

BEING SAFER:

- ◆ Choose not to use drugs and alcohol. If you do, set limits for yourself.
- ◆ Choose abstinence. If you've made that commitment to yourself, you'll be less likely to have sex if you are drunk or high.
- ◆ Be a buddy. Bring a buddy. Take turns watching out for each other.
- ◆ Don't share needles or drug equipment.
- ◆ If you're going to have sex, practice safer sex. Don't exchange body fluids like semen, vaginal fluids and blood. Be prepared with condoms.
- ◆ Choose less risky activities like making out.
- ◆ To protect yourself from date rape drugs, don't drink anything you didn't open yourself and never leave a drink unattended. Stop drinking anything that looks or tastes odd.



If you've had unprotected sex, or if you can't remember what happened, get tested for STIs. If you are a girl, get Emergency Contraception to help avoid a pregnancy. Have a pregnancy test done if you've missed your period.

Resources:

Addiction Services: Bridgewater: 543-7882, Lunenburg: 634-7325. Support and programs for anyone struggling with alcohol or drug use/abuse.

Your doctor: for pregnancy testing, STI tests, pap tests, prescriptions, general well-being.

Drug stores: for Emergency Contraception. It can prevent a pregnancy if taken within 5 days of unprotected sex (the sooner the better). You don't need a prescription.

Sexual Health Centre (Bridgewater) 527-2868: information, counselling, library, pamphlets, free pregnancy testing, free condoms and lubricant.

Teen Place (New Germany) 644-3430: counselling, STI tests, birth control, free pregnancy testing & condoms.

Emergency Department at a local hospital: STI testing.

Second Story Women's Centre (Lunenburg) 640-3044: counselling for women, information, support.

Harbour House 1-888-543-3999: Shelter for abused women and children. 24-hr crisis line, counselling and outreach work for abused women and children.

SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE Lunenburg County

4 Hillcrest Street, Unit 8
Bridgewater, NS B4V 1S9
902-527-2868

LunCo@NSSexualHealth.ca
www.LunCo.cfsh.info

Property of the Sexual Health Centre Lunenburg County (SHCLC).
Written and designed by Carol Rock. May be reproduced for educational purposes but please email or call us with numbers copied. These statistics may help with future funding. Donations always appreciated.
The **SHIFT** project series of pamphlets funded by:



United Way of Lunenburg County



LUNENBURG COUNTY



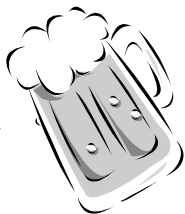
SEX, DRUGS AND ALCOHOL



SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE
Lunenburg County

The experts in sexual and reproductive health

Drugs and alcohol impair your decision-making. If you drink or do drugs you are much more likely to:



- ◆ have sex with someone you don't know well, or don't like.
- ◆ have unprotected sex.
- ◆ perform a sex act you normally wouldn't do.
- ◆ Hook up with someone you normally wouldn't.
- ◆ not remember if you had sex.
- ◆ become a victim of a sexual assault.
- ◆ commit a sexual assault.

Alcohol is a depressant. But it starts by depressing your inhibitions, so at first you act loud, wild or silly and you do things you wouldn't normally do. You often can't make good decisions. You might not think or care about using a condom or birth control when you are drunk or high. Often, the next day, people who have been drinking regret what they have done the night before.



Some drugs like cocaine, heroin, crack, and crystal meth are highly addictive. Drug addictions can make you behave in reckless ways, such as having unprotected sex, sometimes with strangers, multiple partners, or for money to buy more drugs. Having unprotected sex (vaginal, anal or oral) puts you at a higher risk of getting Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and unplanned pregnancy. Using IV drugs (injecting drugs) carries an extra risk of getting viruses like Hepatitis B and HIV if drug equipment or needles are shared.



Some people think drinking or taking drugs will make them better lovers. In fact, large amounts of alcohol and some drugs affect sexual health: they can cause low desire, less vaginal lubrication (making sex uncomfortable), and problems getting or keeping erections. Also, getting drunk and throwing up are a real turn off!

Substances can reduce your inhibitions and lead to a lot of risk-taking.

Pregnant women using alcohol, drugs and tobacco risk harmful effects on the developing fetus. Having just one sip is like giving the fetus 3 sips. New information about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder shows that even a small amount of alcohol can affect the fetus in harmful ways that may not be noticeable until later in life.



Respect Yourself

People with lower self-esteem are more easily influenced by peer pressure to use drugs and alcohol or to participate in a sexual activity when they are not ready. If friends are pressuring you, they're not really your friends. If a partner pressures you, it's not a healthy relationship.

...and hang with people who respect you!

