

Speed : gay men, sex and drugs / Terrence Higgins Trust.

Contributors

Terrence Higgins Trust

Publication/Creation

2007.

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/t5nfhxb2>

License and attribution

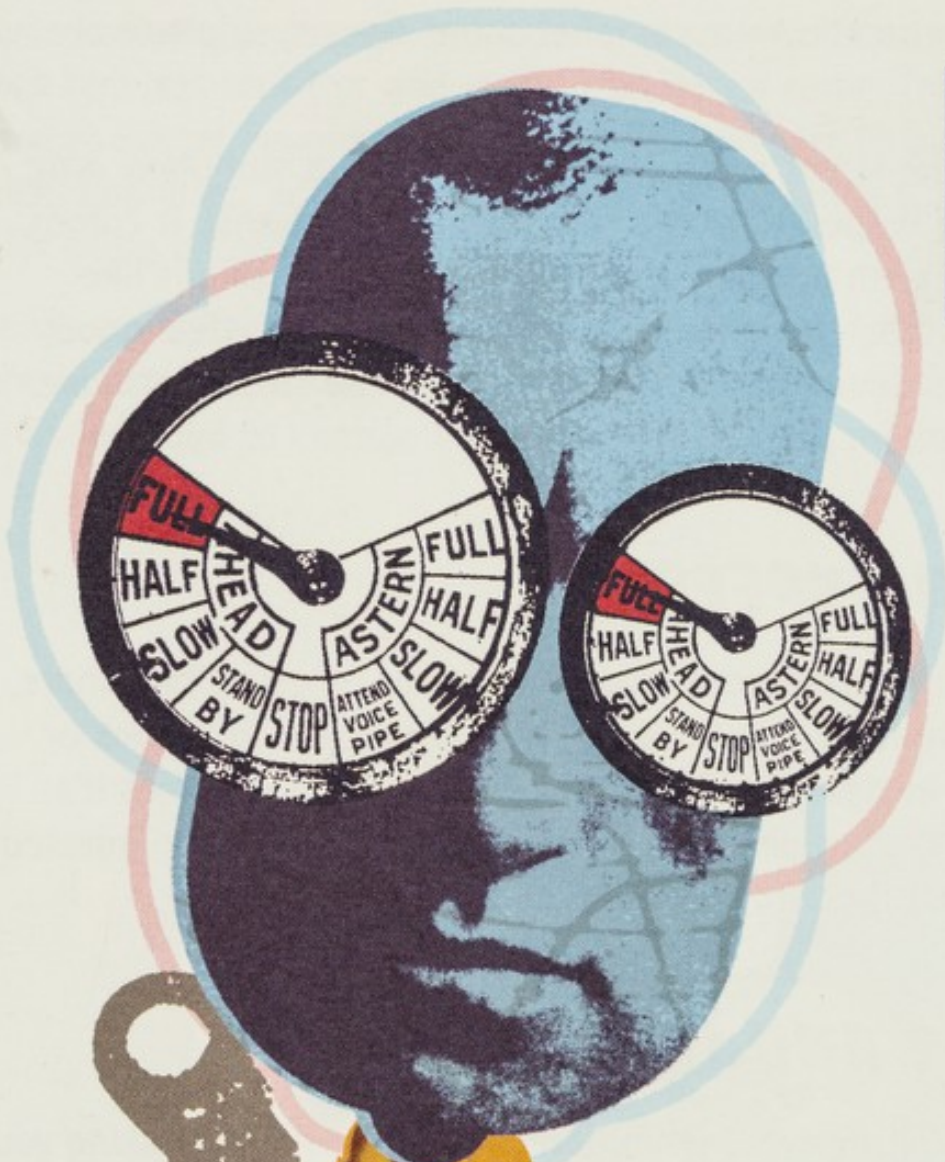
Conditions of use: it is possible this item is protected by copyright and/or related rights. You are free to use this item in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s).

**wellcome
collection**

Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

Gay men, sex and drugs

Terrence
HIGGINS
TRUST



SPEED

WHAT'S THE SCORE?

Speed is also known as: amphetamine, uppers, sulphate or whizz.

Speed's the street name for amphetamine, a stimulant drug (meaning it speeds up the body and its functions). It comes as a white-ish powder, usually cut with other things like caffeine, talc, etc. It makes the brain release its 'feel good' chemicals dopamine and serotonin and the stress hormone norepinephrine.

TAKING SPEED

Speed can be snorted through a straw or rolled up bank note, put on the tongue, rubbed on the gums, mixed in a drink or wrapped in cigarette paper then swallowed. Sometimes it's smoked from a pipe or foil – or mixed with water then injected. Effects last three to six hours.

HIGHS AND LOWS

Speed can lower your inhibitions, raise your mood, making you feel energetic, confident, alert, talkative and sociable. It can allow you to go without sleep or food.

Fast heartbeat, sweating, teeth grinding, jaw clenching and being unable to sleep are common. After using it you can feel depressed, anxious and tired.

A LONG TERM RELATIONSHIP?

