

## Setting

### Where people are and what they are doing when taking drugs

The location of drug use can affect the risks. Some youngsters take drugs in out-of-the-way places which are particularly dangerous - on canal banks, near motorways, in derelict buildings, etc. Accidents are much more likely in these places, especially if the user is intoxicated. Also, if anything does go wrong, it is unlikely help will be at hand or that an ambulance could easily be called.

Even if the setting is not in itself dangerous there may be other types of risks associated with the place of use. Using drugs or taking them into school has led to substantial numbers of young people being expelled, often with drastic affects on their future careers.

What people are doing whilst they are using drugs can be an extra risk. [Driving](#) a car, riding a motorbike or bicycle or operating machinery whilst on drugs will greatly increase the risk of accidents.

Also, drug use can lower inhibitions, which may lead to a greater likelihood of getting into sexual situations whilst under the influence. Avoiding intercourse or practising safer sex - i.e. by using condoms - will be much more difficult if the person concerned is intoxicated. The risks of unwanted pregnancy, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases are probably increased if young people have sex whilst high on alcohol or drugs.

Another danger is that of young people over-exerting themselves when using [ecstasy](#). Ecstasy gives a buzz of energy and is often used in clubs whilst dancing non-stop for long periods. Sometimes young people have danced for hours without a break in hot, crowded environments, thereby running the risk of becoming dehydrated and getting heat exhaustion. This can be very dangerous and has led to over 70 deaths. 'Chillin' out' - having a break from dancing, cooling off and drinking enough water or fruit juice to replace that lost through sweating (not alcohol as it further dehydrates the user) - reduces these risks. Drinking too much water can, it itself, be dangerous.

### Related Links:



[DrugSearch - Safer dancing](#) Detailed safety advice for clubbers



[FAQ - What are the main dangers from drugs?](#) Some people think everyone who takes drugs will end up dead. Others seem to think that drug use is not dangerous at all. The truth is somewhere in between...



[Media guide - Drug effects](#) Not simply a chemical issue...