

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Drugs taken together can interact in ways that increase their overall effect. Many overdoses occur when people mix heroin or prescription opioids and/or alcohol with benzodiazepines such as Klonopin, Valium, and Xanax. Most fatal overdoses are the result of poly-drug use.

## IN CASE OF OVERDOSE



Call 9-1-1  
Stay with the person  
until paramedics arrive.

Don't mess around.  
You MUST get to an ER.

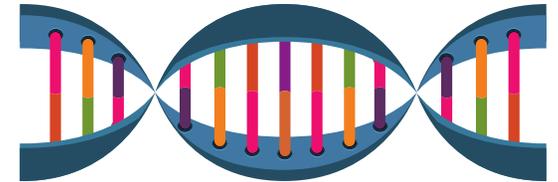
You can't be sure which drug is  
causing the issue.

**MOST FATAL OVERDOSES  
ARE THE RESULT OF  
MIXING DRUGS**



# DRUG MIXING

POLYSUBSTANCE USE



## CONTACT US

Humboldt Area Center for Harm  
Reduction (HACHR)  
(707) 407-6013  
hachr707.info@gmail.com  
www.hachr707.org

THE HUMBOLDT AREA CENTER FOR  
HARM REDUCTION (HACHR)

# SPEEDBALLING

While it seems intuitive that combining a stimulant and a depressant would counterbalance the different effects, the combination does *not* cancel out overdose risk.

People who speedball are at higher risk for overdosing than people who use heroin or cocaine alone. This is likely because:

- The body has to process more drugs.
- The stimulant causes the body to use more oxygen while the depressant reduces the breathing rate.
- People who speedball usually inject more frequently with less time between shots than people who are using only heroin.

# OVERDOSE PREVENTION

Go slow

Drink water

Test your drugs

Do not use behind locked doors

Carry Naloxone

Use one drug at a time, or use less of each drug

Take breaks between drugs

Do not mix drugs every day

Reduce the amount of every drug being taken

Try to avoid mixing alcohol with heroin/pills—this is an incredibly dangerous combination

Always start with small “tester” shots

When using a drug or drug combination for the first time, stick to tiny doses to gauge your innate tolerance first

Have a friend with you who knows what drugs you’ve taken and can respond in case of an emergency

Thanks to our partners at:



# THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

All sedating medications carry overdose risks on their own, however, when drugs are combined, the risk is substantially increased because the drugs typically use different mechanisms in the body to create sedation. These mechanisms represent overlapping protection from the brain and respiration shutting down. This overlapping protection is diminished when multiple substances are combined. For example, the more alcohol (or downers) in someone’s system, the less heroin is needed to cause an overdose.