

Review Article

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Addiction to Drugs

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A drug is a substance that affects the way the body functions when it is used. A prescription drug is a pharmaceutical drug that legally requires a medical prescription to be dispensed. Non-medical use of prescription drugs can have the same harms as illegal drugs. If a drug is classified as illegal, this means that it is forbidden by law. Different illegal drugs have different effects on people and these effects are influenced by many factors. This makes them unpredictable and dangerous, especially for young people.

Now a couple of questions arises e.g., how to stop addiction to drugs?

We should Know our triggers

- avoiding places where we know drugs and alcohol will be available.
- surrounding ourselves with friends who don't use drugs.
- Knowing how to resist temptation.
- learning how to cope with stress and relax without drugs.
- distracting ourselves with activities like exercise or listening to music.

How to reduce or quit drugs?

Why quit drugs?

It's never too late to quit using drugs.

Reducing or quitting drugs can improve our lives in many ways. It can:

- improve our physical and mental wellbeing
- reduce our risk of permanent damage to vital organs and death
- improve our relationships with friends and family
- help us reconnect with our emotions
- increase our energy
- help us sleep better • improve our appearance
- save our money.

Recovered addicts say that they've never felt better after quitting drugs, although this can take time. Knowing why we want to quit drugs can help us to stay motivated during the withdrawal process. What quitting drugs feels like?

When we reduce or quit using drugs our body goes through a detoxification process (detox) or withdrawal.

Symptoms vary between people, and between drugs, and range from mild to serious. They can last from a few days to a few weeks it's different for every person but they are temporary. Cravings for

the drug will sometimes be weak and at other times very strong. Learning how to manage them is important for staying drug-free.

The Number of Abused Drugs is Many and Varied:

Amphetamine
 2C-B (4-Bromo-2,5-dimethoxyphenethylamine)
 Anabolic Steroids
 Aspirin
 Ayahuasca
 Benzodiazepines
 Betel nut
 Buprenorphine
 Buprenorphine – Long Acting Injectable
 Butane hash oil
 Caffeine
 Cannabinoids
 Cannabis (THC)
 CBD (Cannabidiol)
 Cocaine
 Codeine
 Crystal Methamphetamine (Ice)
 Depressants
 Dexamphetamine
 Dextromethorphan (DXM)
 Dissociatives
 DMT
 Empathogens
 Ethylone
 Fentanyl
 GHB
 Heroin
 Ibuprofen
 Inhalants
 Kava
 Ketamine
 Khat
 LSD
 MDA
 MDMA (ecstasy)
 Medicinal cannabis
 Mephedrone
 Mescaline
 Methadone
 Methoxetamine
 Naloxone
 Naltrexone

NBOMes
New psychoactive substances
Nitazenes
Nitrous oxide
Nootropics
Opioids
Opium
Oxycodone
Paracetamol
Performance & image enhancing drugs
PMA and PMMA
Psilocybin (magic mushrooms)
Psychedelics
Salvia
Stimulants
Synthetic cannabinoids
Synthetic cathinones

In this paper, a few important and common drugs will be dealt with their pros and cons, e.g., amphetamine, butane hash oil, alcohol, etc., and the rest will be dealt in some future issues.

Butane Hash Oil

Dabs or dabbing are the names for the use of concentrated butane hash oil (or BHO). It is a relatively new method of administering/ingesting cannabis that involves the inhalation of highly concentrated tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the main active chemical in cannabis. This concentrated form is produced through a chemical process using butane oil. Butane is used to extract the oils from the cannabis.



The use of butane hash oil is not a new practice, but has been gaining popularity in the USA and also here in Australia. This increase in use is thought to be associated with the liberalisation of cannabis use in the United States and Canada.

Reports suggest that butane hash oil can have a THC concentration of approximately 80% (in comparison with traditional cannabis which is about 10-25%).

What does BHO look like? The consistency of BHO can be similar to honey or wax but also hard and like glass that shatters. BHO is usually a golden amber colour but can also be translucent or opaque.

Other Names

BHO, Marijuana wax, budder, honeycomb, shatter, dab, amber, oil, wax butter, sap.

