

THE HIGH-WAY CODE

THE GUIDE TO SAFER, MORE ENJOYABLE DRUG USE

(STIMULANTS)



GLOBAL DRUG SURVEY

INTRODUCING THE GDS HIGH-WAY CODE

GDS knows pleasure drives drug use, not the avoidance of harm. As far as we know no guide has ever outlined the impact of harm reduction strategies on the pleasure users obtain from drugs... until now...



GLOBAL DRUG SURVEY

Ours is a simple premise: as with driving, there are things you need to know and 'rules' you should observe in order to get you to your destination safely. Being aware of these makes you much more likely to get to your planned destination in one piece and much less likely to cause harm to anyone around you.

Please share these findings, they really are important.



THE HIGH-WAY CODE



WHAT IS IT?

The first guide to safer drug use voted for by people who take drugs.

HOW WAS IT WAS DEVELOPED?

GDS asked loads of people who take drugs, as well as other experts, what strategies they thought would reduce the risk of harm when taking some commonly used drugs. As part of GDS2014, we asked people from around the world who had used those drugs in the last year to vote on these strategies. For each strategy we asked:

1. if they usually (i.e. more than 50% of the time) did it
2. to rate how important it is in reducing the risk of harm (10 being the max reduction of risk)
3. to tell us whether using that strategy increased, decreased or had no effect on the pleasure they got from the drug.

WHO DEVELOPED IT?

The guys and gals at Global Drug Survey—a nice bunch of smart people who know a bit about drugs and, with people's help everywhere, will continue to learn more and share what they find out.

ANYTHING ELSE?

Yep follow us on twitter @globaldrusurvy @drugsmeter, like us on Facebook and check out our free apps the drinks meter (www.drinksmeter.com and the app stores) and the drugs meter (www.drugsmeter.com and google play store).

For more interesting info on drugs check out our drugs meter minutes videos on the Global Drug Survey YouTube channel. For suggestions on how to improve GDS, email: adam@globaldrugsurvey.com

HOW TO READ THE HIGH-WAY CODE

This number indicates the percentage of people who told GDS they usually follow the strategy.

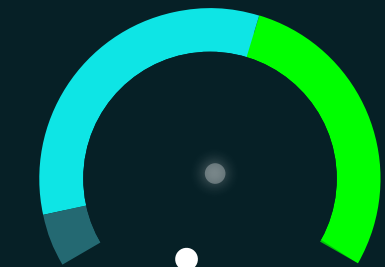
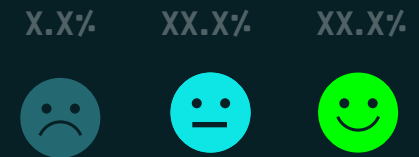


Users who usually do

This dial tells you how important users thought this strategy was in reducing the risk of harm.



Reducing risk from 0-10



Pleasure impact rated by users

Here you can check how many users thought this strategy increased, decreased or didn't affect their pleasure.



KNOW YOUR DRUG EFFECT, THE DOSE, TIME TO ONSET, TIME TO PEAK AND HOW LONG IT LASTS



All drug effects are dose related. Usually the more drugs you take the stronger and longer lasting the effects (and the greater the risk of harm). Because drug purity and potency varies so much you need to treat every new batch as a new drug. This means 'test dosing' each new batch. Knowing how strong your drug is can help you titrate (adjust/measure) how much you take so hopefully you get the effect you want and avoid overdosing. By knowing how long it takes for a drug to come on and how long it lasts, you reduce your risk of taking too much. People also vary widely in how they respond to drugs and how much they need to take. Everyone has to find their own 'right dose'. Not all drugs suit all people so if you get anxious or paranoid on a drug don't use it. Remember being greedy is not good for you. Less is more. Don't ever be worried about calling for an ambulance if you're worried about the state of a mate.

