

Physical activity

Physical activity is usually a lifestyle choice. The amount of physical activity a person regularly takes affects their health and wellbeing.

Types of physical activity

There are different types of activity, which can be carried out at **gentle**, **moderate** or **vigorous** pace.

Type	Examples
Everyday activities	Walking, cycling, gardening, housework
Recreational activities	Swimming, dancing, bowls, running, climbing, exercise classes
Competitive sport	Football, rugby, netball, tennis, rowing

Negative effects of not being active

Just as physical activity has positive effects on all aspects of health and wellbeing, not being active affects the whole person negatively:

- **Physical** – obesity and associated health problems.
- **Intellectual** – reduced brain performance.
- **Emotional** – poor self-concept and reduced ability to cope with stress.
- **Social** – fewer opportunities for social interaction.

Positive effects of physical activity

1 Physical benefits

Physical activity helps maintain a healthy weight and can reduce Body Mass Index (BMI), as well as boosting energy levels. It can improve flexibility, stamina and endurance, and strengthen bones and muscles. It can also reduce the risk of heart disease and diabetes.

2 Intellectual benefits

Studies show a link between levels of physical activity and brain function, such as memory and thinking skills, at every stage of life.

3 Emotional benefits

Physical activity improves confidence and mood, and reduces anxiety and stress. It can aid relaxation and sleep, and can lead to better self-concept.

4 Social benefits

Certain types of physical activity (such as competitive sports, dance or exercise classes) encourage social interaction, reducing isolation and improving social skills.

Physical effects of inactivity and activity

Inactivity	Recommended level of activity
👎 increases risk of breast cancer by 17.9% and colon cancer by 18.7%	👍 lowers the risk of breast and colon cancer by 20%
👎 increases risk of type 2 diabetes by 13%	👍 lowers risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 40%
👎 increases risk of coronary heart disease by 10.5%	👍 lowers the risk of heart disease by 35%
👎 leads to obesity	👍 helps to maintain a healthy weight
👎 leads to joint pain	👍 builds strong bones and healthy muscles

Now try this

Give **one** example for each aspect of health and wellbeing (physical, intellectual, emotional, social) to show how a **lack** of physical activity may affect people.

People who are not physically active will not experience the positive effects outlined on this page.



Smoking and nicotine use

Smoking and the use of nicotine is a lifestyle choice. Nicotine is an addictive drug. It is found in tobacco products such as cigarettes, cigars and chewing tobacco. These products carry a health warning as they can have serious effects on health and wellbeing.

Harmful chemicals

Cigarette smoke contains harmful chemicals that are absorbed in the lungs.

- **Nicotine** causes addiction, raised pulse rate and blood pressure, and thrombosis (blood clots).
- **Tar** causes cancers of the nose, throat, tongue, lungs; stomach and bladder.
- **Carbon monoxide** reduces the amount of oxygen in the blood, straining the heart.
- **Soot** particles cause bronchitis and emphysema.

Reasons people smoke

People give different reasons for smoking, often related to the **addictive** nature of nicotine, such as:

- feeling unable to quit
- to overcome addictions to other drugs or alcohol
- to relieve stress and relax
- because friends smoke (peer pressure)
- to reward themselves
- a fear of putting on weight (nicotine stops people feeling hungry).

Negative effects of smoking

1 Physical

Smoking increases the risk of life-threatening diseases such as lung cancer, stroke, coronary heart disease, emphysema, bronchitis and pneumonia. Smoking during pregnancy carries an increased risk of having a low birth weight baby, or a premature birth or stillbirth.

2 Intellectual

Addiction to nicotine causes cravings, irritation, distraction and stress when the smoker is unable to smoke. Smokers are more likely to develop depression and anxiety over time.

3 Emotional

Being unable to quit smoking may lead to poor self-concept. Smokers may worry about the negative effects on their health and about the cost of cigarettes. Research data shows that smoking is associated with poor mental health.

4 Social

Smokers may feel socially excluded when they have to leave social spaces to smoke outside. People may avoid smokers because of the smell of their hair, breath and clothes.

Passive smoking

Breathing in the smoke from other people's cigarettes carries some of the same risks as smoking. In the UK, smoking is banned in all public indoor spaces and some public outdoor spaces, and it is illegal to smoke in a car in the company of someone who is under 18. This protects people against passive smoking.

Other nicotine products

Smokeless tobacco, nasal snuff or chewing tobacco is absorbed through the membranes of the nose and mouth. It can cause oral cancer and gum disease, as well as increasing the risk of heart disease.

Recently, people have been using 'electronic cigarettes' to inhale nicotine (vaping). The long-term health effects are not yet known.

Now try this

Write a short paragraph to explain why smoking can have negative emotional and social impacts on health and wellbeing.

Remember, an emotional effect is about feelings and a social effect is about how you relate to others.

Alcohol misuse

The consumption of alcohol is a lifestyle choice. Its misuse can have a negative effect on health and wellbeing. Learn about recommended levels of alcohol consumption on page 28.

Alcohol misuse

Alcohol misuse is when a person:

- regularly drinks more than the recommended level
- makes decisions and actions that are negatively affected by their alcohol consumption
- becomes dependent on alcohol (they are not in control of their drinking)
- binge drinks (consumes a large amount of alcohol over a short period of time).