Other types of Cannabinoids:

- Cannabis (THC)
- CBD (Cannabidiol)
- Medicinal cannabis
- Synthetic cannabinoids

How is BHO used?

Cannabis is traditionally smoked in 'joints', 'bongs' or vaporised but these methods are not effective ways of consuming butane

hash oil as it becomes a 'runny liquid' when heated. A specifically designed 'bong' commonly known as an 'oil rig' is commonly used.

There is anecdotal evidence that indicates people believe dabbing is a safer method of cannabis ingestion as opposed to a bong or joint due to the high potency of dabs, which reduces the number of times it needs to be taken to produce a 'high'.

It has been reported that the home production of BHO (known as blasting) is hazardous as butane is flammable and highly volatile, with a number of incidents such as explosions, fires and severe burns occurring in the US.

There is little known about the risks of 'dabs' compared to traditional cannabis but it has been proposed that the increased level of THC and the unique method of administration may increase the risk of dependence and intensify withdrawal symptoms [1].

Effects of BHO

Use of any drug can have risks. It's important to be careful when taking any type of drug. Butane hash oil affects everyone differently, based on:

size, weight and health; whether the person is used to taking it; whether other drugs are taken around the same time; the amount taken; the strength of the drug (varies from batch to batch); the environment (where the drug is taken).

Low to Moderate use of Cannabis May Produce the Following Effects:

Feelings of relaxation and euphoria; spontaneous laughter and excitement; increased sociability; increased appetite; dry mouth.

High-strength cannabis in the form of butane hash oil may produce the following effects:

Relaxation; reduced nausea; changes to heart rate and blood pressure; Pain relief; excitement and restlessness; confusion and paranoia; anxiety and panic; reduced attention rate; decreased reaction times; detachment from reality.

Impact of Mood and Environment

Drugs that affect a person's mental state (psychoactive drugs) can also have varied effects depending on a person's mood (often called the 'set') or the environment they are in (the 'setting'):

- **Set:** a person's state of mind, previous encounters with butane hash oil and expectations of what's going to happen. For example, if you have been experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression, the use of Butane Hash Oil might make these symptoms worse and lead to a bad experience [2,3].
- **Setting:** the environment in which someone consumes BHO – whether it's known and familiar, who they're with, if they're indoors or outdoors, the type of music and light. For example, using BHO in a calm, quiet and relaxed environment can lead to, or contribute to, a pleasant experience but being in a noisy, crowded place may result in a negative experience.

Long-Term Effects

Long-term effects are dependent on how much and how often cannabis is consumed and may also be affected by how cannabis is consumed (e.g. vaporising a concentrate versus smoking the flower). Heavy, regular use of cannabis may eventually cause: tolerance to the effects of cannabis; dependence on cannabis; lung injury; reduced cognitive functioning.

BHO and Mental Health

People who use extremely strong THC cannabis concentrates (such as BHO) may put themselves at a greater risk of experiencing mental health harms such as depression, anxiety and psychosis.

Individuals with a family history of serious mental illnesses such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder – or who currently experience symptoms of these conditions – should also avoid using BHO.

Tolerance and Dependence

People who regularly use BHO can quickly become dependent on the drug. They may feel they need BHO to go about their normal activities like working, studying and socialising, or just to get through the day. They may also develop a tolerance to it, which means they need to take larger amounts of BHO to get the same effect.

Mixing BHO with Other Drugs

Mixing BHO (cannabis) with other drugs can have unpredictable effects and increase the risk of harm.

- Cannabis and alcohol: can cause nausea, impaired coordination, vomiting.
- Cannabis and cocaine/speed/ice: can lead to anxiety, paranoia, confusion, and thought loops.
- Cannabis and psychedelics: may increase the effects which can lead to confusion or a challenging experience/bad trip.

2C-B (4-Bromo-2,5-dimethoxyphenethylamine)



2C-B (4-Bromo-2,5-dimethoxyphenethylamine) is a psychedelic drug, which means it can affect all the senses, altering a person's thinking, sense of time and emotions. Psychedelics can cause a person to hallucinate, seeing or hearing things that do not exist or are distorted. 2C-B is part of the '2C' group of drugs, which is a general name for phenethylamines. The '2C' group of drugs are psychedelic but can also cause stimulant effects. Drugs from this group include 2C-C, 2C-P, 2C-E and 2C-I. The effects vary among each drug in this group.

