

# the pocket guide

men seeking men

Check out the other booklets in the Pocket Guide series.

## MEN SEEKING MEN

FROOTY BOOTY – how to keep your ass fresh

THEY'RE HERE – STD's to know about

You can find them where you picked this one up  
or you can call Man to Man at (604) 893-2238



## resources

Little Sister's Book and Art Emporium

1238 Davie St.

(604) 669-1753

The only LGBT bookstore in Vancouver.

Xtral West

Vancouver's Gay and Lesbian Bi-Weekly Newspaper

Available in various locations.

*For more resources in the Lower Mainland, such as youth groups, college and university groups, health services, social events, etc. call the PrideLine at the Centre.*



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1st edition (1996) written, designed and illustrated by Zdenky H.S. Burkhardt. 2nd edition (1999, 2000) written by Phillip Banks and Zdenky H.S. Burkhardt, designed by Darren Carcary, graphics by The New Congress

If you have feedback, and/or suggestions for improving the guide, or if you would like more copies, please contact Man to Man at 604-893-2238, email [m2m@parc.org](mailto:m2m@parc.org) or visit our website at [www.aidsvancouver.bc.ca](http://www.aidsvancouver.bc.ca). Man to Man would like to send out a great big "thank you" to all of the community members who contributed their time to reviewing the Pocket Guides. The content of this guide is provided for information only and should not be used as legal and/or medical advice or instruction.

## the pocket guide

Published by  
The Man to Man program

AIDS Vancouver

1107 Seymour St.

Vancouver, BC V6B 5S8



resources

# resources

## Three Bridges Community Health Centre

1292 Hornby St.  
(604) 736-9844. Regular hours: Monday to Friday, 8:30am - 8:00pm. Saturday, 10am - 5pm.

*A free health service, with on-site physicians, nurses and counselors. Services include general medical care, HIV testing, STD screening, immunization, alcohol and drug counseling and relationship counseling. Also provides referrals to other health services, and can assist in accessing services such as housing and social assistance.*

## Pride Health Services

Three Bridges Community Health Centre, 1292 Hornby St.  
(604) 633-4201. Thursdays 3:00pm - 6:00pm

*Health services targeted to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered communities.*

## The Gender Clinic

575 W. 8th Ave.  
(604) 875-8282

*Offers services to transitioning transsexuals. Provides a list of doctors working with transgendered/transsexuals.*

## The Centre

1170 Bute St.  
(604) 684-5307

*Services include the PrideLine, a legal clinic, counseling, a library, youth services, 12-step groups, social support and coming-out groups.*

## YouthCO AIDS Society

203-319 W. Pender St.  
(604) 688-1441

*Addresses needs of young people around the issues of HIV and AIDS.*



**Trans Alliance Society**  
(604) 684-9872 ext. 2044  
Information and counseling line that informs bisexual people of the groups and activities of the bisexual communities. Also helps people who may have questions or concerns about bisexual issues.

**Bute Street Clinic**  
The Centre, 1170 Bute St.  
(604) 660-7949. Hours: Monday to Friday, noon - 6:30pm.  
Outreach nurses provide help with HIV/STD education and testing, minor medical problems and referrals.

**AIDS Vancouver**  
1107 Seymour St.  
(604) 681-2122  
Provides direct services to people living with HIV/AIDS. Delivers information, education, and training to communities at risk and the general public.

**Asian Society for the Intervention of AIDS (ASIA)**  
210-119 West Pender St.  
(604) 669-5567  
Serves East and Southeast Asian communities, providing support, education and advocacy services on harm and risk reduction, sexual orientation and sexual health support and promotion, with the goal of reducing the spread of HIV.

Here is a list of some resources. This information is borrowed from Your Everyday Health Guide, a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community health resource guide. Copies are available free from some businesses, clinics and community organizations across the province.

# resources

# pocket guide

The Man to Man program at AIDS Vancouver put together this booklet, as part of a series, to provide information about sex and health to guys who have sex with other guys. The Man to Man program believes having information about the things guys do, or want to try, is an important part of being able to make choices. Especially when those choices can affect our health - physical, mental, emotional, spiritual or otherwise.

The Pocket Guide series will openly and explicitly talk about things related to sex. The stuff we talk about isn't going to be important to everyone. There's way more to being gay or bisexual than how you have sex and who you have it with. Racism, poverty, transphobia, ableism, as well as homophobia, are some of the things we face in our lives. All of these affect our

health and some of the choices we make about sex. This series only scratches at the surface of what's going on out there.

