

Long-term effects

Using lots of different drugs over a long period is not good for your spirit, your health, and your family. You may have mood swings, lose control or become agro with no warning. Some people might be frightened of you and start to see you as being dangerous or strange.



If you do use mixed drugs long term you are more likely to:

- Overdose.
- Harm your body and brain.
- Become worried, sad and depressed.
- Upset your family and community.
- Break the law and get caught.
- Have accidents, especially car accidents.



Reducing harm

- **It's best not to mix drugs.**
- **Injecting drugs is very risky.**
- If you have mixed your drugs, have a trusted family member or friend around and stay in a safe place.
- Never drive on any drugs.
- Using drugs is not an excuse for having unsafe sex – always use a condom.
- Drug use affects your family and community, not only while you're using, but also when you come down.

Look after your family and friends

- Stay together.
- If someone becomes very fearful or is feeling crazy, keep them calm and tell them the feeling will go away. **Do not leave them alone.**
- If someone experiences any bad effects or passes out make sure you call an ambulance straight away. By doing this you could save their life.
  - If someone has passed out put them on their left side and make sure they can breathe.
  - dial 000 for an ambulance (police won't come unless there is violence, serious injury or death).
  - stay with your friend till the ambulance arrives.



Getting some help and information



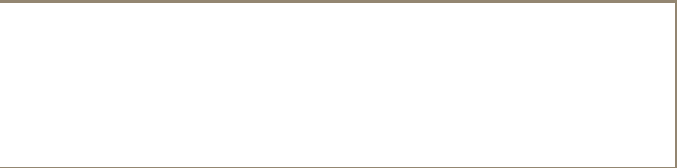
If you are thinking about changing your drug use, perhaps you could use some help or information. Sometimes people don't get help because they feel shame talking about their drug use. Aboriginal Alcohol and Drug Workers, Aboriginal Health Workers or other health professionals will help you. They will not put you down. They can help you to stop using, reduce your use safely, and support you while you make changes. It may not be easy to reduce your use but your friends and family and other people in your community can also help you by supporting your decision.

ABORIGINAL SUPPORT SYSTEM



For more information and help

Local Contact



The Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)

ADIS can provide information about culturally secure alcohol and drug services in your area. They can also provide other information, counselling and advice for people concerned about their own or another's drug use. This is a 24-hour, statewide, confidential telephone service.

**ADIS: 9442 5000 Toll free: 1800 198 024**  
**E-mail: [adis@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:adis@health.wa.gov.au)**  
**Website: [www.dao.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.dao.health.wa.gov.au)**

The Parent Drug Information Service (PDIS)

Confidential telephone support, counselling, information and referral service for parents.

**Telephone: 9442 5050**  
**Toll free: 1800 653 203**

Produced by the Aboriginal Alcohol and Other Drug Programs

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Strong Spirit Strong Mind

Aboriginal Ways of Reducing Harm  
From Alcohol and Other Drugs

Mixing Drugs is  
Dangerous



## ABORIGINAL INNER SPIRIT MODEL



Our Inner Spirit is the centre of our being and emotions.

When our spirit feels strong our mind feels strong.

When our spirit feels tangled our mind feels tangled.

Strong Inner Spirit is what keeps people healthy and keeps them connected together.

Strong Inner Spirit keeps our family strong, our community strong and our country alive.

## Alcohol and other drugs can tangle your spirit and weaken your spirit and your connections with family, community and country

Our way of being healthy is to look after ourselves by making good choices, and to care for our family, community and culture. Alcohol and other drugs can tangle and weaken our spirit and mind. This can affect our emotional, social, spiritual and physical well being. This can weaken our connection to family, community, culture and country.



## Mixing drugs can be dangerous

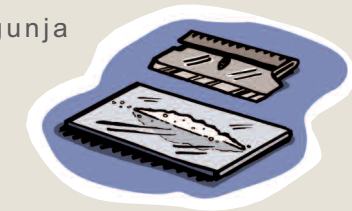
### Mixing drugs is also called polydrug use

**Polydrug use is when you have two or more drugs in your body at the same time. You may be mixing drugs without even knowing it.**



Some ways you can have more than one drug in your body at the same time are:

- Using drugs like grog and gunja together.
- Using grog and later on using gunja while the grog is still in your body.
- Mixing speed and gunja and grog together.



## Short-term effects

**The biggest problem with mixing drugs is the effects are hard to control. This can lead to overdose.** To understand how this works, you need to understand how drugs are grouped.

The four main groups of drugs are:

**Uppers** (stimulants) Speed you up. Amphetamines, caffeine, cigarettes.



**Downers** (depressants) Slow you down. Alcohol, heroin, tranquillisers (Valium, Rohypnol), pain killers with codeine.



**Crazy** (hallucinogens) Make you see and hear things that aren't there. LSD, magic mushrooms.



**Some drugs belong to two groups.** Gunja is a depressant and a hallucinogen. Ecstasy is a stimulant and a hallucinogen.



## Mixing drugs from the same group can increase the effect

Mixing grog with heroin can slow down your heart rate so much that you can stop breathing and die. Mixing speed with ecstasy can make your heart beat faster, you can get overheated, dehydrated and this can even cause death. Mixing grog with gunja can make you really spin out; you may throw up or pass out.

## Mixing drugs from different groups can make one drug cover up the effects of the other.

If you mix grog and speed you could use dangerous amounts of both drugs without knowing it. This can harm your body and make you very sick.

