



**TALKING**  
TO YOUR  
**TEEN**  
ABOUT DRUGS

**FRANK**

Friendly, confidential drugs advice [talktofrank.com](http://talktofrank.com)

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# UNDERSTANDING THE FACTS

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Most teens come into contact with drugs in some form or another at some point in their life. If they do decide to take them (the majority of teens don't) it might be a case of rebellion, and the need to fit in. Some might use them as a way to relax, get high, and lose their inhibitions. It could even be down to curiosity. A chance to experiment with different drugs and see what it's like.

As a parent, it's a good idea to fully understand the facts about drugs. To sit down, and have an

honest conversation with your son or daughter about the risks and effects different drugs have. These conversations will help them feel more confident and comfortable about making the right choices both now, and in the future.

You can use the information in this leaflet as a way to chat honestly about the effects and risks of different substances with your teen. You'll find advice, information on a few specific drugs, as well as some frequently asked questions.

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## LITTLE BITS OF ADVICE FOR TALKING WITH YOUR KIDS ABOUT DRUGS

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### 1. BE PREPARED.

Before talking to your teen, make sure you're well-informed on the drugs you'll be talking to them about.

### 2. BEING HEAVY-HANDED WON'T WORK.

Talk to your teens candidly, but calmly and reassure them that they can talk to you about drugs.

### 3. BALANCE IS KEY.

Make sure your teen is fully clued up on the ins and outs of drugs, through reliable and credible sources. Doing so will allow them to make smart choices. Both now, and in the future.

### 4. KEEP IT SIMPLE.

Try not to overload your son or daughter with information on drugs. They can find out everything they need to know on the FRANK website.

Grown from a plant, cannabis, also known as weed, marijuana, and skunk, is the most widely used drug in Britain. It is classed as a sedating and hallucinogenic drug.



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# CANNABIS

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## THE EFFECTS

The effects of cannabis vary from person to person. For example, some people feel relaxed and chilled out, while others might tend to become more talkative or get the giggles.

Users are usually more aware of their senses, whilst the hallucinogenic effects of cannabis can make it feel like time is slowing down.

Cannabis may cause feelings of anxiety, suspicion, panic and paranoia.

## THE RISKS

There is a link between prolonged cannabis use, and an increased risk of developing a form of psychotic illness, such as schizophrenia. And for those with a family history of mental illness, that risk is increased further.

Using cannabis over a long period of time can affect the way the brain works. Learning and concentration levels are diminished, something which is particularly damaging in people who are still growing.

**K**etamine is a powerful general anaesthetic that's used for operations on humans and animals. The effects don't last long, but until they wear off, ketamine can cause a loss of feeling in the body and paralysis of the muscles. It can also lead to users experiencing a distortion of reality.

# KETAMAM

## THE EFFECTS

Ketamine can produce a floaty feeling for the user, making them feel chilled out and relaxed. It can also make the user physically incapable of moving. Sometimes, a feeling of being completely detached from the body and surroundings can be experienced. This is sometimes referred to as a 'k-hole'.

Ketamine has also been known to cause hallucinations, a bit like LSD. And like LSD, both good and bad 'trips' can be experienced, which can last up to an hour.

## RISKS

High doses, especially when mixed with alcohol, can cause breathing difficulty and increased heart rate. In the worst cases, it can even cause death.

# INE

One of the more recent discoveries about ketamine is its effect on the bladder. It has been known to cause severe pain and difficulty when passing urine.

Legal highs are substances which mimic the effects of drugs such as cocaine, ecstasy or cannabis. The main difference is that they're not controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act. Despite mimicking the effects of illegal drugs, they're chemically and structurally different enough to avoid being officially classified as illegal substances.

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# LEGAL HIGHS

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## THE EFFECTS AND RISKS

One of the biggest problems with legal highs is that little, or no research has gone in to their effects, especially their long-term effects. However, we know that if they produce similar psychological effects as cocaine, ecstasy or cannabis, they are also likely to carry similar risks. And some will have new risks that we don't know about yet.

So, legal highs are far from harmless. For example, substances with similar health risks to cocaine and ecstasy can increase the chances of seizures, comas, and in the worst cases, death.

## LEGAL HIGHS AREN'T SO LEGAL

Some drugs sold as legal highs have actually been found to contain a controlled substance meaning they aren't legal to possess at all.

The Government has now introduced new powers, meaning they can place a temporary ban on any potentially harmful substance, while a decision is made on whether it should be permanently controlled.

Teachers have the powers to search students they believe to be in possession of illegal substances. If a legal high is found, teachers are able to confiscate and dispose of them, in line with the school's policy.

# FAQs

## **WHY IS MY CHILD TRYING DRUGS?**

Reasons change from person to person. It could be experimentation or rebellion. A common reason is peer pressure and wanting to fit in. Talking to your child candidly and calmly about drugs helps to build their confidence, and deal sensibly with any pressure they might face.

## **DOES TOUGH LOVE WORK?**

Help and support is always the best way to deal with a son or daughter who is taking drugs. Being too harsh and strict can often be counterproductive. If you

are particularly worried about your teen, don't feel like you have to tackle the problem alone. Adfam, Action on Addiction and Families Anonymous are just some of the support groups who are there to help.

## **MY SON OR DAUGHTER IS ACTING DIFFERENTLY, AND I THINK THEY'RE HANGING OUT WITH THE WRONG CROWD. WHAT CAN I DO?**

Growing up can be tough. Everyone's been through it. And it's no different for your son or daughter. With changing bodies and surging hormones, it's no surprise that sometimes they might act slightly off. With this in mind, talk to your teen calmly about what's going on in their lives. And if the drugs issue arises, make sure they're aware of both the legal and physical risks of taking them. Leaving a few leaflets and books around the house might be a good idea too.

## **IS MY TEEN AN ADDICT?**

The simple answer is probably not. Whilst it's natural to feel anxious and concerned if your child has, or is taking drugs, there's no need to panic about the extent of it. There's no strong evidence to indicate that young people who experiment with drugs become regular users. For example, only a very small minority of people who use cannabis move on to other drugs.

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If you require more information about drugs  
please talk to FRANK on 0800 776600 or visit [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)