



Remote  
Health

# Course materials

## Creating good habits

### Avoidance of drugs



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## Introduction (4, 5)

**What are drugs?  
What is drug addiction?**



## Definition: What are drugs?

- Chemical substances that affect the body and brain
- Some drugs are legal (caffeine, nicotine, alcohol) while others are illegal.
- Medicines are used to treat illnesses. However, some can be abused as drugs.
- Illegal drugs are controlled and regulated globally.



## What is drug addiction?

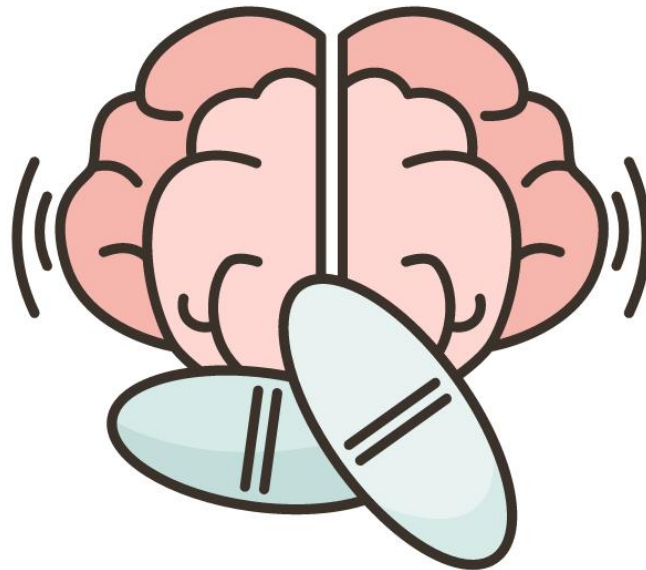
Drug addiction is a chronic brain illness that leads to compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences.

It impairs self-control and a person's ability to resist the strong urge to take drugs.

Most individuals affected by drug addiction are unable to quit on their own. Treatment combining medication and therapy can help people overcome their addiction and achieve long-term recovery.



## What happens to the brain when you take drugs<sup>(3)</sup>



- Drugs impair the normal functioning of the brain.
- Some drugs mimic natural neurotransmitters.
- Other drugs cause an increased release of dopamine.
- Over time, the body adapts to the elevated dopamine levels. The drugs are perceived as less effective, and users increase the dosage. To achieve the same effect or pleasurable feeling, more drugs need to be taken.



- Regular drug use can have long-term consequences.
- Brain functions and the chemical balance of important body substances can be impaired.
- Studies have shown changes in brain regions responsible for critical thinking, learning, decision-making, memory, and behavior on images depicting brain function.
- These changes lead drug addicts to continue using drugs despite negative consequences, resulting in drug addiction.





## The most known drugs<sup>(1)</sup>

**Cannabis, coke, ecstasy, heroin, LSD,  
methamphetamine**



**Cannabis:** Tobacco-like substance made from the flowers and leaves of the Cannabis (hemp) plant. It is usually smoked, consumed in food, or drunk as tea.



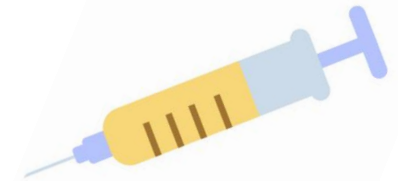
**Cocaine:** Fine white powder made from the leaves of the coca plant. It is taken through the nose or injected.



**Ecstasy:** Chemical drug often produced in illegal labs. It is taken as a tablet, sometimes in the form of capsules or powder.



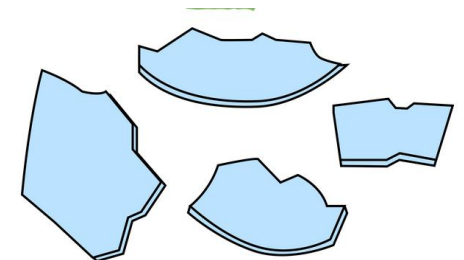
**Heroin:** Made from morphine, a naturally occurring substance found in the opium plant. It is a white/brown powder and is usually injected.



**LSD:** Also known as "acid." Semi-synthetic drug made from a substance that occurs naturally in mold fungus on grains. It is often taken in the form of small pieces of paper soaked with the substance.



**Methamphetamine:** Synthetic drug produced in mostly illegal labs, available as powder, tablets, or crystals. Can be taken in various ways.

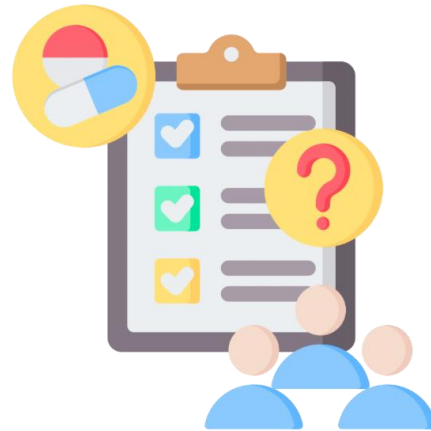


## Causes of substance abuse<sup>(4)</sup>

Social, psychological and biological factors



The causes of substance abuse can vary from person to person. There can be many different reasons responsible for it.



## Social factors

- Peer pressure (one of the main causes)
- Role models/imitation
- Easy availability
- Conflicts (often within the family)
- Cultural/religious reasons
- Lack of social or family support
- Social attitudes
- Celebrations



## Psychological factors

- Curiosity
- Insufficient self-control
- Sensation-seeking (thrill-seeking)
- Low self-esteem (anomie)
- Poor stress coping
- Loss or trauma in childhood
- As a relief from fatigue or boredom
- To escape reality
- Lack of interest in conventional goals
- Psychological distress



## Biological factors

- Family history, genetic predisposition
- Pre-existing psychiatric or personality disorder
- Medical condition
- Reinforcing effect of drugs
- Withdrawal effects and cravings
- Biochemical factors





## Consequences of substance abuse in adolescents (4)



Young people who persistently consume illegal substances often experience a range of problems. These include academic difficulties, health issues (including mental health problems), poor peer relationships, and involvement in the juvenile justice system.

Furthermore, there are negative consequences for family members and the society as a whole.



## Academic performance



Lower grades, decreased engagement in education, not going to school, and other activities, as well as an increased likelihood of dropping out of school or vocational training, are issues associated with adolescent drug abuse.

## Health and safety

Psychoactive drugs affect the central nerve system and alter a person's feelings, thoughts, and behavior. They directly affect the brain or the central nerve system (CNS) and lead to various complications as well as health and behavioral problems.



## Health and safety

Injuries from accidents (e.g., car accidents), physical disabilities and illnesses, as well as the effects of possible overdose, are among the health consequences of substance abuse. A disproportionately high number of adolescents who consume alcohol and other drugs have an increased risk of death from suicide, homicide, accidents, and illness.



## Treatment approaches for drug addiction <sup>(5)</sup>





Medication and behavioral therapy are important elements of a comprehensive therapy process, particularly when combined. This process often involves detoxification, followed by treatment and relapse prevention. A continuation of care, including a special treatment plan that addresses all aspects of a person's life, including medical and psychiatric care, as well as aftercare options, can be crucial to a person's success in achieving and maintaining a drug-free lifestyle.

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