GDS does not condone or promote the use of illegal drugs. GDS does promote the use of common sense when going about one's daily activities. Drugs and alcohol can be very dangerous. They can kill you. Using drugs when you are young can have a lasting negative impact on your cognitive and emotional well-being. The only way to avoid to these harms is not to take drugs. This document represents the views of those who responded to the GDS. Please note: no amount of planning and care can ensure you will have either a safe or enjoyable experience when you take drugs. GDS is simply reporting the results of the survey which may provide some guidance in reducing the risk of harm only. The best way to avoid drug related harm is to not use drugs.

STIMULANTS

(COCAINE, AMPHETAMINE
AND MEPHEDRONE)




OVER 17,000 USERS

GDS know these drugs are different but the basic risks and principles of safer use are the same. The Highway Code also assumes that people know that both injecting and smoking stimulant drugs are associated with greater risk of harm—related to the more intense effects of the drug and the complications associated with the route of use. Snorting and oral use can minimize these risks, lead to a longer (albeit less intense) effect and can make your drugs last longer.

See our drugs meter minute on cocaine and find out why it's been voted the worst value drug in the world two years running (GDS2013 and GDS2014): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wy0anzl-WFs>



COCAINE & MEPHEDRONE

Usual dose	40-100	mg	(taken by snorting)
Time to onset	5-15	min	
Time to peak	15-30	min	
Duration of action	1-3	hrs	

AMPHETAMINE

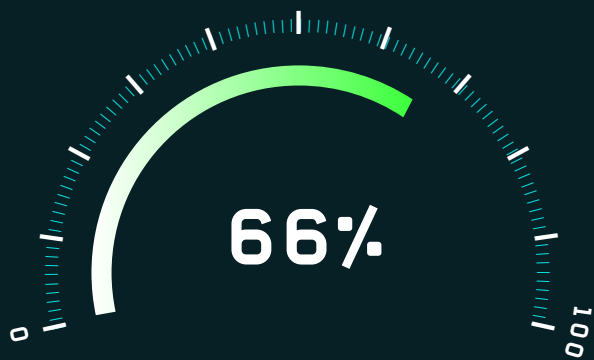
Doses, duration of the effect, time to onset and time to peak vary very widely depending on the type, purity and route of administration. Crystal meth lasts much longer than dexamphetamine. Injecting and smoking have quicker onsets of action with more intense highs. Remember to always test a small dose.



STIMULANTS



1 | STAY WELL HYDRATED



Users who usually do



8.4

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on stimulants-related pleasure



1

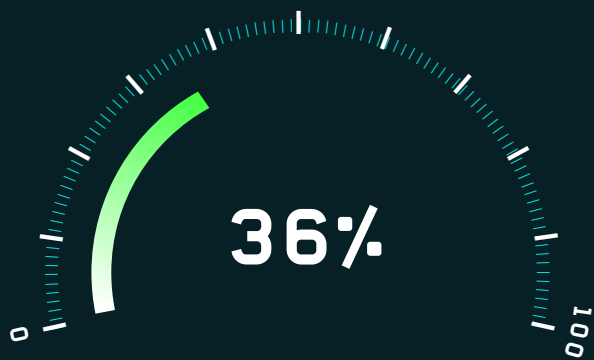
**STAY WELL
HYDRATED**

Stay well watered

If you dehydrate, your body loses the ability to sweat. If you can't sweat you lose one of the major ways to reduce your body's temperature. Together with taking a break from physical exertion and cooling off, drinking non-alcoholic/non energy drinks, this is one of the most important ways of reducing the predictable and avoidable serious risk of dehydrating and collapsing. Alcohol is a bad rehydration fluid because it is a diuretic (makes you pee). Drink lots of non-alcoholic fluids and be cool.