What does 2C-B look like?

According to anecdotal user reports, 2C-B usually comes as a white powder or crystal and is sometimes pressed into a tablet similar to MDMA.

Other Names: Nexus, BDMPEA, Venus, Bees

How is 2C-B used?

2C-B is usually taken via the mouth (orally). 2C-B can be snorted, but anecdotal reports suggest this method of use can be very painful.

Effects of 2C-B

Use of any drug can have risks. It's important to be careful when taking any type of drug. Psychedelics affect everyone differently, based on:

Size, weight and health; whether the person is used to taking it; whether other drugs are taken around the same time; the amount taken; the strength of the drug (varies from batch to batch); environment (where the drug is taken).; 2C-B affects everyone differently, but effects may include:

Dry mouth; increased blood pressure and heart rate; nausea and vomiting; dizziness; drowsiness; confidence; euphoria; feelings of well-being; anxiety and panic; change in perception; hearing sounds; confusion; sexual arousal; hallucinations; insomnia

The effects of 2C-B typically last from four to eight hours. There have been anecdotal reports it can last for up to 12 hours.

Impact of Mood and Environment

Drugs that affect a person's mental state (psychoactive drugs) can also have varied effects depending on a person's mood (often called the 'set') or the environment they're in (the 'setting').

Set is a person's state of mind, previous encounters with psychedelic drugs, and expectations of what's going to happen. For example, feelings of stress or anxiety before using 2C-B may result in an unpleasant experience (bad trip).

Setting is the environment in which someone consumes 2C-B – whether it's known and familiar, who they're with, if they're indoors or outdoors, the type of music and light. For example, using 2C-B in a calm, quiet and relaxed environment could lead or contribute to a pleasant experience but being in a noisy, crowded place may result in a negative experience. Being in a good state of mind, with trusted friends and a safe environment before taking 2C-B reduces the risk of having a 'bad' trip.

Overdose

There have been no reported deaths from 2C-B, but deaths have occurred from the use of other 2C drugs. According to anecdotal user reports, the after-effects or comedown of taking 2C-B can last for around 2-4 hours.

Long-Term Effects

To our best knowledge, there have been no scientific studies into the long-term effects of 2C-B use.

2C-B and Mental Health

People with a family history of mental illness are more likely to experience anxiety or paranoia after using 2C-B. This is consistent with what the evidence tells us about people with mental illness and psychedelic use.

Bad Trips Some people may have negative experiences taking psychedelics, or experiences they find challenging. This can include experiencing:

frightening or confronting hallucinations; intense anxiety and confusion; fear and paranoia.^{5,7}; Tolerance and dependence; Similar to other psychedelics, 2C-B does not produce dependence. Some people that use 2C-B report a tolerance to it after regular use (more than once every five to seven days) [3].

Mixing 2C-B with other Drugs

The effects of taking 2C-B with other drugs – including over-the-counter or prescribed medications – can be unpredictable and dangerous.

2C-B + cannabis = a more intense psychedelic experience which could result in anxiety and increase the chances of having a 'bad trip' [4].

2C-B + tramadol = a lowering of the seizure threshold. May cause seizures in predisposed individuals.

Reducing Harm

Start with a lower dose until you know how the drug affects you personally. It will be different for everyone due to factors such as weight, tolerance and metabolism.

Always weigh the 2C-B before use, using a milligram scale. A 15mg dose will produce a very different experience to a 30mg dose. Consider the impact of mood and environment. Consider having a person to 'trip sit'. A person who remains sober and that can help out if needed.

Avoid snorting as anecdotal user reports are this is extremely painful and can damage your nose and cause nose bleeds.

Withdrawal:

There is limited information regarding regular use of 2C-B and withdrawal symptoms.

Alcohol



Alcohol is a depressant drug, which means it slows down the messages travelling between the brain and body.

What Does Alcohol Look Like?

