Drugs and the Body—It Isn’t Pretty

Nicotine. Heroin. Cocaine. Marijuana. Inhalants. Methamphetamine. Steroids. They all cause damage. Check out this diagram to find out how each part of the body is affected by drugs of abuse.

**BRAIN**

**Honey, I Shrank My Brain!**
Inhalants can actually shrink the part of the brain that controls body movements.

**Tired and Moody**
A chemical called serotonin helps you stay in a good mood and get enough sleep. Ecstasy messes with the serotonin in your brain.

**Bye-byes, Brain Cells!**
Methamphetamine use can damage a large number of brain cells in the brain’s reward system (or emotional brain).

**Super Slow**
Messages spread from your brain to your muscles at more than 200 miles per hour. Inhalants can put the brakes on quick communication.

**The Next Step?**
A working short-term memory is required for learning and performing tasks that call for more than one or two steps. Marijuana can impair short-term memory.

**HEART**

**Body Blocking**
Steroid use can lead to blocked blood flow to the heart or brain. The result: a stroke or a heart attack.

**Fit as a…**
Even very fit athletes can have a heart attack if they abuse cocaine or methamphetamine.

**’N Sync**
Inhalants can disrupt normal heart rhythms, which can cause a heart attack.

**LUNGS**

**Sticky Black Tar**
Need we say more? It coats the lungs of tobacco and marijuana smokers.

**Bone Marrow**
When an abuser sniffs inhalants, the toxic gas can replace oxygen in the lungs. Without oxygen, the brain and body suffocate and die.

**SKIN**

**Pizza Face**
Steroids can cause acne pimples to pop up all over the face of a user.

**BONES**

**Forget About the NBA**
Even very fit athletes can have a heart attack if they abuse cocaine or methamphetamine.

**Down in My Bones**
Inhalants damage the marrow inside of bones.

**KIDNEYS**

**Boiling Over**
Ecstasy users risk kidney failure when their body temperature soars and they become dehydrated.

**IMMUNE SYSTEM**

**Sharing More Than Needles**
Drug abusers who share non-sterile injection equipment are at risk for contracting HIV, Hepatitis B and C, and other infectious diseases.

**NOSE**

**No More Noseflaps**
Snorting cocaine can create pimple-like abscesses that can turn into raw holes. The holes can eat away the cartilage that divides the nose.

**MOUTH**

**Not a Good Look**
Ecstasy users smoke silversheet teeth. Sniffing can also lead to gum disease and tooth decay.

**Tense Teeth**
Ecstasy use causes involuntary teeth clenching. Some users need to wear dental mouth guards. Others actually use pacifiers.

**A Case of the Blahs**
All drugs of abuse can make users lose the ability to feel normal happiness and pleasure.

**How About a Mint?**
Sugar and nicotine build up on the teeth and tongue, leading to bad breath.

**LIVER**

**Risky Rupture**
Steroid abuse has been associated with liver tumors and blood-filled cysts. Both the tumors and the cysts can rupture, causing internal bleeding.

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