2 | SET LIMIT ON AMOUNT USED



Users who usually do



8.3

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on stimulants-related pleasure



2

**SET LIMIT ON
AMOUNT USED**

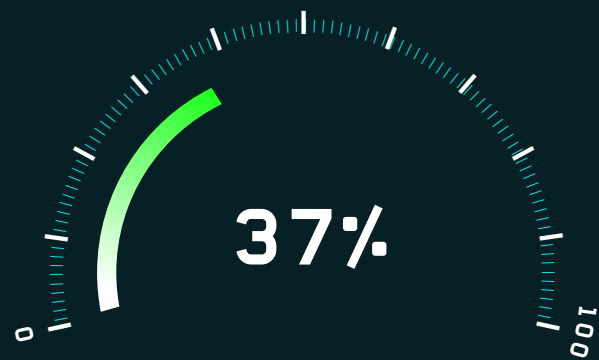
Common sense

Not using too much too often will avoid the development of tolerance and will give your brain a chance to recover between sessions so you can enjoy your drugs when you use them. Higher doses tend to cause more unwanted effects and the comedown is worse. It also costs more. Less is more, as they say.



3

TEST DOSE FROM NEW BATCH



Users who usually do



8.2

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on stimulants-related pleasure



3

**TEST DOSE FROM
NEW BATCH**

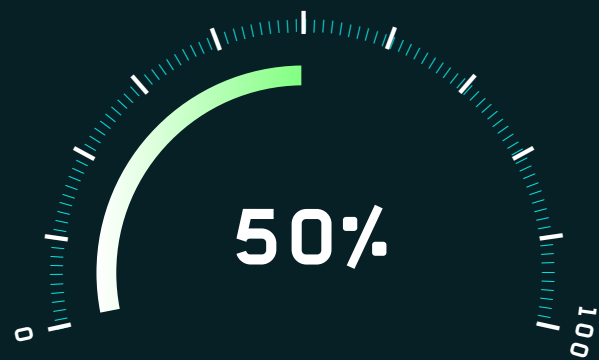
Drug purity varies

Drug purity varies—buyers beware! Because illicit preparations vary in potency and precise composition, you are safest checking each new batch by taking a small ‘test’ dose and waiting at least 30–60 minutes before re-dosing. Knowing how strong your drug is can help you titrate (adjust/measure) your doses so you hopefully get the effect you want and minimise the risks of harm.



4

AVOID WHEN DEPRESSED/ANXIOUS



Users who usually do



8.2

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on stimulants-related pleasure



4

AVOID WHEN DEPRESSED/ANXIOUS

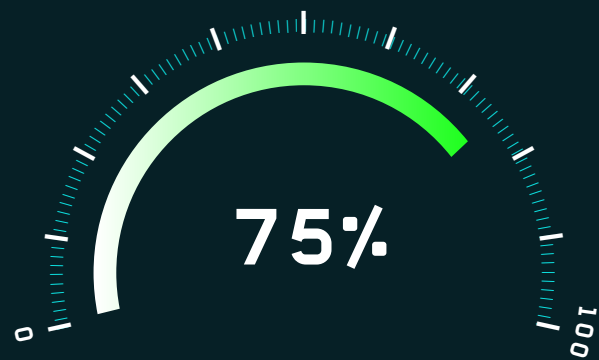
Set and setting—old school
drug law

Stimulant drugs will tend to worsen whatever state you are in when you take it. Depression is thought to be due to low levels of certain chemical transmitters in your brain. Taking a stimulant drug like crystal meth or cocaine that empties your brain cell of more chemical transmitters like serotonin and dopamine, will only make you more depressed. If you are on antidepressants, best avoid any stimulants drugs at all. Not only will the stimulant drugs work against the effects of the medication, your comedowns will be far worse.