Whatever you think, Man to Man is interested in your feedback. Call us at 604-893-2238 if you have any comments or question about absolutely anything in the Pocket Guide series. We'd also like to hear from you about issues you want us to address.

The Pocket Guides are written for men who have sex with other men. This is a broad spectrum of people. Some people in our communities are born biologically female and identify sometimes, or all the time, as guys. Some of these men may have sex with biological guys and identify as gay or bi, so a lot of the information will be useful to trans guys who are part of the "gay scene".

the corner. And don't forget those stories you hear of guys meeting and falling in love in the grocery line-up. Whether you're in the market for friends or a boyfriend, think about the qualities that you want them to have.

Think about joining a queer sports team or a men's discussion group. If there's an organization whose work you respect, you could volunteer. There are queer clubs and groups for people interested in cycling, video making, writing, parenting, social justice issues and square dancing. There are groups for Asian guys, Bi guys, Bears, Radical Faeries, Trans youth and HIV+ guys. The list goes on and on.

Whether you're exploring or ready to jump right into a relationship, honesty and communication are important. Being up front and honest can save some pain down the road.

Whether you're new to the Vancouver "gay scene" or have been around for a while, meeting guys can be hard. Meeting guys you like can be even harder. A clear understanding of what you want can help. Do you want sex? A fuck-buddy? A friend? A boyfriend? If there's no simple solution, you never know where you're going to meet that special someone. It may be the guy you meet on the phone line, or at the bar. Maybe it's the guy you see everyday at the coffee shop around



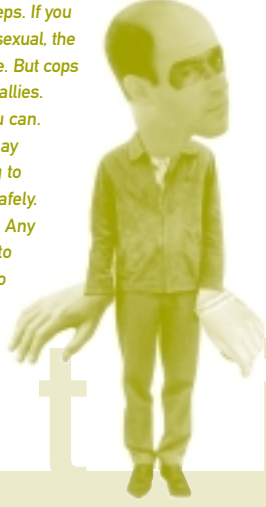
# meeting other guys

# safer street tips

We all know that there are people out there who bash queers. Beating up anyone because of their sexual orientation or gender identity is against the law, but that doesn't always stop it from happening. There are things you can do to stay safer. The main points are to be aware of your surroundings. Trust your instincts and watch out for potentially dangerous situations. There are some other things to consider...

- Travel in groups when possible
- Try to avoid poorly lit areas, alleys and back streets that you're not familiar with
- Walk as though you have a place to go and you are expected somewhere
- If you're drunk or high, and you can afford it, take a cab
- Take notice of which shops or restaurants are open in case you need help

- You can report any incidence of bashing to the **Bashline (899-6203)**. They keep statistics that help queers when pressuring police and government for services. The police might be able to help. They may be able to catch the creeps. If you were assaulted for being gay or bisexual, the law is supposed to be on your side. But cops are not always a queer's greatest allies.
- Take a self-defense course, if you can. It might make you feel safer. It may also provide you with the training to get out of dangerous situations safely.
- Some people carry pepper spray. Any kind of weapon you may choose to use should be one you are able to manage. If an attacker gets it, it may get used on you.



# meeting other guys

If you become involved in a relationship there will be all sorts of things to consider. Things that you may not have had to consider when you were single, like whether to be monogamous or non-monogamous. Both monogamy and non-monogamy have lots of definitions and interpretations. Each relationship can be different depending on what you both want at that moment, and what your experience has been with other relationships. Communicating about the kinds of sexual or emotional relationships each of you wants with other people may be part of how you define the expectations and boundaries of your relationship. There's way more to be said about relationships than can be said here. Check out the library or your favourite bookstore if you want to read more about relationship dynamics. Talking to friends and family about what's going on can help too.

If sex is what you're looking for, there are places to go and ways to find it. Places like bars, parks, peep shows and bathhouses are places some people cruise for sex. Phone lines, chat rooms and personal ads are other ways guys connect. Whatever you do, and however you choose to do it, remember that some people out there don't have your best interests in mind. Be careful. It's important to have an idea of what's going on, so you don't walk into situations that leave you too vulnerable to those folks who prey on others. This isn't about preaching doom and gloom. It's about having balanced information to make your decisions.

So have fun, and stay safe!

