cause flashbacks weeks, months, or even years after using the drug.

Marijuana is made from the hemp plant and is smoked, eaten, or drunk.

Marijuana is a hallucinogen that also has the effects of both a depressant and a stimulant.
Marijuana use decreases your:

- Alertness
- Coordination
- Reaction time
- Concentration
- Energy and ambition

These effects can last for several hours. Marijuana can be dangerous, yet the most lethal effect is that it increases your risk for having suicidal thoughts.
Inhalants are substances with breathable fumes that are sniffed and inhaled in order to get a high.

Glue, gasoline, and paint thinner are used as inhalants.

Inhalants are deadly. A user can:

- Die the first time they use it.
- Die by suffocation.
- Die by choking on his/her own vomit.
- Die by having a heart attack.
- Die by being in an accident.
Other risks of inhalants include problems of the:

- Liver
- Lungs
- Kidneys