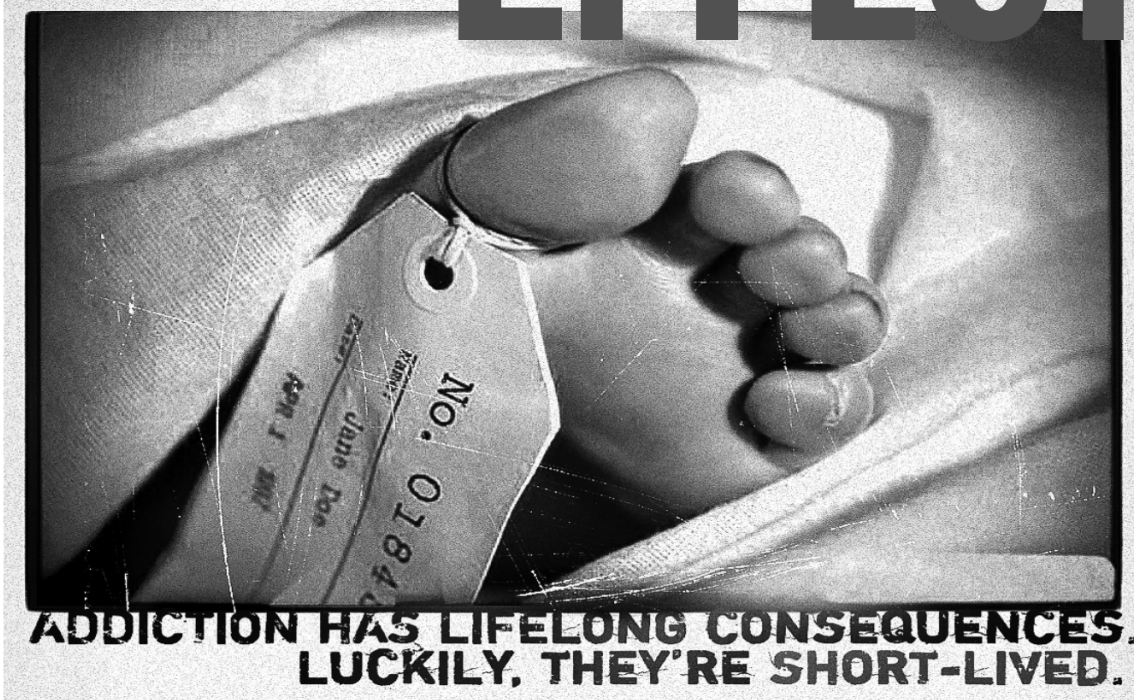


DRUGS & EFFECT



**ADDICTION HAS LIFELONG CONSEQUENCES.
LUCKILY, THEY'RE SHORT-LIVED.**

There are a wide variety of drugs being abused in society today. Whether they are legal or not they are as easy to purchase as a second hand colour television. Some create a heightened sense of awareness, while others kill anxiety and numb the senses easing the emotional pain. Drug addicts are not just teenagers or emotionally unstable people, they come from all walks of life. They are cab drivers, doctors, teachers, businessmen and housewives. People trying to cope with or escape from the problems of everyday living. Some just want to experiment out of curiosity while others want to exert themselves and see drugs as a way to rebel, to go against the system. No matter what the reasons, drugs are being abused in epidemic proportions. It is a problem that we must deal with because in one way or another, it affects each and every one of us.

With mood altering drugs, it is often the case that an addict will admit to being hooked after the first mind altering experience. The feelings of awareness and energy that accompany cocaine and amphetamine use, as with the intense awareness and euphoric glow of the psychedelics are pleasantly hypnotic, if the drugs are taken in moderate amounts. The pleasant feelings of euphoria are a trap that ensnares a large percentage of drug users initially. This pleasant spell, which usually overcomes the victim (for addicts are victims) is the first step toward serious drug dependency.

For most mind altering drugs on the street, and those bought over the counter, there are certain classifications. Alcohol and opium derivatives, such as heroine or morphine,

fall under the labels of depressants, while cannabis, LSD and psilocybin mushrooms (magic mushrooms) are considered psychedelics. Last but certainly not least, are the stimulants, cocaine and amphetamines. Outlined below are a few facts about each drug and their depressants.

Drug Type: **Psychedelics**

Cannabis

Marijuana is a bushy plant that flourishes in a warm climate. The leaves can be dried and smoked, or the resin collected and pressed into blocks known as hashish. It can also come as a dark liquid called oil. In all of its various forms, cannabis is often the drug of introduction. Nearly all heroin addicts say they started on pot. Cannabis use interferes with the body's immune system and often leaves the user susceptible to diseases or other common ailments. Within minutes of smoking cannabis, the effects are being felt and will continue for hours. Visual perceptions are enhanced, colours are brighter and time and space seem distorted. Afterwards, the individual is sluggish both physically and mentally. Contrary to popular belief, cannabis is addictive.