# street and other

# safer sex

Safer sex is not always easy. There are so many situations that can lead to unsafe sex. And it's not just about using condoms. But what do you do when unsafe sex happens and you start to feel worried? What can you do if you don't feel like you're in control, and you're getting into unsafe situations? Some people are dealing with alcohol or drug dependencies or sexual addition. If you want to address some of these things, there are some telephone numbers in the back of this guide that you might find useful. It's not always easy to have safer sex, but it's never too late to start.

- You can show a guy that you practice safer sex by handing them a condom or by putting one on them - or yourself. That makes it pretty clear that you expect it. A lot of guys we've talked to say this can work.
  - Keep condoms and lube handy where you have sex. So they can see them, and you can get to them easily. If something is happening in sex that you don't like, try to change the activity by leading it somewhere else. You have the right to decide what happens to your body.
- Talking about safer sex with some guys is easy. With other guys it's damn near impossible. Telling a guy you are going to use condoms might be the clearest way to get them to have safer sex because there is no confusion. But let's be realistic. It's not always that easy. Here are a few suggestions that might help you to play safer:



# bathhouses

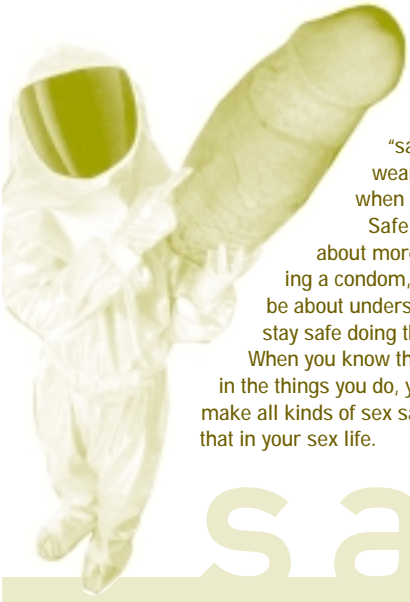
Sometimes known as saunas or tubs, bathhouses are businesses where guys can go and rent a locker or a small room with a single bed, and be in a sexually charged environment. These places vary from showers and steam rooms to pinball machines and TV monitors. Others have showing porn videos. Some have decide what works. Remember though, cruising isn't always about trying to pick someone up for sex. Cruising can have romantic intentions. The queers advertised in can find them advertised in the queer papers.

# cruising

Cruising is the "art" of giving and receiving signals to express sexual interest in, or attraction to, someone else. It depends a lot on body language. Cruising uses eye contact and body movements to tell someone you're interested in them, or to let you know that someone's interested in you. Cruising can be subtle or it can be extremely obvious. It's up to you to decide what works. Remember though, cruising isn't always about trying to pick someone up for sex. Cruising can have romantic intentions.



# making sex safer



“Safer sex” is a term that many guys are familiar with.

For a lot of guys “safer sex” means wearing a condom when they fuck.

Safer sex can be about more than just wearing a condom, though. It can be about understanding how to stay safe doing the things you do. When you know the risks involved in the things you do, you can learn to make all kinds of sex safer, and include that in your sex life.

But what does risk mean? And how do you reduce risk to make something safer?

Risk means “the chance of something bad happening”. It doesn’t have to be about sexually transmitted diseases alone. It can be about things like physical violence and mind fucking. It’s going to depend on whether you think an end result is “bad” before you decide something you do is risky. It comes down to personal choice. You might believe a risk in sex is getting infected with HIV when you get fucked. Getting your partner to use a condom can be a way of reducing that risk.

Safer sex is a personal thing that will mean different things to different people. You need to decide what you’re comfortable with and then try to stick with that.

# peep shows

Generally located in sex shops, “adult book” stores and some video arcades; peep shows are usually at the back of the shop in a separate area. Inside the room there are small booths with video monitors that you feed with tokens or quarters. Some people go in to the peeps to watch videos and jack off alone. Others go in to have sex with someone else. It’s legal to go into the booths alone; it’s not legal if you go in and have sex with someone else. The police don’t strictly regulate peep shows, but be prepared for the possibility of a surprise raid. A lot of peep show owners turn a blind eye to more than one person in a booth, but some may get nasty and kick you out if they catch you in there with someone.