You can become dependent on the drug, with larger doses needed to get the same effect and withdrawal symptoms if you stop (exhaustion, not being able to sleep, depression and feeling irritable). Deaths are rare but long term use can damage the heart, liver, kidneys and lungs, causing aggression and speed psychosis (which can include violent behaviour, paranoia and hallucinations).

SPEED WITH OTHER DRUGS

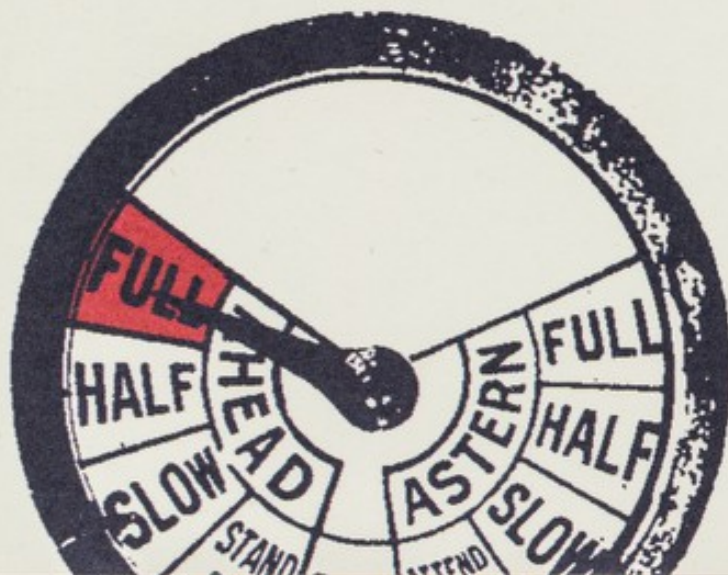
HIV drugs – protease inhibitors can cause a big rise in the amount of speed in the body, leading to overdose.

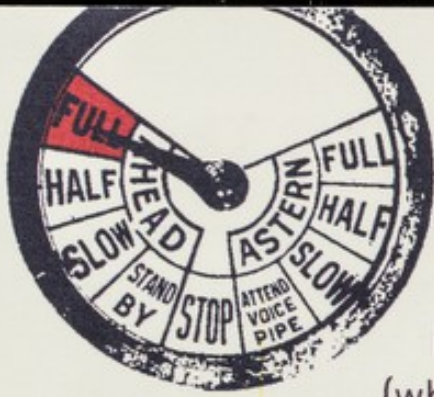
Cocaine, crystal meth, E, poppers – mixing these drugs with speed risks a dangerous strain on the heart.

Anti-depressants – taking speed when on these drugs can cause a life-threatening rise in blood pressure.

Alcohol – speed masks the effects of booze, leading people to drink more without realising how drunk/over the limit they are.

Viagra-type drugs – speed causes loss of erections, but taking Viagra etc. puts even more stress on the heart.





USEFUL TO KNOW

Swallowing the drug wrapped in a cigarette paper (a speed bomb) or mixing it with water is less harmful than snorting (which can damage the nose).

When snorting there's less damage to the nose if the powder's fine, if you alternate between nostrils and rinse them out after.

Injecting's best avoided as this is more likely to lead to addiction. Also, speed deaths are linked to taking the drug this way, and it can cause skin abscesses, damaged veins, blood poisoning and heart infections. Sharing injecting equipment can pass on HIV and hepatitis B and C.

Speed should be avoided by people with high blood pressure or heart conditions.

THE LAW

Speed is a Class B drug.

Possession can mean up to five years in prison and/or an unlimited fine.

Intending to supply (including giving it to mates) can mean up to 14 years in prison and/or an unlimited fine.

If prepared for injecting speed is a Class A drug.

Possession can mean up to seven years in prison and/or an unlimited fine.

Intending to supply (including giving it to mates) can mean up to life in prison and/or an unlimited fine.

SEX ON SPEED

Speed often causes problems getting erections. It can make the dick feel less sensitive and make it harder to come. This can lead to longer, rougher fucking sessions and sore or bleeding dicks and arses, with a greater risk of HIV, hepatitis C and other STIs being passed on.

Longer, rougher sessions make it more likely a condom will break. Keep checking it and after about 30 minutes it's recommended to change the condom for a fresh one.



MORE INFO

If you'd like to talk to someone with lots of experience of drug-related issues, there's:

One-2-One counselling with a drugs counsellor at Terrence Higgins Trust's London offices. It's free of charge and to see if this would be useful for you, call our **Wellbeing Service** on **0207 812 1777**.

Or you can ask one of the **LADS** outreach team (identifiable in venues and cruising areas by their LADS stand, t-shirts and ID badges) about speaking to our drugs worker.

Also, check out www.tht.org.uk / **DRUG F*CKED**

Antidote

A London service gay and bisexual men concerned about their alcohol or drug use can make use of, with weekly drop-in, one-to-one counselling, support groups and more. Call **020 7287 8743** or go to www.thehungerford.org/antidote.asp

Talk To Frank

Information and support around alcohol and drug use. Call the 24 hour helpline on **0800 77 66 00** or contact by email, details from their website. Also, check out the 'need help' section of the site, www.talktofrank.com