5

REGULAR SLEEP AFTER USE



Users who usually do



8.0

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on stimulants-related pleasure



5

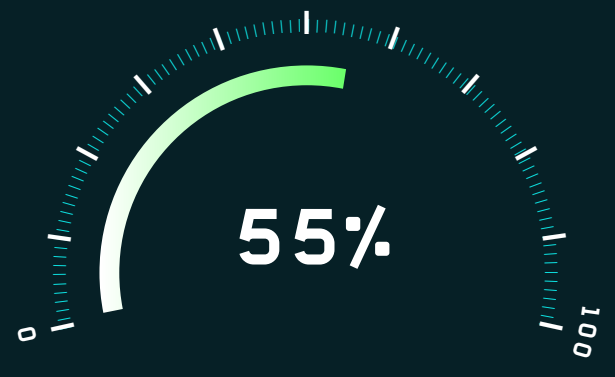
**REGULAR SLEEP
AFTER USE**

Sleep rests your brain

Sleep lets your brain catch up and process all the stuff that has been going on. Sleep gives your brain and body time to recover. Several days of not sleeping worsen your comedown and increase the risk of accidents at work, being unable to concentrate when you need to and delay your recovery to feeling back to you again.



6 | EAT PROPERLY



Users who usually do



8.0

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on stimulants-related pleasure



6

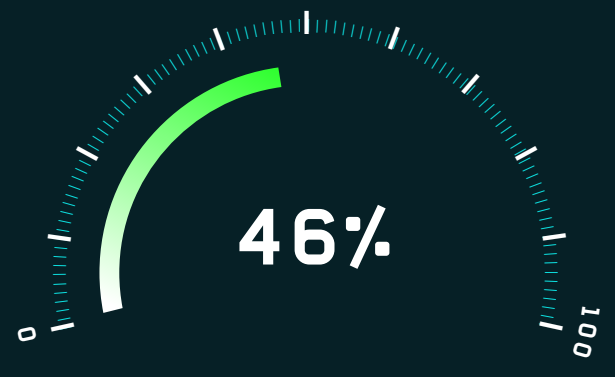
EAT PROPERLY

If you don't eat your drugs won't work (as well)

Food refills your body with the building blocks it needs to make the chemical transmitters your stimulant session has just emptied. Bananas, chocolate, kiwi fruit, nuts, honey, marmite, turkey, multivitamins, milk or juice are all good recovery foods.



7 | TAKE A BREAK FROM PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



Users who usually do



7.6

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on stimulants-related pleasure



7

**TAKE A BREAK
FROM PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY**

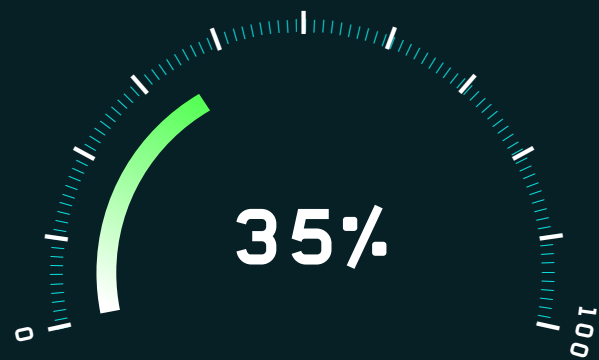
Chill out

One of the most avoidable risks from stimulant drugs is overheating and dehydration. Stimulant drugs raise your pulse, blood pressure and body temperature. Combined with increased levels of physical exertion, such as dancing, this can lead to dangerous increases in your body temperature, especially in hot environments. Night clubs can be hot places and dance floors often have the worst ventilation. Taking a break from dancing and getting off the dance floor for 10 minutes every hour or 2 can help you avoid overheating.



8

AVOID OTHER STIMULANTS



Users who usually do



7.4

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on stimulants-related pleasure



8

AVOID OTHER STIMULANTS

Not enough brain juice
to go round

All stimulant drugs work the same way. They all cause the release of chemical transmitters such as dopamine and serotonin. Since they are pulling from the same source using more than one will lead to more rapid depletion. Combined use also seems to lead to increased risk of unwanted stimulant effects such as palpitations, panic and aggression. Oddly many users say cocaine reduces the buzz from MDMA—which is probably why most users avoid cocaine with MDMA.



