

## Helplines and Websites

National Drugs and H.I.V Helpline  
Freephone: 1800 459 459

Alateen

Web: [www.al-anon-ireland.org](http://www.al-anon-ireland.org)

Email: [info@al-anon-ireland.org](mailto:info@al-anon-ireland.org)

Ph: 01 8723699

HSE Drugs and Alcohol Counselling  
and Information Service

Helpline Lo Call: 1850 700 850

[www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie)

[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

[www.drugs.ie](http://www.drugs.ie)

[www.exchangehouse.ie](http://www.exchangehouse.ie)

Ph: 01 8721094

Fax; 01 8721118

Email: [info@exchangehouse.ie](mailto:info@exchangehouse.ie)



This leaflet was produced by St.Oliver's Park and Labre Park young womens group with the hope that it will educate other young people around the effects and dangers of substance misuse.



**EXCHANGE HOUSE**  
National Travellers Service

61 Great Strand St

Dublin 1

Phone: 01 8721094

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**EXCHANGE HOUSE**  
National Travellers Service

## Knowing the Facts About Drugs

Knowing the facts about drugs makes it easier to talk about drugs in an open and informed way. This leaflet gives you:

- ◆ Information on Marijuana and Alcohol
- ◆ A brief introduction to why young people do drugs
- ◆ Details of where to get more information, support and help



## Why People Use Drugs

**Different people use different drugs for different reasons.**

There are of course legal drugs which we all come across every day. For example, you may take medicine when you are sick, alcohol to help you relax or coffee to help you stay awake.

What we are talking about in this leaflet is the harmful effects of alcohol and marijuana.

## Alcohol and its effects

Alcohol use among young people can cause serious effects on their physical and mental health. These include:

**Hangover:** This happens when a young person is dehydrated. Symptoms often include headaches, vomiting and they may become irritable.

**Risks:** Young people who drink are more likely to smoke and try drugs.

**Poor Schools Performance:** Alcohol use can be a major factor in the result and cause of difficulties in school. It also restricts the development of other skills such as decision making, social and political skills.

**Anti Social behaviour and mental health:** Alcohol is a "depressant". Heavy drinking and binge drinking are often linked to anti-social behaviour, mental health problems and permanent brain damage.

**Premature Death:** Accidents, suicide and violence are the main causes of death in young people between the ages of 16-25. Alcohol is often involved in these cases.

**If a young person drinks before they are 15 they are:**

- ◆ four times more likely to develop alcohol dependency than those who wait until they are 21.
- ◆ Seven times more likely to be in a car crash because of drinking.
- ◆ Eleven times more likely to suffer unintentional injuries because of drinking.

## Marijuana and its effects

Marijuana is the most used drug among young people. It's an illegal drug that can be smoked (in a pipe or rolled with tobacco as a spliff or joint) or eaten.

**Hallucinations:** If the effects of marijuana are strong then you might hallucinate. It affects different people in different ways.

**Mental Health** many people feel paranoid, scared or sick after smoking marijuana. Unpleasant reactions include fearfulness, confusion, severe panic and anxiety, paranoid reactions and hallucinations. Users may undergo temporary and in a small percentage of cases, severe psychological distress

**Poor School Performance:** Smoking marijuana can affect memory, concentration and motivation.

**Physical Health:** Like cigarettes, smoking marijuana damages your throat and lungs. When burned, cannabis cigarette produces three times more carcinogenic "tars" than tobacco and five times more poisonous carbon monoxide.

**Increased appetite:** You can get cravings for junk food which will lead to weight gain which could contribute to further health problems.