Magic Mushrooms

The most common rationalization about mushrooms is that they are okay because they are organic. So are Deadly Nightshade and Death Camis but nevertheless they are both highly poisonous. When using these drugs, people have what is known as a trip. Awareness and details are magnified. Colours and sound take on great brilliance and intensity. This is accompanied by hallucinations but a trip can turn bad. A person is susceptible to prolonged psychotic behaviour. Its use leaves you disoriented and empty. Like so many other mind altering drugs, psilocybin mushrooms leave the user withered and worn down.

LSD (Acid)

A chemical that was created exclusively for the illegal drug market, acid was quite popular in the sixties. Producing hallucinations it was associated with mysticism and revelations. In some ways the acid trip is like a short, but to the mystics state of grace. But shortcuts usually have to be paid for. Bad trips are related to a person's personality. For disturbed people, LSD can lead to permanent schizophrenia and mental impairment.



Drug Type: **Depressants**

Alcohol

As one of the most widely abused drugs today, it is responsible for over 18,000 deaths a year. As it is socially accepted, alcohol can be found in many households within easy reach of us all. Whether it is a few beer while watching the game, or a couple of glasses of wine during dinner, alcohol is being consumed. As it is being absorbed into the bloodstream, the alcohol starts a chain of events that lasts several hours. In most people, a few drinks makes people happy, their inhibitions disappear and they are friends with everyone. Bit by bit their vision blurs and their speech becomes impaired. As they drink more, they become impaired and that is when accidents happen. As one of the biggest killers today, alcohol is ironically the accepted drink.



Heroin

Although it was originally a painkiller, a legitimate medicine, almost all the heroin that is now found on the street is imported. It can now be smoked or injected, but most commonly it is the latter. A person can build up a tolerance to heroin, which sometimes proves dangerous. If someone has been deprived of a drug for awhile they can lose some of their tolerances and may overdose on their regular dosage.

Opium

Derived from the seed of the opium poppy, opium has been used in medicine to find new and potent painkillers. Heroin and morphine were thus discovered.



Morphine

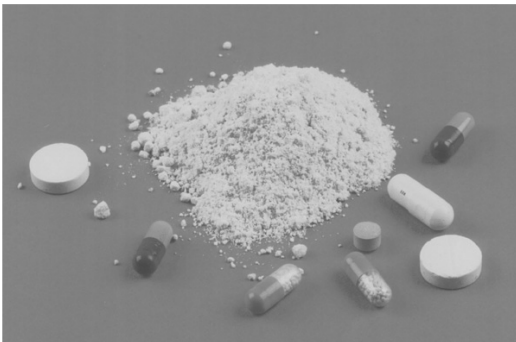
Used since the 1900's, morphine has proved to be quite addictive. When the morphine is injected the user feels a warm wave of pleasure sweep over him. The body feels warm and heavy and is insensitive to pain. Yet morphine has its bad effects as well. There is vomiting, the skin is chilled, and with larger doses the pupils contract to pinpoints and the person's breathing slows to a complete stop. With both morphine and heroin a user always runs the risk of an overdose or accidental death.

Drug Type: **Stimulants**

Cocaine

Comes from the leaves of the cocoa plant, originally grown in the Andes. It is a powerful stimulant, which oddly enough also contains potent anesthetic properties. Because of the latter the flesh it touches is likely to suffer local damage. Hence the destruction of the bridge of the nose suffered by coke snorters. Some users nostrils are also destroyed after excessive use.

Cocaine is quite wrongly believed to be non-addictive. It is addictive, both physically and psychologically. Cocaine produces instant energy, action, creativity but at a high cost. Like speed, it enables the user to pillage his or her last resources, leaving them in equal states of exhaustion and depression. The high price of cocaine, even today, makes it the classiest form of self-destruction in terms of emotional and actual bankruptcy.



Amphetamines

Became a part of medicine in the mid 1930's. They were used to treat obesity and some forms of depression. They are still available through prescriptions, but on the street bennies, blues and dexies are causing problems.

They create an intense sense of awareness and energy but they take their toll. Soon after the high fades away the user goes through a down period. With all of the reserves used up by the pills the body is left exhausted. In the long run this exhaustion will create health problems.

When long term addicts are suddenly deprived of the drugs, they become depressed and violent, suffer chronic weight loss and may end up with long term paranoid psychosis. In this state, the user loses all contact with reality. Because of a distorted perception and a paranoid interpretation of reality some users will become very violent and will suffer vivid hallucinations. Do not be fooled. Speed kills.

Following lung cancer and heart disease, addiction is the third largest killer disease in Canada. It feeds off people's emotional problems like low self esteem, peer pressure or family troubles. Whether it is excessive eating, drug use, or gambling, addiction affects everyone. It is a frame of mind that, like a magnet, compulsively leads you down the road to self-destruction.

In the medical field it is considered a single disease, not alcohol addiction or cocaine addiction but simply addiction. It is said that if you deprive an addict of their chosen drug, they will switch to another. "If they cannot get the drug they love they will love the drug they get." Until the consequences of drug abuse become too painful or unpleasant for a person to handle, they will not quit, but will endure it all again and again and again.