Designer and Club Drug Emergencies: When to Seek Help
Reviewed Aug 17, 2016

If someone you know uses club or designer drugs, would you know the signs of a drug emergency? Drug emergencies can result from:

- **Overdose**—when too much of a drug is used
- **Toxicity**—when a drug causes a harmful reaction
- **Interaction**—when a drug mixes with another drug or alcohol, causing a toxic effect
- **Withdrawal**—when a person becomes sick after suddenly stopping a drug

Drug emergencies can be hard to identify because we expect people high on drugs to act oddly or not feel so well. Plus, emergency symptoms vary depending on the drug used. But if someone you know uses drugs, look out for signs and symptoms that emergency care may be needed.

**Seek emergency care for these symptoms**

- Racing heart or chest pain
- Agitation
- Out of touch with reality, hallucination, paranoia
- Extreme shaking or tremors
- Profuse sweating or very dry and hot skin
- High fever
- Seizure
- Problems breathing
- Drowsiness or passing out
- Vomiting
- Violent or aggressive behavior
- Suicidal thoughts

Tell emergency personnel what drug(s) was used (if you know it). This will help them know how to approach treatment.

If you’re not sure whether the problem is a true emergency, call the National Poison Control Center. Experts give free and confidential advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The number is: (800) 222-1222.

**Don’t wait for symptoms to improve**

If someone appears to be having a bad reaction to drugs, don’t wait to see if symptoms improve. Health problems that need medical care can start quickly and unexpectedly. People who have
needed emergency medical care after using designer or club drugs have had these problems:

- High blood pressure
- Dehydration
- Dangerously high body temperature
- Breakdown of muscle tissue
- Heart attack or failure
- Kidney failure
- Liver damage
- Amnesia
- Coma
- Seizure
- Serotonin syndrome—a life-threatening drug reaction that causes the body to have too much of the brain chemical serotonin
- Death

Don’t take chances

Helping someone having a bad reaction to drugs is a noble act. But don’t take chances with your own safety. People high on designer, club, or other drugs may behave violently or unpredictably. Call 911 if a person is agitated or violent.

Resources

Emergency Care for You
www.emergencycareforyou.org

National Institute on Drug Abuse
www.drugabuse.gov

Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator
http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov

By Christine Martin
©2013 Beacon Health Options

Contact Us:
855-281-1601

© 2017 Beacon Health Options, Inc.

https://www.achievesolutions.net/achievesolutions/en/shelpch/