don’t be a statistic

According to a research study conducted in 2007/8 and published in 2011 by DDRC Healthcare (previously the Diving Diseases Research Centre):

- 22% of the 531 divers who took part in the project said that they had used one or more illicit drug since learning to dive, compared with more than 35% of the UK population.
- More than 3% of the divers admitted to the use of one or more drug in the past 12 months, and 3% in the past month.
- 9% had used a class A drug since learning to dive.
- 21% of the divers who used illegal drugs also admitted to using a class A or B drug between 5 minutes and 24 hours before a dive.
- Cannabis, cocaine, and ecstasy were all reported between 5 minutes and 6 hours before a dive.
- Cannabis was the most popular drug of choice – in line with the national population – with cocaine and ecstasy a close second and third!
- LSD and magic mushrooms were also used by divers.

...don’t do drugs & dive

This leaflet has been produced by DDRC Healthcare, a charity (No. 279652) that promotes medical treatment, training and research associated with the use of hyperbaric oxygen therapy in the treatment of diving diseases and other medical problems.

Find out more about DDRC Healthcare at www.ddrc.org
Facebook & Twitter – DDRC.Plymouth

Dive Master Insurance, one of the largest independent providers of recreational dive-related insurance in the world, supported the original concept of this educational leaflet.

Find out more about Dive Master Insurance at www.divemasterinsurance.com

Find out more about the effects of drugs at www.talktofrank.com

illegal drugs & diving

WHAT DO YOU REALLY KNOW ABOUT ILLEGAL (RECREATIONAL) DRUGS?
Do you know?

...for how long some illegal drugs can affect your body, or for how long a drug can be detected in a urine test?
...how an illegal drug may interact with you in the diving environment? How it can affect you physically or psychologically?
...that the strength of some strains of cannabis has increased more than 10-fold since the 1980s? Regular cannabis use is associated with increased risk of developing psychotic illnesses later in life, including schizophrenia.

A family background of mental illness may increase this risk. It is also possible that frequent use of cannabis can affect the fertility of men and women.

...that cocaine seized by police in 2009 was on average only 33% pure? If you don’t know how pure your cocaine is, you won’t know how strong it is, or what other substances you may be taking.
...that illegal drug-users are more likely to experience non-fatal accidents than non-users?
...that about 18% of people killed in road accidents have traces of illegal drugs in their blood?

The effects of some drugs last for days or weeks. National Statistics estimates that in the past year 8.8% of adults aged 16–59 (almost 3 million people) used illegal drugs, and that 3% (around 1 million) used a Class A drug.

Divers are told during training not to use illegal drugs, but are given few facts and figures or details such as effects on reaction times, class of drug, whether stimulants or hallucinogens – and the risks.

Scuba-diving requires information-processing, recall, reasoning, decision-making, attention and ability to take control of a situation in a number of scenarios – on shore, in a boat, at the water’s surface or under water.

These situations may be affected by the use of illegal drugs within certain timeframes. Read on and learn about the types of illegal drug, class, onset and duration of effects, detection in urine, and think about the side-effects – both above and below the water!

Type, Class, Effect Time & Duration, Detection Times & Side Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Effect Time &amp; Duration</th>
<th>Detection Times</th>
<th>Side Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMPHETAMINES</td>
<td>UK Class A/B</td>
<td>USA Schedule 2</td>
<td>Detection time in urine: 1-4 days.</td>
<td>CNS stimulation, increased heart rate, elevated BP, delusions, light sensitivity, anxiety, insomnia, irrational behaviour, headache, hallucinations, can cause convulsions. May affect judgment and problem-solving ability, and increase hypothermia susceptibility under water.</td>
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<tr>
<td>COCAINE</td>
<td>UK Class A / USA Schedule 2</td>
<td>5 minutes, with high lasting for 15-30 minutes, general effects 1-2 hours, up to several days for late phase following a binge.</td>
<td>Detection time in urine: 2-4 days.</td>
<td>CNS stimulation, increased heart rate, elevated BP, increased body temperature, disoriented behaviour, euphoria, improved performance in simple tasks, dizziness, nausea and vomiting, increased light sensitivity, feelings of well-being, can cause convulsions. May impair judgment and ability to respond appropriately while diving.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CANNABIS (MARIJUANA)</td>
<td>UK Class B / USA Schedule 1</td>
<td>Within 10 minutes, high may last up to 2 hours, behavioural and physiological effects may return to baseline within 3-5 hours, residual effects in specific behaviours up to 24 hours.</td>
<td>Detection time in urine: 1-3 days but may be 20 days or longer.</td>
<td>Increased cardiac output, vasodilation, dry mouth, decreased co-ordination, impaired learning/memory, euphoria, relaxed inhibitions, subjective slowing of time, apathy, alterations in thought formation and expression, impaired motor performance. May impair judgment and ability to respond appropriately while diving.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LSD</td>
<td>UK Class A / USA Schedule 1</td>
<td>Intravenous 10 minutes, oral 20-30 minutes with high at 2-4 hours and diminishing over 6-8 hours. Flashbacks may occur within a few days or more than 1 year after use.</td>
<td>Detection time in urine: 2-5 days.</td>
<td>Changes in perception and mood, decreased co-ordination, subjective slowing of time, hyperventilation, increased heart rate, panic attacks, loss of personal boundaries, tachycardia, hypertension, sense of dissociation. May impair judgment and ability to respond appropriately while diving.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CANNABIS</td>
<td>UK Class B / USA Schedule 3</td>
<td>Long-acting effect within 1-2 hours, total effect 1-2 hours or longer. Detection time in urine: Short-acting 1 day, long-acting 2-3 weeks.</td>
<td>Detection time in urine: Approx 8 hours.</td>
<td>Increased confidence, distortion of colour, sound and objects, changes in sense of time and movement. May impair judgment and ability to respond appropriately while diving.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HALLUCINOGENS</td>
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<td>May impair judgment and ability to respond appropriately while diving.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEROIN</td>
<td>UK Class A / USA Schedule 1</td>
<td>Dependent on route and dosage, from 45 seconds to several minutes, peak effects 1-2 hours, over all effect 3-6 hours. Detection time in urine: 2-3 days.</td>
<td>Detection time in urine: Approx 8 hours.</td>
<td>CNS stimulation, increased heart rate, panic attacks, loss of personal boundaries, tachycardia, hyperventilation, sense of dissociation. May impair judgment and ability to respond appropriately while diving.</td>
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<td>LSD</td>
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