9

DRINK LESS THAN 6 ALCOHOL UNITS

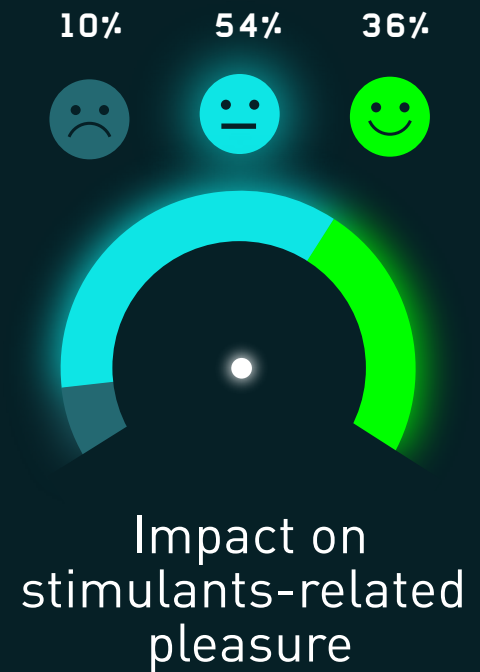


Users who usually do



7.1

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on stimulants-related pleasure



9

**DRINK LESS
THAN 6 ALCOHOL
UNITS**

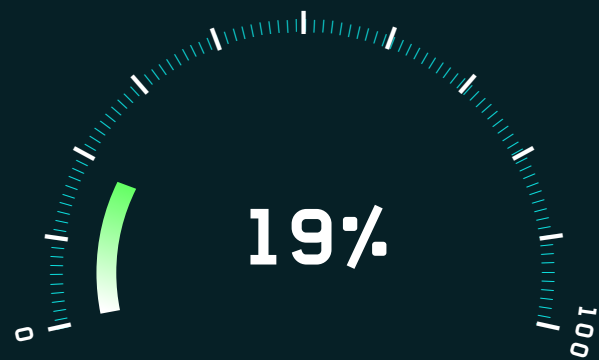
Alcohol dehydrates you

Alcohol dehydrates you and increases your risk of overheating, heart problems, memory loss and violence. Stimulant drugs tend to offset some of the desirable effects of alcohol, so you're kind of wasting your money if you drink loads. Drinking lots of alcohol when you have used a stimulant drugs tends to increase your consumption of both substances so the night is more expensive. And mixing cocaine with alcohol creates something called cocaethylene which is particularly bad for your heart.



10

CLEAN NOSE AFTER USE



Users who usually do



7.0

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on stimulants-related pleasure



10

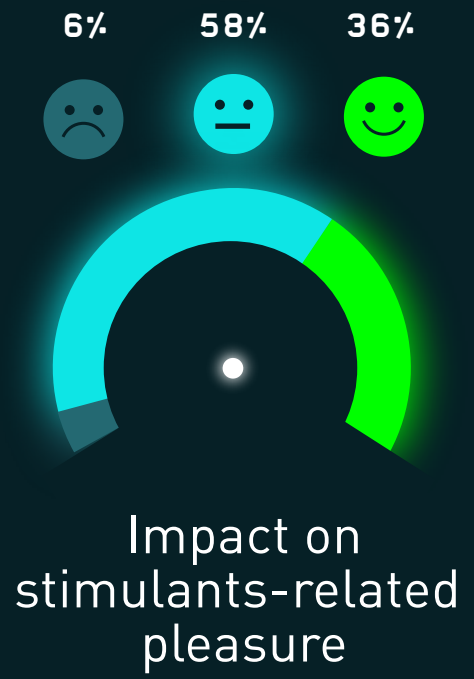
CLEAN NOSE AFTER USE

Look after your nose

Nasal douches have been used for centuries in countries like India. Using dilute salt water or sodium bicarbonate, they are thought to help keep your nasal passages clear. Douches are advised before and after a session. Alternating nostril might be useful as well. Don't use douches if you have sinusitis because they can spread infection. A bit of Vaseline or Vitamin E oil on your nose after a session can keep it looking nice and nosey.



