









# Interactions Between 'Street Drugs' and Prescribed Psychotropic Drugs

There is limited information available to guide safe and effective prescribing in this area. A summary is given below.

	<b>Cannabis</b> 	<b>Heroin/ methadone</b> 	<b>Cocaine, Ecstasy, Amphetamines</b> 	<b>Alcohol</b> 
<b>General Considerations</b>	<p><b>Cannabis use:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases the risk of developing schizophrenia</li> <li>Can worsen existing psychotic symptoms such as voices and paranoia</li> </ul> <p><b>Cannabis can cause:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weight gain, sedation and tachycardia (a fast heart beat).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both can cause sedation and in higher doses, reduce the respiratory rate (this decreases the oxygen supply to the brain).</li> <li>Methadone prolongs the cardiac QTc interval which can lead to arrhythmias (abnormal heart rhythm).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cocaine can cause blood vessels to constrict so reducing the blood supply to the heart (heart attack) and brain (stroke).</li> <li>Cocaine and amphetamine can raise blood pressure and cause arrhythmias</li> <li>Ecstasy can cause dehydration &amp; hyperthermia (overheating).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Causes sedation</li> </ul> <p><b>Long term or binge drinking can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Damage your liver (will affect how your body processes other medication).</li> <li>Damage your brain (affect your memory and ability to think clearly).</li> </ul>
<b>First Generation Antipsychotics ('typicals')</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Antipsychotics can reduce the high from street drugs</li> <li>If you take ecstasy you may be more likely to develop movement disorders associated with first generation antipsychotics.</li> <li>You may be more likely to experience tachycardia (fast heart beat), arrhythmias (abnormal heart rhythm), sedation and weight gain.</li> </ul> 			
<b>Second Generation Antipsychotics ('atypicals')</b>	<p><b>Cannabis:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduces the amount of olanzapine &amp; clozapine in your body</li> <li>Can increase weight gain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases risk of sedation</li> <li>Risperidone may precipitate methadone withdrawal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases risk of arrhythmias (heart rhythm disturbances).</li> <li>Risperidone may reduce the high feeling experienced with cocaine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases risk of sedation</li> <li>Increases risk of low blood pressure with olanzapine</li> </ul>
<b>Antidepressants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cannabis increases the risk of sedation with some antidepressants.</li> <li>Some antidepressants can cause rapid heart beat (especially tricyclics). Cannabis can make this worse.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases risk of sedation with some antidepressants</li> <li>Some SSRIs can increase the amount of methadone in your body</li> <li>Increases risk of arrhythmias with tricyclic antidepressants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases risk of arrhythmias with tricyclics.</li> <li>Increases risk of high blood pressure with MAOIs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases risk of sedation with some antidepressants.</li> <li>Increases toxicity in overdose with tricyclics.</li> </ul>
<b>Anticholinergics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can cause hallucinations, elation and impaired memory</li> </ul>			
<b>Lithium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alcohol &amp; ecstasy in particular can cause dehydration. Dehydration can precipitate lithium toxicity.</li> </ul>			
<b>Valproate/ Carbamazepine</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carbamazepine reduces the amount of methadone in your body</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All can affect the health of your liver</li> </ul> 
<b>Benzodiazepines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases risk of sedation</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases risk of sedation &amp; respiratory depression</li> <li>Accidental overdose possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases risk of over-sedation with high doses of cocaine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases risk of sedation &amp; reduction in respiratory rate</li> <li>Benzodiazepine abuse possible</li> </ul>