Short-term impact of alcohol misuse

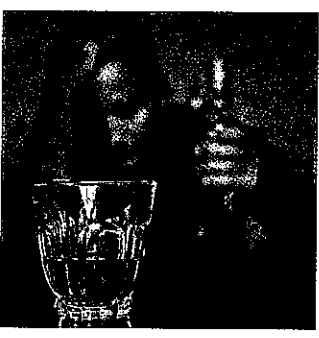
Drinking more than recommended levels of alcohol may lead to:

- becoming aggressive or violent
- lack of concentration
- trips and falls, causing injury
- hangovers (headaches, dizziness, dehydration)
- making poor judgements such as having unprotected sex, drunk driving.

1 Physical: diseases of the major organs (liver, heart, kidneys); cancer (mouth, throat, oesophagus, breast); stroke; stomach ulcers; weight gain; infertility /impotence

2 Emotional: low self-concept; personality change; addiction (alcoholism)

Negative effects of drinking more than recommended levels



3 Mental wellbeing: depression and anxiety; self-harm; brain damage; impaired brain development of an unborn child; poor decision-making

4 Social: breakdown of relationships; domestic abuse; social exclusion

5 Economic: job loss; inability to manage money

Drinking heavily in pregnancy can cause foetal alcohol syndrome (restricted growth, facial abnormalities, behavioural disorders) in a baby.

Now try this

Carrie drinks more than the recommended level of alcohol when she goes out in the evening and often has hangovers the next morning.

Give **three** examples of the possible effects on her ability to work.

Try to include at least one short-term and one long-term example.



Had a look Nearly there Nailed it!

Substance misuse

All drug use has an effect on health and wellbeing. Drugs include legal substances such as nicotine, alcohol, prescription and over-the-counter medicines, and illegal substances such as cannabis and cocaine. Substance misuse has a negative effect on health and wellbeing.

Prescription drugs

Prescription drugs are those recommended by a doctor or practice nurse. When taken correctly, they have beneficial effects on health and wellbeing, such as reducing pain or fighting infection.

Their misuse can have negative effects on health and wellbeing.

Misuse of prescription drugs

The use of prescription drugs must be monitored by a health practitioner. Prescription drugs are misused when people:

- take them for non-medical (recreational) reasons
- become addicted to them
- take more or less than the prescribed dose
- take drugs that belong to another person.

Negative effects of substance misuse on mental health

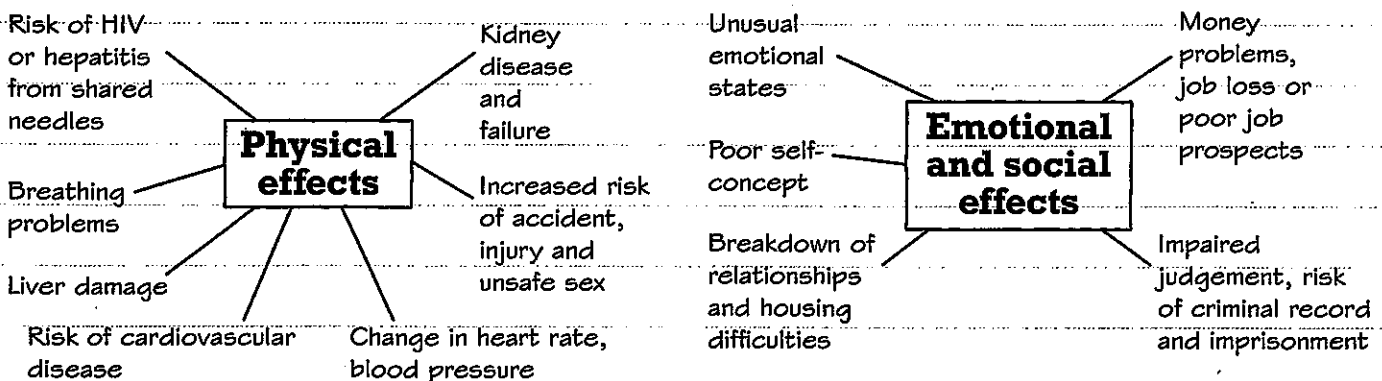
The three main types of recreational drugs are shown in the table. All are **addictive**.

People take these to change their mental state. Some drugs may give an immediate feeling of wellbeing, or even euphoria, but all have longer-term negative effects on mental health.

Cannabis / Marijuana may act as a stimulant or depressant

Drug type	Possible short-term effects	Possible long-term effects
Stimulants nicotine, cocaine, caffeine, cannabis	Increase brain activity, blood pressure and heart rate making individuals more active, alert, excited	Paranoia, aggressiveness, schizophrenia, depression, suicidal feelings
Depressants alcohol, solvents, heroin	Calm, relaxed, reduced tension, confusion and loss of concentration	Sleep problems, anxiety, memory loss, depression
Hallucinogens LSD, ketamine	Hallucinations, altered sense of space and time, thoughts and feelings, and moods	Anxiety, memory loss, depression, panic attacks, flashbacks

Other negative effects of substance misuse



Now try this

Liam, 16, has recently started taking stimulant drugs as a result of peer pressure.

Give **two** possible effects on his emotional and/or social wellbeing.

Think about how drug use may affect his behaviour and the impact this has on his relationships.