

FESTIVAL TIME

WHO DOESN'T LOVE A GOOD FESTIVAL! SOME OF THE BEST BANDS AND DJs IN THE WORLD; HAVING A GREAT TIME WITH YOUR MATES - AND FOR SOME OF YOU - DRUGS, LEGAL AND ILLEGAL.

Any new drugs (formerly known as legal highs) are now automatically illegal under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016.

There are many different types of drugs taken at festivals. Some, like alcohol, are legal, others, like cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine, ketamine, mephedrone, mushrooms and LSD, are illegal.

Some drugs speed you up, others slow you down, while others turn your head upside down and inside out.

The trick to surviving a festival is to make sure they don't speed you up or slow you down too much.

The only way to avoid the risks associated with using drugs is not to use them, but if you choose to use drugs at a festival let's look at some of the ways you can look after yourself and your mates.

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE TAKING?

The answer is - you can't be sure. One powder or pill looks much like any other powder or pill, so you won't know how long it takes to come up, how powerful it is or how it will make you feel.

Test your drugs

Some festivals now offer a drug testing service on the festival site. When you arrive, find out where they are. They are confidential and non-judgemental and can help you identify what is - or isn't - in your drugs before you take them.

Low and slow.

Even if you do have your drugs tested, always exercise caution. Don't assume what you are taking is going to have the same effect, or come up as quickly as it did last time you took it. It may not be the same strength, or it could be an entirely different substance.

Using a small amount and giving it time to take effect could reduce risks.

TAKING TOO MANY DRUGS

Using drugs can have long-term effects on your health, but the most immediate risk at festivals is overdose - basically, taking too many drugs.

Overdose signs will vary depending on what type of drugs are taken.

Overdose signs for stimulant drugs such as ecstasy and mephedrone can be:

- shallow breathing
- fast racing pulse
- rigid muscles
- hyper-aggression/mania
- seizure
- unconsciousness.

Overdose signs for depressant drugs such as GBL and heroin, alcohol and Xanax can be:

- slowed breathing
- pale or clammy face
- fingernails and lips turn blue or purplish black (greyish or ashen on dark skin)
- pulse (heartbeat) is slow, erratic
- unresponsive

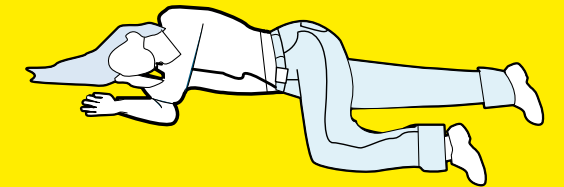
What to do if you think someone is overdosing or becomes ill

Most festivals have a medical tent with staff that can help a person through emergencies, so find out where they are when you arrive on-site.

Get the overdosing person to medical help, and make sure you tell the medical staff what drug they have taken and, if possible, how much.

Don't be shy about letting them know what they have taken. Show them the substance, if you can, so it can be identified and the appropriate treatment given.

If the person is unconscious and you have to leave them to get help - **don't leave them lying on their back** - put them in the recovery position first.



MIXING DRUGS

Using several drugs at the same time, and this includes alcohol, is dangerous.

Lots of cases of people overdosing on drugs have been when they have taken more than one drug.

Taking drugs throughout a two or three-day festival can put you under a lot of strain and increase the risks to your mind and body.

OVERHEATING

Stimulant drugs cause your body temperature to rise. Combined with dancing around all day (in the hot sun if your lucky) and then well on into the night can cause you to dehydrate and suffer from heatstroke, which can lead to organ failure and death.

The symptoms of heatstroke are: nausea; vomiting; fatigue; weakness; headache; muscle cramps and aches; and dizziness.

Stay hydrated. Always carry a bottle of water or a sports drink with you and sip it regularly. Take frequent breaks and find somewhere cool and quiet to chill out for a while.

Also, it can be a long way back to your tent or trailer, especially if you get lost. Make sure you have some warm, dry clothing to put on as you head back. Cooling down too quickly can make you ill.

OVERDOING IT

Going to a festival can be just like going on holiday, you can get over-excited, feel invincible and do too much too soon. This can get you into some dangerous situations.

Some drugs, such as ketamine or GBL/GHB, can be very dose-dependent. A small increase in the amount used can leave you physically helpless and vulnerable to accidents and assaults (both physical and sexual).

Take a break

Being off your face in the middle of a huge festival site with thousands of people can be daunting, this can make you anxious and paranoid. If you, or any of your friends, start to feel this way, go and chill out for a while in a quiet place. Take someone with you or tell your mates where you are going, so they can keep an eye on you.

Sex

Some drugs can increase sexual desire even though they decrease the ability to perform. This could increase the chances of risky sexual behaviour, even with someone you don't particularly like. Always carry condoms and make sure you use them.

HOME TIME

REMEMBER, if you have been drinking alcohol and taking drugs during the festival, you may be unfit to drive. Together with feeling tired from your festival frolics, this can be dangerous for yourself, your passengers and other road users.

Finally...

It's your body, so look after it. There are lots of websites and forums which can provide you with more information than we can fit into this leaflet. So before you decide to use any drug, find out as much as you can about it, from as many different sources as possible. We have listed below some places which may help you.

www.themix.org.uk

The Mix is a UK based charity that provides free, confidential support for young people under 25 via online, social and mobile.

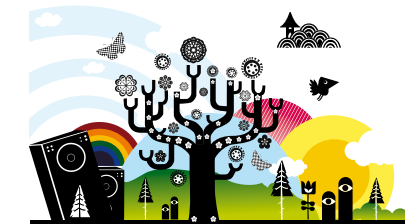
www.erowid.org

Online drug information library.

www.release.org.uk

Free non-judgmental, specialist advice and information on issues related to drug use and to drug laws.

USE YOUR HEAD - DON'T JUST GET OFF IT!



FESTIVAL HIGHS

HARM REDUCTION ADVICE
FOR PEOPLE WHO YOU
USE DRUGS AT FESTIVALS