

Withdrawal symptoms can be worse in the few first days and sometimes can take up to 10 weeks to fully recover.



## HEROIN

Heroin is a drug that comes from the opium poppy. It is a depressant drug and slows down the messages travelling between the brain and body. Heroin is usually injected into a vein but can be smoked and added to cigarettes with cannabis or sometimes it can be snorted. The effects are usually felt straight away and last 3–5 hours. Not all people who try heroin become dependent. Dependence happens gradually with ongoing use.

### Common names for heroin in Nigeria

Gabji, Market, Brown, Brown Sugar, Horse, Skunk, Smack.

### Short term effects

- High level of pleasure and pain relief
- Relaxation, drowsiness and clumsiness
- Confusion
- Slurred and slow speech
- Dry mouth
- Tiny pupils (circular opening in the centre of the iris of the eye)
- Breathing become shallow
- Reduced appetite and vomiting
- Decreased sex drive

### Long term effects

- Sadness
- Irregular periods and difficulty having children (females)
- No sex drive (males)

### Long term effects of heroin (contd)

- Constipation
- Damaged heart, lungs, liver and brain
- Vein damage and skin, heart and lung infections from injecting (i.e., HIV and Hepatitis C)
- Needing to use more to get the same effect (develop tolerance)
- Dependency

Withdrawal symptoms usually start within 6 to 24 hours after the last heroin dose and can last for about a week (commonly days 1 to 3 will be the worst). Some withdrawal symptoms can include: cravings for heroin, restlessness and irritability, depression, diarrhea, yawning and restless sleep, stomach and leg cramps, vomiting and no appetite, and a runny nose. The effects of taking heroin with other drugs can be unpredictable and dangerous, and could cause a fatal (deadly) drug overdose.

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RESPONSE TO DRUGS AND RELATED ORGANISED CRIME IN NIGERIA  
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# SOME TYPES OF DRUGS USED IN NIGERIA

Part 1



## BACKGROUND

In 2014 there was an estimated 246 million (range 162–324 million) people in the world that have used an illegal drug in the past 12 months. The drugs used include cannabis, opiates (such as heroin), cocaine and amphetamine-type stimulants. Globally the most common illegal drug used is cannabis. In Nigeria drug use problems are found throughout the country but there are no official estimates of the number of drug users in the country. However, the numbers are considered large enough to be of concern. The most common illegal drug used in Nigeria is cannabis. Other illegal drugs used include cocaine, heroin, amphetamine-type stimulants and inhalants and solvents such as glue. There are a lot of misunderstandings about the type of drugs people use and of their side effects. This brochure outlines brief and accurate information of some major drugs used in Nigeria.

## CANNABIS

Cannabis is derived from the plant *Cannabis sativa*. Cannabis is a depressant drug which means producing an effect that will slow down the activity of the central nervous system and the messages going between the brain and the body. In large doses it may also produce hallucinogenic effects, meaning you may see things which are not really there. The key ingredient responsible for the 'high' produced by cannabis is called delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Cannabis is typically smoked, often mixed with tobacco and sometimes added to food and eaten. When cannabis is smoked, the effects are often quick as THC is rapidly absorbed into the lungs entering the bloodstream within minutes. Some people who use cannabis are dependent.

### Common names for cannabis in Nigeria

Igbo, Weewee, Weed, Marijuana, Mary and Joan, Choko, Yoyo, Kush, Skunk, Green Leaf, Ghanja, Grass, Indian Hemp (*a term sometimes used on the streets*), Blaze, Taba, Ndedeko, Bendel Market, Joint, Pot and Genye.

### Short term effects

- Loss of inhibition (can feel unusually well, happy, talkative)
- Quiet and reflective mood, drowsy (tired)
- Intense or altered senses to sound, colour and other sensations
- Altered memory and thinking, confusion
- Anxiety (worry, nervous, tense) and mild paranoia (feeling undue suspicion of others)
- Altered vision and bloodshot eyes
- Dryness of the eyes, mouth and throat
- Reduced coordination and balance

- Decreased nausea (feeling of sickness in stomach) and increased appetite (hungry for food)

### Long term effects

- Problems with memory and learning
- Decreased motivation and concentration
- Increased risk of respiratory diseases
- Paranoia (feeling undue suspicion of others)
- Psychosis (seeing or hearing things that do not exist or are distorted)

Regular and heavy cannabis use during adolescence is associated with more severe negative outcomes than use during adulthood.

For more detailed information see the brochure 'GET THE FACTS ABOUT CANNABIS'



## COCAINE

Cocaine is a drug made from the leaves of the coca plant which is found in South America. This plant is processed in different ways to make different types of cocaine. Cocaine is a stimulant drug which means it speeds up the brain and nervous system. The effects of taking cocaine can last from a few minutes to a few hours but mostly less than one hour. Cocaine is most commonly snorted into the nose, but can be injected, rubbed into the gums, added to drinks or food. In Nigeria it is sometimes smoked with cannabis. Some people who use cocaine are dependent.

### Common names for cocaine in Nigeria

Coke, Powder, Thailand White, Brown/Black, Off White, Rock, Snow, Blow, Chunk, Stone and Charlie.

### Short term effects

- Happiness and confidence
- Talking more
- Feeling energetic and alert
- Feeling physically strong and mentally sharp
- Reduced appetite
- Dry mouth
- Enlarged (dilated) pupils
- Faster heartbeat and breathing
- Higher body temperature
- Increased sex drive
- Unpredictable, violent or aggressive behavior
- Delusions (over-inflated sense of worth, power, knowledge, or identity)

### Long term effects

- Insomnia (cannot sleep) and exhaustion
- Nasal (nose), sinus problems, nose bleeds
- Anxiety, paranoia, psychosis, depression
- Eating disorders and weight loss
- Sexual dysfunction (not performing normally)
- Heart damage
- Lung problems
- Kidney failure
- Increased risk of strokes (loss of body function on one side) and seizures (body convulsions or loss of consciousness)

**Anxiety** : worry, nervous, tense

**Paranoia** : feeling extremely suspicious of others

**Psychosis** : seeing or hearing things that do not exist or are distorted

Those that are dependent to cocaine may find it very hard to stop using or cut down because of withdrawal symptoms which include some of the following: craving cocaine badly, feeling angry or upset, feeling sick, vomiting, shaking and tiredness.