



A Closer Look at How Substances Affect the Mind and Body

Substance use can have significant impacts on both the mind and body, with effects varying depending on the substance, frequency of use, and the individual's overall health. Prolonged substance use can lead to serious mental and physical health issues. Early intervention, education, and seeking help when substance use becomes problematic are crucial in minimizing risks. For additional information and support, reach out to the EAP.

Alcohol:

- **Physical Effects:** Slurred speech, dizziness, lack of coordination, impaired reflexes, increased heart rate and blood pressure, nausea, vomiting, and dehydration
- **Mental Effects:** Lowered inhibitions, impaired memory, judgment, and decision-making, mood swings, difficulty focusing, and potential anxiety or depression
- **Addiction:** Prolonged use can lead to dependence

Tobacco:

- **Physical Effects:** Increased heart rate and blood pressure, reduced oxygen in the blood, dry mouth, bad breath, dental issues, coughing, throat irritation, dizziness, lightheadedness, leads to diseases, cancer, a weakened immune system, and premature aging
- **Mental Effects:** Mood swings, energy crashes, sleep disturbances, increased stress, anxiety and depression, cognitive decline with long-term use
- **Addiction:** Nicotine is highly addictive, often leading to cravings, irritability, and anxiety when trying to quit

Marijuana:

- **Physical Effects:** Increased heart rate, dry mouth, red eyes, impaired coordination, memory issues, difficulty concentrating, increased appetite, respiratory problems, and a weakened immune system
- **Mental Effects:** Altered sensory perception, anxiety, paranoia, or panic, impaired memory, difficulty with complex thinking, increased risk of mood disorders
- **Addiction:** Can lead to cannabis use disorder

Cocaine, Methamphetamine, Stimulants:

- **Physical Effects:** Increased heart rate, blood pressure, and body temperature, dilated pupils, reduced appetite, hyperactivity, severe restlessness, physical agitation, weight loss, malnutrition. Long-term use can lead to heart attacks, strokes, and seizures
- **Mental Effects:** Heightened alertness, increased energy, aggression, anxiety, paranoia, hallucinations, cognitive decline, and mood swings
- **Addiction:** Highly addictive, with compulsive use leading to severe withdrawal symptoms

Opioids:

- **Physical Effects:** Drowsiness, slowed breathing, nausea, constipation, constricted pupils, respiratory depression, risk of infectious disease, liver and kidney damage
- **Mental Effects:** Sedation, drowsiness, confusion, slowed mental functioning, emotional numbness, anxiety, depression, cognitive impairments, and memory loss
- **Addiction:** Opioid use leads to dependence, a high risk of overdose, and compulsive drug-seeking behavior

Hallucinogens:

- **Physical Effects:** Dilated pupils, increased heart rate, elevated body temperature, nausea, dizziness, loss of coordination, tremors, and muscle twitches
- **Mental Effects:** Altered perceptions of time, space, and sensory experiences, emotional highs and lows
- **Addiction:** Can lead to physiological dependence