# parks

Parks, of course, are outdoor areas designed for recreation and relaxation. You can find out where park cruising takes place in a number of different ways. There’s word of mouth, stories in the news and the ever-faithful sixth sense. Some parks have cruising only at night. Some have it in the daytime too. If you want to go cruising in a park at night you might want to check out the area in the daylight so you can acquaint yourself with the terrain. There’s often nothing more than the light of the moon and the scent of men to guide you.

Sex in public is illegal. Cruising parks can be dangerous if the police, or groups of straight guys that like to bash fags, catch you. Like most public sex environments there are risks. Here are a few common sense things to consider.



safer sex peep shows



Some people mix one drug with another, or with alcohol. This can sometimes have unpredictable effects on your body and your head. It can also affect your ability to practice, or your interest in, safer sex. It’s important to know your limits. Being drunk or high can affect your ability to respond to situations in ways you might if you weren’t drunk or high. Sticking to limits you set isn’t always easy, in some cases it can feel impossible. If you’re doing things regularly that make you feel worried, it might be time to talk to someone. There are numbers at the end of the guide that you can call if you want to talk about what’s going on for you.

# drugs

park

- Carry a whistle so you can draw attention to yourself if you get into trouble. If you hear someone else who needs help try not to leave them alone.
  - If at all possible, tell someone where you’re going. Or bring a friend along – it’s safer.
  - If you don’t feel entirely safe, don’t go too far into the trees. You could get lost, or distance yourself from people who could help you if you get into trouble.
- Some of these hints apply to cruising in other places too. Like public restrooms (teahouses) and back alleys.
- If you go cruising in public places don’t leave a mess behind. Used condoms and lube packages draw unwanted attention to what goes on there. If people know what’s happening they may call the cops. Or worse, a bunch of fag-bashers may want to visit to get their kicks (pun intended).



- Be alert. Pay attention to what’s going on around you. If your senses are dulled by drugs or alcohol you may be less attentive.
- Don’t go into the park carrying your life savings.
- You should carry a minimum amount of cash and jewelry. Credit cards should be left at home.

# parks

# drugs

the immune system. This can increase an individual's vulnerability to all kinds of infections. People with heart problems, anemia or glaucoma may be running a risk if they use poppers. And poppers can lower blood pressure to unsafe levels if used with Viagra, an anti-impotence drug.

## Poppers and Sex

Some guys use poppers when having sex. Because poppers can reduce a person's awareness of pain, using them during sex can increase the chances of infection with STD's, like HIV.

A person might not feel rips or tears in the ass that could be caused when getting fucked. Tears that he might normally notice if he was feeling pain. If condoms aren't used, or if the condom breaks, the tears in the lining of the ass can create easier access to the blood stream for the infections. So, to reduce the chance of getting tears – use lots of lube.

And to further reduce the chances of STD infections, you can wear a condom when fucking.

## Mixing Drugs

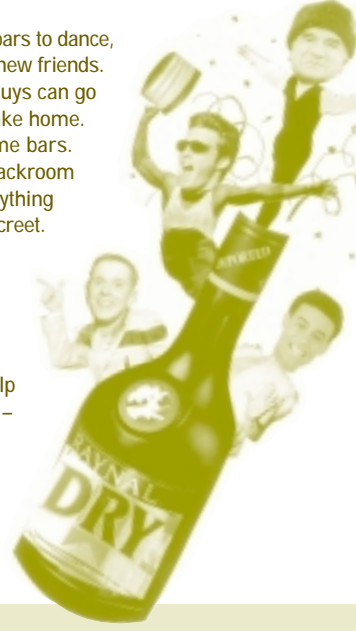
There have been some incidents recently of bad reactions when anti-HIV drugs have been mixed with some of these drugs. In some cases, mixing has resulted in death. The drug companies making these prescription drugs don't test how they interact with party drugs, so there is very little research to guide us. What is known, is that party drugs can further suppress the immune system. When mixed with some anti-HIV medications, drugs like Ecstasy, Meth and Special K can build up in the blood. This can dangerously increase the effects of the party drugs. Other times it can slow down the effects of the party drugs making you feel like you need to take more. This can cause an overdose.

# bars

Although they are businesses whose primary goal is generally financial profit, bars are some of the few queer spaces many people are aware of, or comfortable in. In towns or cities where there are visible queers, bars are often a cornerstone of the community. It's important to acknowledge that while bars have been, and continue to be, enormously important places for guys to find other guys, they are not accessible to everyone. For some it may be because they don't have money, they're not old enough or don't feel comfortable being around that much alcohol. Perhaps they don't smoke or don't feel like being gawked at. It could be that the bar is not physically accessible or it feels like too much of a meat market.

