

Safer Student Nights

There are always risks when taking drugs. It is always safer not to use at all, but if you do, follow harm reduction information to help reduce the harms.

- **Talk to your friends about using drugs and research the risks on Drugs.ie.** Don't use alone or in an isolated place.
- **Can you trust the dealer?** You can never be fully sure of the contents of drugs. Sometimes the person selling might not know all of the contents themselves. The risks are increased if you buy from an unknown person at an event.
- **What's in the pill or powder?** There is no way to know the contents of a drug just by looking at it. Drugs could look the same and contain different contents. Drugs from the same batch can also vary. Don't assume you know the content based on what you are sold.
- **What about drug testing kits?** You cannot rely on drug testing kits as they have limitations. They mightn't tell you everything in the drug or the exact strength.
- **Start low and go slow.** Start with a very small dose to see how you react to the drug. Some drugs or adulterants can take longer to take effect than others. Wait at least 2 hours before taking more.
- **Leave the mixing to the DJ.** Mixing drugs increases the risk of becoming unwell or overdose. Use one drug at a time and don't mix substances, including alcohol and prescription medication. Decide your drug of choice for the night and stick to it.
- **Stick together.** Don't leave anyone alone. Have a charged phone and establish a meeting point in case you are separated from your friends.
- **Keep it cool.** Sip water but don't drink over a pint an hour. Take breaks from dancing and give yourself time to cool down.
- **Always carry a condom**
- **Don't be afraid to get help.** If you or a friend become unwell or feel suicidal after taking drugs you should get help immediately. Know where to go in the venue or call 112.

Always be honest about what you think was taken. Emergency services are there to help.

Know the signs of overdose

You can become unwell or overdose on club drugs. Look after yourself and your friends and look out for the below signs;

- Hot, flushed or sweaty skin
- Rise in temperature
- Very fast erratic speech
- Restlessness
- Headaches
- Chest pain
- Unsteadiness
- Rigid muscles, tremors or spasms
- Uncontrolled movements or seizures
- Difficulty breathing
- Vomiting
- Confusion
- Unconsciousness

Leave the mixing to the DJ – Any time you mix drugs together you take on new risks

Alcohol

- Alcohol combined with most drugs can cause problems. It is safer to use one substance at a time.

Cocaine

- Alcohol and cocaine combine in the body to provide a new substance called 'Cocaethylene' that increases the risk of damaging organs such as the liver and heart.
- Cocaethylene is more toxic than cocaine and alcohol alone and produces a greater increase in heart rate and blood pressure.

MDMA

- Alcohol and MDMA used together can be unpredictable and effects of both drugs may be prolonged.
- MDMA used with some antidepressants can be dangerous and lead to too much serotonin in the body, known as "serotonin syndrome".

Ketamine

- Ketamine mixed with other drugs, particularly depressant drugs like alcohol or benzodiazepines increases the risk of collapsing, passing out and/or serious injury.
- Alcohol and ketamine can make people unwell and vomit, which can increase the risk of choking.
- Ketamine can also be very dangerous when mixed with ecstasy or amphetamine (speed), as it can cause high blood pressure.

Get more information

For more information about drugs, the effects and risks go to www.Drugs.ie

Harm reduction

For harm reduction information go to Drugs.ie/campaigns

Sexual health

For information about sexual health and wellbeing go to www.sexualwellbeing.ie

Concerned about your use?

Take the Drugs.ie online self-assessment to identify the impact of your use: Drugs.ie/drugtest

Getting help

If you are concerned about your own use or someone else's use, contact a local service through the Drugs.ie National Directory for Drug and Alcohol Services at Drugs.ie/services

You can also contact the **HSE Drug and Alcohol Helpline on 1800 459 459** from Monday to Friday between 9:30 am and 5:30 pm or email helpline@hse.ie.

