

drugs?
something
chemical
nervous system

B1 Topic 3

Inter-relationships

Effect of Drugs

Our bodies make **many** substances. Some of these (e.g. hormones, neurotransmitters) coordinate how we **behave** and **respond** to **stimuli**.

Chemical substances that **interfere** with the chemicals the body makes or cause changes in the way the body works are called **drugs**. Most drugs are chemical substances that affect the **central nervous system** and change our **psychological** behaviour in the way we **feel** or **act**.

Some drugs, like antibiotics and paracetamol are **medically useful**, but many drugs are **dangerous** if misused. This is why you can buy some drugs **over the counter**, but other drugs are restricted and can only be obtained with a **doctor's prescription**.

Some people get **addicted** to drugs and if they don't get it they get **withdrawal symptoms**. Many legal drugs are as addictive as illegal drugs, e.g. **caffeine** in coffee and **nicotine** in tobacco. **Rehabilitation** is a form of treatment where you get help and support to try and overcome an addiction.



Tolerance can develop with some drugs, both legal (alcohol) and illegal (heroin). The body gets use to having the drug, so a **higher dose** is needed to give the **same effect**.

Different Types of Drugs

We group drugs by the **effect** they have on us. For example, a **narcotic** is a drug that makes us feel **sleepy**.

Type of Drug	Examples	Effect on the body
Depressants	Alcohol, heroin and barbiturates	Decrease the neurone activity in the brain . This slows down the responses of the nervous system , resulting in slower reaction times and poor judgement of speed and distance . They also help us to relax .
Stimulants	Caffeine , nicotine , cocaine , amphetamines and ecstasy	Increase the activity of the brain by speeding up neurotransmissions across synapses . This speeds up reaction times and makes you more alert and awake . They are often used to treat depression.
Painkillers	Morphine and heroin	Decrease the feeling of pain by blocking some of the 'pain' impulses along neurones before they reach the brain.
Hallucinogens	LSD	Change the way the brain works by altering the pathways nerve impulses usually travel along. This distorts and changes what we see , hear and feel . LSD distorts our senses of colour, time and space.