

INCASE OF EMERGENCY

Most people don't use drugs and even amongst those that do, emergencies are rare. But no one can be certain how drugs will affect them so there's always the risk that they'll have a bad time, fall ill, hurt themselves or even worse.

Here's what you need to know should you ever have to help a friend or relative who's having a bad reaction to a drug.

What to look out for

If someone is having a bad time on drugs they may be:

- anxious,
- tense
- panicky,
- overheated and dehydrated,
- drowsy, or
- Having difficulty with breathing.

What to do

The first things you should do are:

- Stay calm,
- Calm them and be reassuring. Don't scare them or chase after them.
- Try to find out what they've taken
- Stay with them

If they are anxious, tense or panicky you should:

- Sit them in a quiet and calm room.
- Keep them away from crowds, bright lights and loud noises.
- Tell them to take slow deep breaths.
- Stay with them.

If they are really drowsy you should:

- Sit them in a quiet place and keep them awake,
- If they don't respond or become unconscious call an ambulance immediately and place them in the recovery position.
- Don't scare them, shout at them or shock them,
- Don't give them coffee to wake them up,

- Don't put them in a cold bath to "wake them up" – this wastes time and there's a risk of drowning,

If they are unconscious or having difficulty breathing you should:

- Immediately phone for an ambulance,
- Place them into the recovery position,
- Stay with them until the ambulance arrives,
- If you know what drug they've taken tell the ambulance crew, this can help make sure that your friend gets the right treatment straight away.

What happens in A&E

- In A&E the doctors and nurses will treat your friend as best as they can. This may involve giving an antidote or treatment to counteract the effect of the drugs.
- You can help by telling the ambulance crew, the doctors and nurses all you know about what drug(s) your friend had taken, if they'd been drinking, and if your friend has any medical conditions and if there are still some of the drugs left, hand them over. Providing this information will help them give your friend the right treatment without delay. They won't tell the police, your friend's family or others not involved in their clinical care, that your friend has been taking drugs.

Did you know?

- **999** is the number for the emergency services in the UK, but you can also call **112** for help. 112 is the single emergency telephone number for anywhere in Europe.