11 | USE FOR LESS THAN 2 DAYS IN A ROW



11

USE FOR LESS THAN 2 DAYS IN A ROW

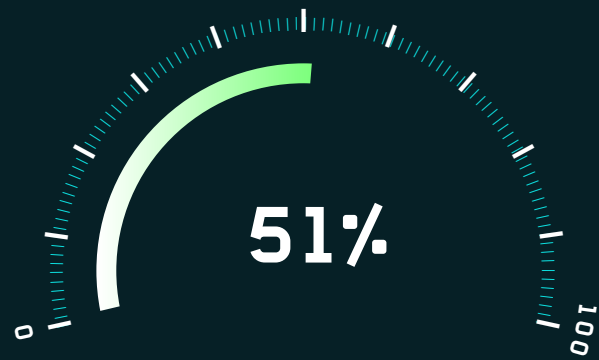
A weekend is just 2 days long

People can build up tolerance to the effects of stimulant drugs very quickly. After more than a day or 2 you've probably emptied your brain of most of the neurotransmitters you need to get a good high. Continuing to use just leads to less of a buzz and more unwanted effects. Going more than a night without sleep will also delay your recovery. Having enough control to limit your use also means that the working week stays protected (though comedowns can intrude of course).



12

USE OWN STRAW/TUBE/NOTE

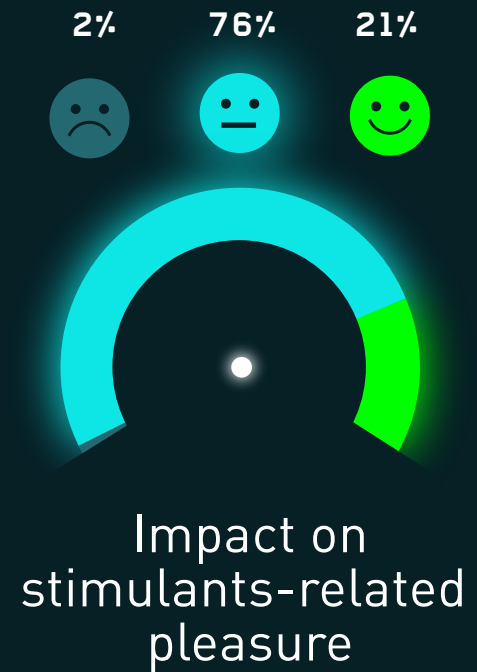


Users who usually do



6.4

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on stimulants-related pleasure



12

USE OWN STRAW/ TUBE/NOTE

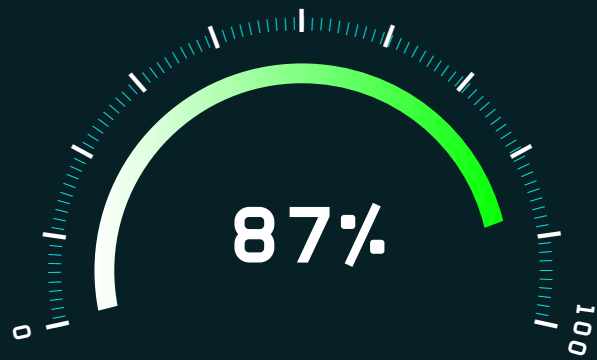
You might share more than snot!

Snorting crystalline white powders can damage the lining of your nose. Sometimes that leads to nose bleeds. Sharing straws with others runs the risk of transmitting blood borne viruses like hepatitis C. So use your own straw and avoid exposure to viruses. Avoid bank notes because they are dirty, can transmit other infections and might not be too clever if you got searched by the police.



13

FINELY CHOP POWDER



Users who usually do



5.8

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on stimulants-related pleasure



13

FINELY CHOP POWDER

Finer powders go further (maybe).

Finer powders go further (maybe). Grinding up/chopping up your stimulant drugs very finely can allow better connection with the nasal lining, better dose management, easier snorting action, reduced waste and nasal damage. It might make your drugs last longer. Many people seem to think this is an important strategy. GDS is not too sure of the evidence or whether you really do your nose less damage- but hey-ho this is what thousands of people told us.