Many guys are at bars to dance, drink, party and meet new friends. They are also places guys can go to meet someone to take home. Sex is going on in some bars. But unless there's a backroom designated for sex, anything going on is usually discreet.

Alcohol often goes hand in hand with cruising in the bars. For some this is a combination that works. Alcohol can help you feel more relaxed – more adventurous.



drugs

bars

stomach

Poppers have been around in various chemical forms for years. It's not uncommon to smell them on the dance floor, in the bathroom or in public sex environments.

## Poppers (amyl nitrate & butyl nitrate)

Poppers are flammable and can burn and if they are used too much, a temporary rash can develop around the mouth or the nose. The rash goes away after a person stops using them, but long-term use of poppers has been shown to weaken

erode the inside of the nose. Poppers (amyl nitrate & butyl nitrate) are flammable and can burn and if they are used too much, a temporary rash can develop around the mouth or the nose. The rash goes away after a person stops using them, but long-term use of poppers has been shown to weaken

Coke can make a person feel energized and ready to party. It comes on quickly and lasts for varying amounts of time depending on quality, dose, body size, etc. It's the kind of drug that makes someone want to take more to keep the high going. For some people, when the coke wears off they feel sleepy, irritable or jittery. It comes as a white powder that can be snorted up the nose, rubbed on the gums, smoked or shot with a needle. Snorting too much can cause nosebleeds, sinus congestion and may eventually

## Cocaine (Coke, snow, blow)

Poppers come in a small bottle in liquid form. Sniffing them makes the blood pressure drop and the heart is followed by a 30-second to three-minute "uphoria". While rushing on poppers, a person's tolerance

ing amounts of time depending on quality, dose, body size, etc. It's the kind of drug that makes someone want to take more to keep the high going. For some people, when the coke wears off they feel sleepy, irritable or jittery. It comes as a white powder that can be snorted up the nose, rubbed on the gums, smoked or shot with a needle. Snorting too much can cause nosebleeds, sinus congestion and may eventually

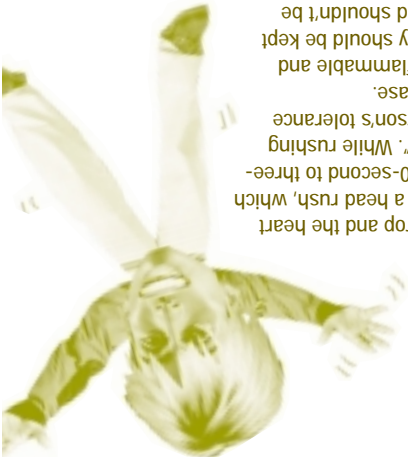
drugs

stomach

"I don't always make good decisions if I'm drunk. If I'm going out to drink, I'm not going to go home with someone. If I do meet someone, I'll get their number and call them later."

Sometimes people do things when they've been drinking that they wouldn't do sober. This can work in your favour – it can also make you into an arse. It's important to know your limits. Lots of guys say that they have rules for themselves that they try to follow when they go out. For instance one guy said:

Either way, if you set rules for yourself and break them, try not to get down on yourself. If you're regularly breaking your "rules" maybe they are unnecessary or unrealistic. If you're having trouble feeling in control of yourself though, maybe you should try talking to someone. (There are some numbers at the end of the booklet that may be helpful)



# drugs

## Crystal Meth. Speed & Ice

These are methamphetamines and are more potent than amphetamine-based speed. They can give a person a lot of energy while they're high. When coming down many hours later a meth user may feel completely exhausted and irritable. Regular users sometimes become violent and irrational. Like many drugs, it's recommended that they be taken in smaller doses. They can be toxic in large amounts.

Crystal is coarse and it's called crystal for a reason. Speed and ice are finer powders.

## Ketamine (Special K. K)

In small doses this can make a person feel relaxed, or sleepy and slightly disoriented. If they take more they can feel separated from their body – a mini “out

of body” experience that some people describe as pleasurable. This drug can also cause powerful hallucinations. Taking too much K can make the hallucinations so strong that a person can lose grip of reality and they can slip into a “K hole”. This is when the person on K feels almost comatose. Ketamine is used medically as an anaesthetic. This drug is known for causing some serious feelings of anxiety when coming down. Remember this, the next morning a person can think their life is falling apart – when really, it's just the K talking.

