



# DRUGS + YOUR BODY

**Drugs can attack your body inside and out—from your teeth and bones to your organs.**

**T**he human body is an amazing organism from the brain, where trillions of connections per millisecond keep you functioning, to the heart, which pumps 2,000 gallons of blood from your head to your toes every day. Your body also has a pretty awesome immune system that can recognize and destroy millions of biological invaders to protect your health.

Maintaining a healthy body requires a delicate balance of good food, rest, and exercise. As strong and resilient as our bodies are, alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs are incredibly powerful in their ability to create illness and disease.

## ▶ More Info:

For additional facts about drug effects on the brain and body, visit [scholastic.com/headsup](http://scholastic.com/headsup) and [teens.drugabuse.gov](http://teens.drugabuse.gov).



## Bad Breath and More

Tar and nicotine from **tobacco** are sticky substances that build up on the **teeth** and **tongue**, which can lead to bad breath, gum disease, discolored teeth, and tooth loss. Cigarettes and chewing tobacco also contain cancer-causing chemicals that flood the **mouth** and **throat**, increasing the risk of cancer in the mouth, pharynx, and larynx.



## Nose No More

Snorting **cocaine** can destroy cartilage in the **nose**, like the septum—the hard tissue that divides the nose into nostrils. This can lead to nosebleeds and can decrease the ability to smell.



## Not a Good Look

**Methamphetamine** abusers often report feeling like they have insects crawling under their **skin**, which causes them to pick at their skin, creating sores.



## Messing With Hormones

Anabolic androgenic **steroids** are artificial forms of the male sex hormone testosterone. Abusing them can affect the **reproductive system**, causing shrunken testicles, infertility, baldness, and the development of breasts in males. In females, abusing them can cause facial hair, male-pattern baldness, changes in the menstrual cycle, and deepening of the voice.



## Ready for Cancer?

**Cigarette** smoking and **nicotine** have been linked to about 90 percent of all cases of **lung** cancer. Smoking cigarettes is associated with increased risk of respiratory diseases, including emphysema, bronchitis, chronic cough, and asthma.



## Hot and Dry

**Ecstasy** and **methamphetamine** users risk **kidney** failure when their body temperatures soar and they become dehydrated, restricting blood flow to the kidneys.

## Undersize Me

**Steroid** use can stop **bones** from growing. Teen abusers may never reach their full adult height.



## Poison

Heavy drinking of **alcohol**, even for a few days, can cause fat to build up in the **liver**. This condition is called steatosis (fatty liver) and impairs the liver's ability to remove toxins, digest foods, and make important proteins the body needs.

## Flatline

Sniffing common household chemicals like solvents (e.g., butane, propane), aerosols (e.g., spray paints, hair sprays), or gases can cause rapid, irregular heartbeats and lead to fatal **heart** failure within minutes. This is known as “sudden sniffing death.”

### SHARING THE PAIN

Each year about 46,000 nonsmokers who have been exposed to someone else's cigarette smoke die from coronary heart disease.