

KNOW YOUR STUFF

DRUG FIRST AID



WHAT IS IT?

Drugs are unpredictable in their effects and risks, and there may be times when someone has a bad reaction. It is important to know what to look out for and what to do – it could be life-saving.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Someone who is having a bad experience may be:

- Confused or hallucinating
- Having a panic or anxiety attack
- Feeling or being sick
- Struggling with their breathing
- Feeling too cold or too hot
- Having a seizure
- Noticing their heart rate is much faster or slower than usual
- Drowsy or unconscious.

The type of drug they have taken will play a part – for example, someone who has overdosed on a stimulant such as ecstasy or cocaine is at risk of overheating, whereas someone who has had a strong reaction to ketamine or a benzodiazepine is in danger of passing out.

WHAT TO DO

Drug overdoses are medical emergencies, so don't delay in calling 999 and providing as much information about the situation as possible – you won't be in trouble. In the meantime, do the following:

- Keep calm – the person and those around them may be panicking, so keep a cool head.
- Stay with the person – leaving them alone makes them very vulnerable, and their state may deteriorate.
- If the person is distressed, move them to a quieter location and provide reassurance – remember that a mental health crisis is also a medical emergency.
- If the person is having a seizure, try and keep the immediate environment safe so they don't injure themselves – don't restrain them.
- If the person is overheating, try and cool them down by using a fan, removing layers of clothing and giving them sips of water – but don't take extreme measures such as pouring cold water over them.
- If the person isn't fully conscious, put them in the recovery position – having a first aid app on your phone is a good idea.

Naloxone

Naloxone is an antidote for overdoses caused by opiate drugs such as heroin, codeine and fentanyl. It works by reversing the breathing problems these drugs can cause, meaning that administering naloxone in an emergency situation can be truly life-saving. However, access to naloxone varies, the effects are short-lived so the person still needs urgent medical care, and it shouldn't be used as a safety net to take extra risks as it doesn't work that way.



RECOVERY POSITION

[Click here to watch a video on how to put someone into the recovery position.](#)

For more information, go to:



<https://www.crew.scot/drugs-information/what-you-need-to-know/overdose/>



DSM foundation
The drug education charity

www.dsmfoundation.org.uk

The Wellbeing Hub
– from Teen Tips –



www.teentips.co.uk