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## Looking after your health: HIV and Recreational drugs

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Many people know that HIV damages and weakens the immune system over time. A damaged immune system makes it difficult for your body to fight off disease. Using ecstasy, Crystal/Ice and other types of methamphetamines and other party drugs is likely to further suppress your immune system. The effects can be harmful for both the short and longer term.

In addition to the drugs, the partying lifestyle itself can weaken your immune system. Staying up for long periods of time, not eating enough, or not eating the right foods can damage the immune system of any person, even if they are in great health.

There's not a lot known about how HIV treatments interact with illicit or recreational drugs, though this is changing. However, if you are on HIV treatments and use recreational drugs, there are some common cautions you could follow:

- Avoid taking HIV treatments and other drugs at exactly the same time: Wait at least a couple of hours between doses.
- Ritonavir and possibly other protease inhibitors may cause dangerous, even fatal interactions with ecstasy, Crystal/Ice and other types of methamphetamines. We know that these HIV drugs slow down the body's elimination of recreational drugs.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Start with a smaller amount of any illicit drug and monitor any unusual responses.
- Seek emergency medical help if you experience dizziness, sudden drowsiness, blurred vision, heart palpitations, vomiting or any other severe or unexpected effect.
- Methamphetamines and ecstasy can make eating difficult; which can be a problem for people who need to take treatments with food.

[◀ CD4 Count](#) [1][up](#) [2][Clinical trials](#) ▶ [3]

- [recreational drugs](#)

### Links:

[1] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/next-steps/cd4-count>

[2] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/next-steps>

[3] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/next-steps/clinical-trials>