

Overdose

The use of any drug in such quantities that acute adverse physical or mental effects occur

Overdose death, can take the form of [heart](#) failure (through over exertion or through it stopping due to too many sedatives slowing the breathing down), [liver](#) failure (where the body is unable to eliminate the drug from the body leading to poisoning and other organ failure) or breathing or respiratory failure (where the [lungs](#) stop working due to the [depressant](#) drug(s) slowing down the breathing to such an extent that it stops).

Physical symptoms of a drug overdose vary with the type of drug(s) taken. They include:

- Abnormal breathing
- Slurred speech
- Lack of coordination
- Slow or rapid pulse
- Low or elevated body temperature
- Enlarged or small eye pupils
- Reddish face
- Heavy sweating
- Drowsiness
- Delusions and/or hallucinations
- Unconsciousness which may lead to coma

Overdose is most common among [depressants](#) such as such as [heroin](#), [methadone](#), [barbiturates](#), and [solvents](#), particularly when mixed with other depressant such as [alcohol](#) and [tranquillisers](#). Overdose with stimulants is less common, but can occur.

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[Media guide - Overdose](#)



[FAQs - How many people die from using drugs?](#) The straight answer is that we do not know exactly how many drug-related deaths there are in the UK. This is because: