



How

- ▶ These preparations are available in the form of tablets, capsules, injection ampoules or syrups.
- ▶ They are usually bought from the chemist shops without a legal prescription.
- ▶ They may also be sold by blackmarket dealers.
- ▶ Under such circumstances, they are sold for several times the maximum retail price.
- ▶ To produce intoxicating effects they are usually taken in doses much larger than what is required for legitimate medicinal purposes.

It does

- ▶ Withdrawal (i.e., when the drug is not available to an addict) causes nausea and vomiting, sweats, running nose, excessive tears from eyes, shakes, sleeplessness, and muscle cramps, pains and aches all over the body.
- ▶ In severe cases, withdrawal may also lead to fits or even death.
- ▶ Overdose may lead to death.
- ▶ Some pharmaceuticals, when taken in higher doses, may cause damage to liver producing jaundice or damage to brain producing mental illnesses or fits, besides the risk of death due to respiratory suppression.
- ▶ Causes vein damage and abscesses when injected.

Alcohol

Cocktails; Daru; Sharab

It is

- ▶ A depressant - reduces the activity of the central nervous system and brain.
- ▶ Alcoholic drinks vary with percentage of alcohol content.

Why

- ▶ Alcohol-use by parents, and peer pressure can cause youngsters to abuse the substance.

- ▶ Advertisements tend to link drinking with highly valued personal attributes such as sociability, elegance and physical attractiveness, as well as with success, relaxation, romance and adventure. It is further linked with an increased ability to solve problems and "being cool".

It does

- ▶ It can lead to unsafe sexual practices, which increase the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases and blood-borne viruses like HIV.
- ▶ People who begin drinking before the age of 15 are more likely to develop alcoholism than those who begin at 21.
- ▶ Alcohol abuse is the main cause of family violence and traffic accidents in India.
- ▶ Alcohol damages the liver and is the most common cause of illness and death from liver disease.
- ▶ Can cause sexual functional problems and loss of motor skills.
- ▶ Can cause foetal alcohol syndrome in the babies of women who abuse alcohol during pregnancy.
- ▶ Binge drinking can cause serious damage to the brain during the period of growth, which normally ends in one's early-20s.
- ▶ Withdrawal (i.e., when not available to an addict) may cause sleeplessness, tremors and in severe cases, fits, mental illness and may even be fatal.



Tobacco

- ▶ Highly addictive.
- ▶ Usually the first drug young people try.
- ▶ Causes lung cancer and heart disease.
- ▶ Youths take up smoking generally due to peer pressure or by imitating parents.

Is it true that sniffing petrol or whitening fluids is also addictive?

Yes. There are number of substances of everyday use collectively referred to as inhalants. These include substances such as correction fluid used by typists, petrol, cleaning fluids, nail polish remover and glues. All these substances have volatile solvents which, if inhaled, can give the user a 'high' and lead to addiction. In the long run, these substances can cause significant permanent damage to the brain.

Drugs and the law

1. Is my child punishable by law if he is caught with drugs?

Yes. Possession of drugs is in itself an offence under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS Act). It does not matter whether the possession is for personal consumption or for any other purpose. The punishment depends upon the quantity of drugs possessed. However, if the user is charged with either possession of small quantities of drugs or with consumption of drugs and he voluntarily seeks to undergo medical treatment for de-addiction from a hospital or an institution maintained or recognised by the government or a local authority, there is no prosecution. This immunity from prosecution may be withdrawn if treatment for de-addiction is completed.

2. What if he is caught carrying drugs for himself and his friends for a party?

Then the quantity of drugs she is found with may exceed what is considered "small" and she will be dealt with accordingly. The penalty for possession of various quantities of drugs is shown below:

Small quantity

Up to 6 months imprisonment or fine up to Rs. 10,000 or both

More than small quantity but less than commercial quantity

Up to 10 years imprisonment and fine up to Rs. 1,00,000.

Commercial quantity

Imprisonment of 10 to 20 years and fine of Rs. 1,00,000 to Rs. 2,00,000

3. How much drug is considered small or commercial quantity?

The quantities differ with the type of drug and are notified by the government. The quantities for a few common drugs are below:

Drug	Small qty*	Commercial qty**
Heroin	5 grams	250 grams
Cocaine	2 grams	100 grams
Hashish/ charas	100 grams	1 kg
Opium	25 grams	2.5 kg
Ganja	1 kg	20 kg

* Any quantity below the prescribed limit is a "small" quantity.

** Any quantity above the prescribed limit is a "commercial" quantity.

4. Will he get any consideration for his young age under the law?

Yes. If he is less than 18 years of age, then a special law called the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act applies for any offence, which he may commit under any law including NDPS Act.

5. I know a drug peddler. Who should I report this to?

To the nearest police station. Delhi police also has a special narcotics cell headed by a Deputy Commissioner of Police. You could also report it to any officer of state excise, customs, central excise, Narcotics Control Bureau, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, or Central Bureau of Investigation, all of whom are empowered to take action under the law.

6. Is there any age when one can legally use drugs?

No. Drug use is not like alcohol or smoking. It is illegal for anyone of any age to use drugs.

7. Is there any quantity of a drug (esp. weed) that one can carry legally?

No. Possession of drugs is an offence no matter how large or small. Some drugs such as diazepam, buprenorphine, proxyvone have medical uses. You can buy and use such drugs if the doctor prescribes it. The pharmacists selling them and the companies manufacturing them also have licences under the law.

8. What if the amount of drug I'm carrying is less than what is prescribed as a "small quantity" under the law?

If you carry any quantity below the threshold prescribed as small quantity, you will be punishable for possession of a small quantity of drug.

9. Who is liable in the following situations?

▶ My friends are using drugs on my property (we are all adults)

If you knowingly allow them to use your property to abuse drugs, you will be liable for the same punishment as those using drugs. If they used it without your knowledge, then you are not liable.

▶ My friends are using drugs on my property (we are minors).

In this case, would my parents be held responsible?

If you are a minor, it is likely that the property is in the name of your parents. They will be liable for punishment if they knowingly allow your friends to abuse drugs in their premises. As minors, your friends may enjoy protection under the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection) Act, which means you will be sent to a remand home instead of jail. However, your parents, being adults, will be sentenced for allowing their premises to be used for consuming drugs.

It is better to play safe. If you suspect someone is likely to use drugs on your premises, DO NOT allow them to use your premises.