Alcohol is a colourless fermented or brewed liquid made from ethanol and flavoured water.

Other Names: Booze, grog, piss, liquor, charge, plonk, bevies, nip

How is Alcohol Used?

Alcohol is typically drunk in the form of beer, wine, cider or spirits. It can affect you quickly depending on the type of drink, as well as a person's weight, height, health and amount consumed.

Effects of Alcohol

Use of any Drug can Have Risks

It's important to be careful when taking any type of drug. The Australian guidelines recommend no more than 10 standard drinks a week and no more than 4 drinks in one day to reduce the risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury [6].

Alcohol Affects Everyone Differently, Based on

size, weight and health; whether the person is used to drinking it; whether other drugs are taken around the same time; the amount drunk; the strength of the drink

You May Experience

Feeling relaxed; increased confidence and energy; trouble concentrating; slower reflexes; clumsiness; slurred speech; feeling happier or sadder, depending on your mood.

National Alcohol Guidelines

Based on the latest scientific evidence, new alcohol guidelines have been released to help reduce the risk of alcohol harm and improve the health of Australians.

Impact of Mood and Environment

Drugs that affect a person's mental state (psychoactive drugs) can also have varied effects depending on a person's mood (often called the 'set') or the environment they are in (the 'setting'):

- **Set:** a person's state of mind, previous encounters with alcohol, and expectations of what's going to happen. For example, feelings of stress or anxiety before drinking may result in an unpleasant experience and worsening of those feelings.
- **Setting:** the environment in which someone consumes alcohol. For example, heavy drinking tends to occur more when we're with friends and at social events, and we can make more risky decisions in these environments due to lowered inhibitions.

Overdose: If you drink a large amount, you could overdose.

Call an ambulance straight away by dialling, if you or someone else has any of the following symptoms (Emergency services are there to help and can provide instructions over the phone): slowed breathing; confusion; blurred vision; nausea, vomiting; passing out; coma.

Coming Down

The following day after drinking alcohol, you may have a hangover. Effects include:

Headache; nausea; tiredness and trembling; increased heart rate and blood pressure; dry mouth; trouble concentrating; anxiety; poor or decreased sleep.

Sobering up takes time – the liver gets rid of about one standard drink per hour. Sweating it out with exercise, cold showers, coffee, fresh air, or vomiting won't speed up the process. This may ease the symptoms, but it won't remove alcohol from the bloodstream any faster. This means it may not be safe to drive or work the following day.

Long-Term Effects: Regular and heavy use of alcohol can cause: worsening of mental health conditions; poor memory and brain damage; difficulty getting an erection; difficulty having children; liver disease; cancer; high blood pressure and heart disease; needing to drink more to get the same effect; physical dependence on alcohol.

Alcohol and Mental Health: Research shows a relationship between people who are dependent on alcohol and increased mental health issues. People with mental health issues may also drink more alcohol to self-medicate. Although alcohol might feel like it relieves symptoms of anxiety or depression in the short term, it is more likely to lead to longer-term anxiety and depression.

Tolerance and Dependence: People who regularly use alcohol can become dependent on the drug. They may feel they need alcohol to go about their normal activities like working, studying and socialising, or just to get through the day. They may also

develop a tolerance to it, which means they need to drink larger amounts of alcohol to get the same effect. People who develop a tolerance and dependence on alcohol experience more alcohol related harms.

Mixing Alcohol with other Drugs: Mixing alcohol with other drugs can have unpredictable effects and increase the risk of harm

Alcohol and Cannabis: can cause nausea, impaired coordination, vomiting. Alcohol and cocaine/ice/speed can feel less intoxicated due to the stimulant effect of methamphetamine/cocaine and lead to drinking more. Increases risk of alcohol poisoning.

Alcohol and Benzodiazepines/GHB/Heroin: high risk of overdose, may feel clumsy or uncoordinated, shallow breathing, nausea and vomiting, memory loss, passing out, and possible death.

