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CITY OF LONDON  
DRUG ACTION TEAM

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What happens when you mix  
**alcohol** +  
**cocaine?** ❄️

# alcohol + cocaine

depresses your nervous system and exaggerates your moods

stimulates your heart rate and confidence

=  cocaethylene

Cocaine and alcohol combine in your liver to make a third drug called cocaethylene. It's a lot more toxic than either coke or alcohol and makes sudden death a risk

I like taking coke,  
because I don't get  
as drunk and I feel  
as though I'm  
in control

I love to take coke because  
of the way it makes me feel  
but my mates keep telling  
me that all I do is talk shit

# Why mix alcohol and cocaine



- \* 'Because it's there': alcohol may well be available when you are taking coke.
- \* Cocaine can reduce feelings of drunkenness and tiredness from alcohol.
- \* Alcohol seems to intensify the pleasurable effects of cocaine including exhilaration, confidence and feeling energised.

I only ever take it when I'm drinking so that I've got more energy. But now I'm starting to get bad comedowns. I get a bit paranoid sometimes and its affected my relationships

I've always thought it was great that I didn't feel too rough the next day if I took coke when drinking – but I didn't realise how much damage it was doing to my body

# Why not mix alcohol and cocaine ?

- ✱ Alcohol also intensifies the unpleasant effects of cocaine including being sweaty, staring and pale; behaving in a loud and aggressive way that can lead to violence; depression, anxiety and panic attacks.
- ✱ Negative effects on your mind and body (see next page).



# how does it affect your head

- Feeling alert, wide awake, energised, happy
- Confident with no inhibitions
- Impulsive decision making and poor judgement
- Impaired memory and less ability to learn
- Aggressive behaviour

## AFTER-EFFECTS INCLUDE:

- Constant tiredness
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Lowered self-esteem
- Feeling down and low moods
- Financial headaches
- Cravings and urges to keep taking more that are difficult to resist

## INCREASED RISK OF:

- Panic attacks, psychosis and schizophrenia

- Increased confidence
- Emotional outpourings
- Non-stop talking nonsense

- Loss of sense of smell
- Stuffy/blocked nose
- Repeated snorting of cocaine damages the lining of your nose leaving you more open to infection.

- Blood and mucus is easily transferred on shared snorting straws/rolled up banknotes etc. Even tiny amounts are enough to spread diseases like Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV and MRSA

# cocaine increases risk of heart attack by up to 24 times

- Breathing difficulties
- Increased risk of respiratory failure

- Increased blood pressure and heart rate
- Raised body temperature
- Weakening of the immune system

## INCREASED RISK OF:

- Chest pains
- Seizures or convulsions
- Stroke
- Heart failure
- Particularly dangerous if you have an undetected heart condition

- Upset stomach, diarrhoea and vomiting
- Lack of appetite, which can lead to malnourishment

- Increased risk of liver failure or permanent liver damage

- Short-term sexual arousal
- Unsafe sexual behaviour
- Can prevent orgasm
- Long-term loss of interest in sex
- Affects hormonal balances (including menstrual cycle)
- Impotence
- Risk of Infertility

how does it  
affect your  
body



## the signs

Signs of overdosing on cocaine include confusion and dizziness with a dry throat. Also erratic breathing with short and deep gulps for air.

## What to do if someone collapses or overdoses

- ✱ **Don't panic.**
- ✱ Turn them on their side to avoid choking – known as the recovery position. (see right)
- ✱ **Dial 999** for an ambulance.
- ✱ Don't leave them alone.
- ✱ If you do have to leave to get help, make sure they can't roll over onto their back.
- ✱ If you know what they've taken – tell the ambulance crew (if you have time, remove any drugs beforehand).

# action in an emergency

You won't get into trouble for having taken drugs – paramedics don't automatically call the police unless there has been a fatality

# your action could save a life



- \* Cocaine is a Class A drug. Possession of cocaine is illegal. So is giving even a line away or selling it.
- \* Possession can mean a prison sentence of up to seven years.
- \* Supplying, or dealing, includes getting hold of it for your friends. It can result in a life sentence and an unlimited fine.
- \* You can be prosecuted even if you are under 18.
- \* If you have a drugs record you won't be able to get a visa to visit certain countries. eg the United States.
- \* A drug record will seriously affect your job and new employers often require background checks.



**Where  
to  
find  
help**

**[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)**

**0800 77 66 00**

free confidential drugs information  
and advice 24 hours a day

**[www.lifeline.org.uk](http://www.lifeline.org.uk)**

**0161 834 7160**

provides a range of drug and  
alcohol services

**[www.alcoholics-  
anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)**

**0845 769 7555**

**[www.release.org.uk](http://www.release.org.uk)**

**0845 4500 215**

free and confidential advice on  
drugs and drugs law

**[www.adfam.org.uk](http://www.adfam.org.uk)**

**020 7553 7640**

for concerned families and friends

**[www.cauk.org.uk](http://www.cauk.org.uk)**

**0800 612 0225**

Cocaine Anonymous UK