

3 Facts for Young People About Cocaine

Young people (aged 18–25 years) use cocaine more than any other age group. Young people are more at risk of the harms associated with cocaine use. If you are using cocaine or know someone who does, here are some facts to help reduce the risks.

1 Know the Risks

Health Risks

Immediate health risks associated with cocaine use include **accidental drug poisoning which can cause death**.

Long-term health risks of prolonged and frequent cocaine use include cardiovascular diseases.

Other risks may depend on how you use cocaine:



If you **snort** cocaine — risk of damage to your nasal cavity and respiratory illnesses



If you **smoke** cocaine — risk of damage to your lungs and worsening respiratory conditions



If you **inject** cocaine — risk of blood borne diseases and infections, like HIV and hepatitis B and C



If you **swallow** cocaine — risk of intestinal illnesses

Other Risks

Using cocaine can impair your ability to drive.



2 Check your Drugs

The risk of using cocaine with other unexpected toxic drugs is high and has greatly increased in the past five years.

Drug checking can tell you the contents of your drugs to help you make an informed decision about use.

Find out more information on how to check your drugs, contact your local Community Health Center or Public Health Unit near you.

3 Be Prepared

Pace yourself when using cocaine.

Avoid using cocaine with other drugs.

Drugs like alcohol, cannabis, ecstasy (MDMA), and prescription stimulants like Ritalin® mask or increase the effects of cocaine and may increase the likelihood of an adverse reaction.

Don't use alone.

The risk of accidental drug poisoning is higher when you use drugs alone. It is best to use cocaine with people you trust, so they can help you if needed.

Carry naloxone.

Naloxone reverses accidental drug poisoning from possible opioid contaminants in cocaine.

Know your rights.

Call 911 if you suspect accidental drug poisoning. You will **NOT** be charged for having small amounts of drugs on you due to The Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act.

Plan a safe ride home.

Cocaine-impaired driving is a risk to yourself and others.

Learn more at ccsa.ca and check out our resources

Stimulants: Do Drugs Contain What People Think They Contain?: Results from the Community Urinalysis and Self-Report Project
What Do People Who Use Drugs Want and Need? (Results from the Community Urinalysis and Self-Report Project)