Reducing Harm

There are ways you can reduce the risk of harm when drinking alcohol:

- Follow the Australian drinking guidelines – no more than 10 standard drinks in a week and no more than 4 standard drinks at any one time
- Drink water or other non-alcoholic beverages between alcoholic drinks.
- Avoid drinking in rounds with friends, as you may end up drinking more than planned.
- Order smaller serves of beer, cider and spirits, rather than pints or double serves.
- Don't let others top up your glass if you're sharing a bottle of wine as you may lose track of how many drinks you've had.
- Avoid high-alcohol content beverages, such as cocktails or spirits. Set the number of drinks you'll have, and count them to help you stick to it
- Eat some food before and while drinking, to slow your drinking pace and slow the absorption of alcohol.
- Occupy yourself while drinking to reduce the amount you're consuming; play pool, sing karaoke, dance, talk to friends.

Withdrawal

Giving up alcohol after a long time is challenging because the body has to get used to functioning without it. Please seek advice from a health professional as alcohol withdrawal can be serious and sometimes cause death.

Withdrawal symptoms can start within a few hours after the last drinks and can last for two to seven days. Symptoms include: Sweating; tremors; nausea; anxiety, irritability, difficulty sleeping; seizure of fits; poor appetite; delusions and hallucinations; death.

Amphetamines



What are Amphetamines?

Amphetamines are stimulant drugs, which means they speed up the messages travelling between the brain and the body.

Some types of amphetamines, such as dexamphetamine, are prescribed by doctors to treat conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and narcolepsy (a disorder that affects a person's sleep cycle).

Other types of amphetamines, such as speed, are produced and sold illegally. Amphetamines have also been taken as performance enhancement drugs. The most potent form is crystal methamphetamine (ice).

What do they Look Like?

The appearance of amphetamines varies from powder and crystal forms, to capsules and tablets. They may be packaged in 'foils' (aluminium foil), plastic bags or small balloons when sold illegally.

Amphetamine powder can range in colour from white through to brown, sometimes it may have traces of grey or pink. It has a strong smell and bitter taste. Amphetamine capsules and tablets vary considerably in size and colour.

Illegally produced amphetamines can be a mix of drugs, binding agents, caffeine and sugar. New psychoactive substances, such as protonitazene, have also been found in illegal amphetamines.

Prescription amphetamines such as dexamphetamine and lisdexamfetamine (Vyvanse) usually come in pill or tablet form. Slang names: Speed, up, uppers, louee, goey, whiz, rack.

Other types of Stimulants

Betel nut; Caffeine; Cocaine Crystal; Methamphetamine (Ice); Dexamphetamine Khat; Synthetic cathinones; Tobacco.

How are Amphetamines Used

Amphetamines are generally snorted, swallowed, injected or smoked.

Effects of Amphetamines

Use of any drug can have risks. It's important to be careful when taking any type of drug. Amphetamines affect everyone differently, based on:

size, weight and health; whether the person is used to taking it; whether other drugs are taken around the same time; the amount taken; the strength of the drug (varies from batch to batch with illegally produced drugs). You might feel the effects of amphetamines immediately (if injected or smoked) or within 30 minutes (if snorted or swallowed). You might experience: feeling happy and confident; talking more and feeling energetic; large pupils and dry mouth; fast heartbeat and breathing; increased blood pressure; high body temperature dehydration; teeth grinding; reduced appetite; nausea and vomiting; increased sex drive.

Snorting amphetamines can damage the nasal passage and cause nose bleeds. If injecting drugs, there is an increased risk of:

Tetanus; infection; vein damage and blood clots; If sharing needles, there is an increased risk of: hepatitis B.; hepatitis C.; HIV and AIDS. Impact of mood and environment:

Drugs that affect a person's mental state (psychoactive drugs) can also have varied effects depending on a person's mood (often called the 'set') or the environment they are in (the 'setting'):

Set: a person's state of mind, previous encounters with drugs, and expectations of what's going to happen. For example, feelings of stress or anxiety before using amphetamines may result in an unpleasant experience and make those feelings worse.

Setting: the environment in which someone consumes amphetamines – whether it's known and familiar, who they're with, if they're indoors or outdoors, the type of music and light. For example, using amphetamines in a relaxed environment may result in a different experience than being in a noisy, crowded place.

Overdose

If you take a large amount or have a strong batch, you could overdose.

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