

# MIXING DRUGS

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

### What are they?

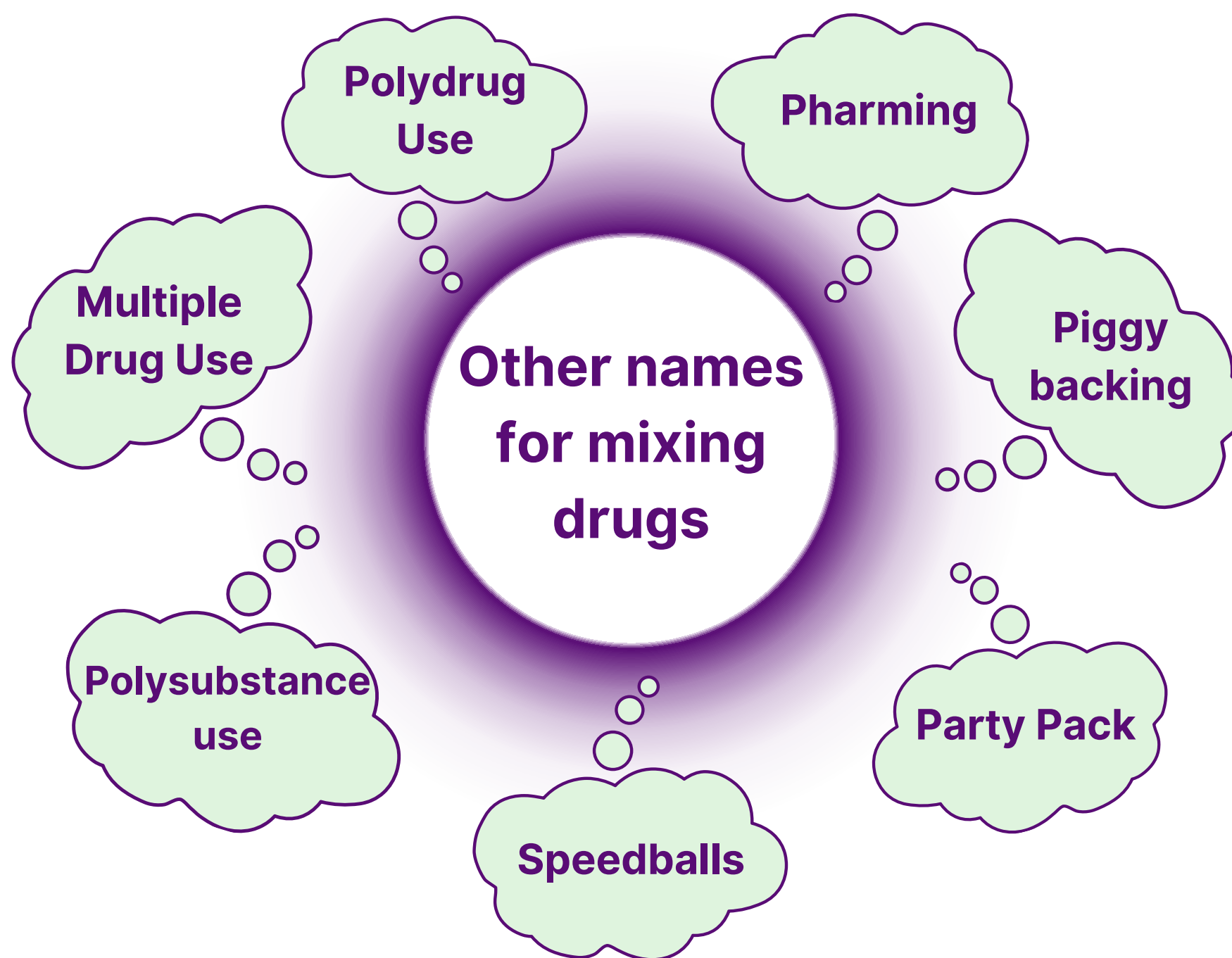
Mixing drugs can be dangerous



**Polysubstance use** is also known as mixing drugs, or using more than one drug at the same time.

Drugs may be used together on purpose to enhance a desirable effect or to decrease a negative effect of one. It may also be unintentional.

