

# Drugs at Schoolies Week

## For secondary school students

Schoolies is all about having a good time and celebrating the end of your school life. Drugs can sometimes be part of these celebrations, so it's important to know a bit about them.

Here are some tips on how to reduce the risks of taking drugs and how you can help anyone if they have too much.

## Drugs you might come across

Drugs you may come across at Schoolies include cannabis, ecstasy, LSD, ice and speed. But there are also new drugs that are being used. These drugs are known as synthetic drugs, but they are also being called lots of different names like herbal highs, party pills, and bath salts. Sometimes they try and mimic the effects of common illegal drugs.

Synthetic drugs come in the form of powders, pills, and dried herbs that have been sprayed with synthetic chemicals.

Sometimes these drugs are advertised as legal, but this often isn't true and doesn't mean they are safe. In fact, the effects of synthetic drugs are often more unpredictable than common illegal drugs.

## Do you know what you're taking?

The ingredients in any drug (unless dispensed from a chemist) differ between batches, so it's impossible to know exactly what's in them, how strong they are and how they might affect you. Something that looks like ecstasy may actually be a new synthetic drug that might be stronger and have more serious side effects.

## You don't have to take drugs

Even though you may come across drugs at Schoolies, you don't have to take them to have fun. In fact, avoiding drugs is the best way to make sure you create good memories at Schoolies rather than bad ones.

The best way to ensure you have a good time is to have a plan for the week. Find out about activities before you leave home. Travel agents offer Schoolies packages with fun activities that don't have a focus on alcohol and drugs.

## Reducing the risks of drugs

There is no safe level of drug use. Taking drugs is always risky. If you or a friend do decide to take them, then there are some things that can be done to reduce the risks of getting sick, having an accident or overdosing.

- **Start small** – Have a test amount first, and wait 2 hours before taking more. This is to see if you have bad side effects and to help you decide how much to take. Avoid taking large amounts of any drug.
- **Tell someone what you've taken** – To make it easier for the ambulance officers to help you if you do overdose, make sure someone knows what you've had and how much. (If no one is around, write it down somewhere).
- **Don't mix drugs** – Taking different drugs at the same time (including with alcohol, prescription medicine and over-the-counter drugs) can have unpredictable effects and can make it easier to overdose.
- **Avoid caffeine** – Illegal drugs often contain caffeine, sometimes in large amounts. Having too much caffeine can cause your heart to stop, so avoid drinking coffee or energy drinks when taking drugs.
- **Energy drinks and alcohol don't mix** – Combining these drinks can lead to drinking too much and can turn a great night into a disaster.
- **Take it easy** – If you're using a stimulant drug like ecstasy, speed or ice, take regular breaks from dancing and make sure you get enough rest, even if you don't feel tired.
- **Stay hydrated** – Drink small sips of water but don't drink more than 500ml in an hour. It's important not to overheat, but it's also important not to drink too much water.
- **Carry a condom** – Some drugs can make you horny, so be prepared and always practise safe sex. Remember that pressuring someone into having sex is sexual assault and illegal.
- **Stick with your friends** – Drugs affect your judgment and stop you thinking clearly, so it's important to stick with your friends and avoid risky situations. If you do overdose or get into trouble, your friends can get help.

- **Don't drive or swim** – This includes when you are 'coming down' from drugs because they affect your reflexes and judgment. It can take a few days to 'come down' from some drugs.
- **Drugs, alcohol and depression don't mix** – If you're feeling a little down or depressed, it probably isn't a good idea to take drugs or drink alcohol because they can make your mood more intense.
- **Don't hesitate to call an ambulance** – If anyone looks like they've had a bad reaction to drugs, including passing out, call an ambulance immediately by dialling triple zero (000). Ambulance officers don't have to involve the police. Wait for the ambulance with the person who's sick. Keep crowds back, make sure the person has fresh air, and keep them calm and out of trouble. If they want to lie down, put them on their side in case they vomit.
- **Help your friends make good decisions** – It's easy to get caught up in the moment and forget how to stay safe at Schoolies, so look after your friends and give them good advice.

## Further information

To find out some of the effects of any drug, text the name of the drug to **0439 TELL ME** (0439 835 563). Standard SMS charges apply.

### Further Information

The Druginfo website has information on:

- Help and support
- Drug facts
- References for this fact sheet

Go to [druginfo.adf.org.au](http://druginfo.adf.org.au)

These fact sheets  
are funded by



# Factsheet

### Stay informed

[twitter.com/austdrug](https://twitter.com/austdrug)  
[linkedin.com/company/australian-drug-foundation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/australian-drug-foundation)  
[facebook.com/AustralianDrugFoundation2](https://www.facebook.com/AustralianDrugFoundation2)  
[grogwatch.adf.org.au](http://grogwatch.adf.org.au)  
[adf.org.au/subscribe](http://adf.org.au/subscribe)

Level 12, 607 Bourke Street, Melbourne  
 PO Box 818 North Melbourne Victoria Australia 3051

Email [druginfo@adf.org.au](mailto:druginfo@adf.org.au) Telephone **1300 85 85 84**

© The Australian Drug Foundation, 2016. ABN 66 057 731 192. This fact sheet offers general information only. The Australian Drug Foundation recommends that you obtain professional advice based on your individual circumstances before acting on information in this fact sheet.

Drugs at Schoolies Week

Page 3/3

June 2016