



# Which Drugs are Harmful to Your Kidneys?

Certain drugs, including painkillers, antibiotics, and illegal substances, can harm your kidneys. Always follow your healthcare provider's instructions and avoid unsupervised medication use.

Every drug you put into your body passes through your kidneys. If the drug is not taken following your healthcare provider's instructions, or if it is an illegal substance, it can cause injury to the kidneys.

## **Pain Medications**

Your kidneys could be damaged if you take large amounts of over-the-counter medications, such as aspirin, naproxen and ibuprofen. None of these medicines should be taken daily or regularly without first talking to your healthcare provider. Thousands of Americans have damaged their kidneys by using these medicines regularly for too long. To learn more about pain medications and your kidneys [click here](#).



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## Alcohol

Heavy drinking can hurt both your kidneys and your liver. Alcoholics have a high risk of developing both kidney and liver failure. Learn more about alcohol and your kidneys.

## Antibiotics

Antibiotics can also be dangerous if they are not taken correctly. People with kidney disease need to take a smaller amount of antibiotics than people with healthy kidneys. Take only medicines ordered for you by your healthcare provider.

## Prescription Laxatives

In general, over-the-counter laxatives are safe for most people. However, some prescription laxatives that are used for cleaning the bowel (usually before a colonoscopy) can be harmful to the kidneys. To learn more click [here](#).

## **Contrast Dye (used in some diagnostic tests such as MRIs)**

Some medical tests called "imaging tests" contain a type of dye called "contrast dye." Examples of imaging tests are MRIs and CT-scans. Contrast dyes can be harmful to people who have kidney disease. Not all imaging tests contain contrast dyes. To learn more about contrast dye click [here](#).

## **Illegal Drugs**

Most street drugs, including heroin, cocaine and ecstasy can cause high blood pressure, stroke, heart failure and even death, in some cases from only one use. Cocaine, heroin and amphetamines also can cause kidney damage.

## **What should you do?**

- Do not take any medicine, drug or substance unless you are under a healthcare provider's supervision.
- Do not take pills or substances given to you by a stranger or even a friend.
- If you do take a medication or other substance and feel ill, contact your healthcare provider immediately.
- If you need to have an imaging test or colonoscopy, let your healthcare provider know if you have kidney disease or are at risk for getting it.