Both legal and illegal substances may be used together.



### Examples of Polysubstance Use

#### Stimulants

- Having a cigarette while drinking coffee
- Using cocaine a few hours after taking your ADHD medication (e.g. Ritalin)



#### Depressants

- Combining morphine (an opioid) with Gravol
- Mixing alcohol with Ativan (a benzodiazepine)




#### Mixed

- Taking ecstasy before drinking alcohol at a festival
- Smoking cannabis after drinking alcohol
- Combining alcohol with an energy drink




### What are the effects?



Using more than one substances often leads to an effect that is much stronger than a substance being used alone.



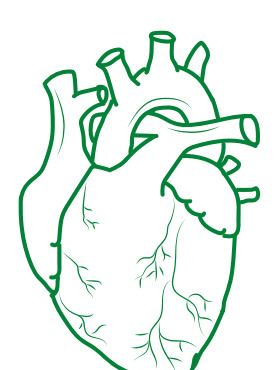
Mixing substances can cause **serotonin syndrome**- a reaction caused by too much of the hormone **serotonin** being released into your body.



The effect of one substance may be masked by the other, especially if they have opposite effects. This can lead to accidental overdose.



Serotonin syndrome can span from muscle weakness and confusion to seizures, a rapid heartbeat, and even death.



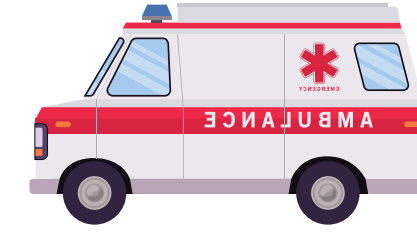
Mixing stimulants puts much more stress on the heart, increasing the chance of a heart attack. It can also cause psychosis.



Mixing depressants can cause confusion and unconsciousness at lower doses, which may lead to **brain damage** or **death**.

# MIXING DRUGS

## When do you seek emergency help?



**Overdose or poisoning:** Taking too much of a substance, or combining substances together (e.g. alcohol and opioids).

**Signs** can depend on the substances being taken. In general, a change in breathing, level of consciousness, or difficulty speaking and walking can all be signs of an overdose or poisoning.

**Get help right away!** An overdose or poisoning is a medical emergency- no matter what substances are used.

### Did you know?

Mixing substances together may produce a **much stronger effect** than you would think. Double the drug is **not** always double the high!

This is why polysubstance use is one of the **biggest causes** of **unintentional overdoses** in Canada.

## How to stay safer

- 1 **Not mixing substances** is the safest choice, though it may not be realistic for everyone.
- 2 **Timing matters.** Avoid mixing substances before work, school, or operating a vehicle (e.g. car, ATV), as it can impair your reaction time and concentration.
- 3 **Start low and go slow.** Try a small amount of a substance to see how it affects you before deciding to take more.
- 4 **Wait before mixing.** See how one substance affects you before deciding to take another, to lower the risk of taking too much of either.
- 5 **Don't use alone.** Have a friend with you in case you need help.
- 6 **Keep it new:** Infections such as Hepatitis or HIV can be passed through shared needles. Homemade supplies can increase your risk of hurting yourself and getting serious infections (e.g. heart infections).
- 7 **Plan for safety.** Have a ride arranged for after you use mix substances.

## Naloxone Kits

Naloxone can save a life! It temporarily reverses the effects of opioids that may be mixed into or used with other substances.

Check out our naloxone instructions [here!](#)



Call 811 to find out where to get a free kit.



**SWAP** provides proper supplies for injecting, smoking, and snorting drugs. To find out more, call or text **709-757-7927**.

For more information visit us at:

[www.DECYDE.ca](http://www.DECYDE.ca)