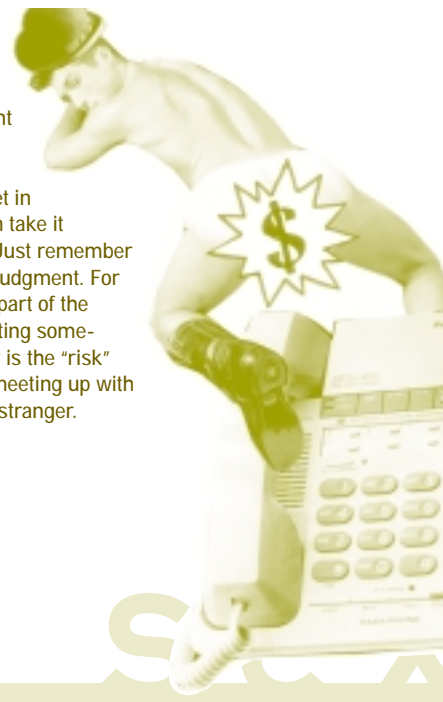


# phone sex

Phone sex and cyber sex. This usually means jacking off while chatting to a guy on the phone or on the computer. From the comfort of your home you can chat with the “man of your dreams” and explore some of those fantasies you might never share if your identity wasn't secret. Go wild, but remember to keep track of how long you've been on the phone, especially if you are on an expensive telephone service and remember, long distance charges may apply.

Phone lines, chat rooms and classified ads may also be a way to meet someone to get with for sex, a date or a long-term relationship. If you're going to do this, remember that “the man of your dreams” may not turn out to be that in reality.

You may want to set up a time and place to meet in public – then take it from there. Just remember to use your judgment. For some guys, part of the thrill in meeting someone this way is the “risk” involved in meeting up with a “faceless” stranger.



drugs

phone sex

snort

snort

E has been known to give the user an increased heart rate, higher levels of energy and an emotional openness. It's reputed to help create a temporary, altered state of consciousness. How it works is not entirely understood. What is known is that it stimulates chemicals in the brain that contribute to feelings of love, closeness to others and increased sensuality. That's what the people who love it say. Others might say that it's not always so great. It's been reputed to cause anxiety and panic attacks, paranoia, extreme mood swings and blurred vision. Some stories have appeared in the news linking Ecstasy to strokes and comas. Lots of people get dehydrated when they take Ecstasy. This can either be because it makes a person sweat or because they danced their ass off. Or both. In either case, it's been recommended that Ecstasy users drink lots of water to replenish fluids. E is usually in a capsule or tablet form.

This is sometimes compared to Ecstasy, but it's not very accurate. It can have the same effect of reducing inhibitions, but rather than making someone feel full of energy it can slow them down – even put them to sleep. There was a lot of controversy around this drug because it was being used by some assholes as a “date rape” drug. At the proper dosage it can be euphoric, too much and a person could slip into a coma. GHB can come as a liquid or a powder. It is highly recommended not to mix GHB with alcohol. It can be deadly. **ECSTASY (E, X, MDMA)** Like any recreational drug, Ecstasy is seen as a great drug by some and a nightmare by others.

## GHB (Liquid E, Grievous Bodily Harm)

drugs

of the drugs is not possible. This means there is no guarantee that a guy is going to feel the same effects as his buddy who took the same dose. It's also worth considering taking smaller than normal doses when getting drugs from a new supplier, or doing it for the first time. This way a person can gauge their body's reaction and decide whether or not to do more. There are hundreds of drugs out there that people use. There's no way to name them all, but here's a short list of some of the popular drugs and a bit of what they can do. *Much of this information is based on anecdotes from guys we've talked to. It shouldn't be taken as scientific or medical advice. This information is meant for educational purposes only, we aren't endorsing or encouraging the use of the drugs described here.*

Going out with friends? Drugs and alcohol are a way some guys choose to relax or party. Whether a person is trying them out for the first time or using them regularly it's good to get some information so a good time doesn't turn into a nightmare. Many street and party drugs are illegal. Because they aren't regulated like alcohol and prescription drugs one can rarely be exactly sure of what they're getting. Most street and party drugs are mixed with all sorts of crap that affects their purity. Predicting how each person will react to any



drugs