Alcohol and other drug use represent serious threats to health and the quality of life. More than 25,000 people die each year from drug-related accidents or health problems. With most drugs it is probable that users will develop psychological and physical dependence. The general categories of drugs and their effects are as follows:

**Alcohol** - short-term effects include behavioral changes, impairment of judgement and coordination, greater likelihood of aggressive acts, respiratory depression, irreversible physical and mental abnormalities in newborns (fetal alcohol syndrome) and death. Long-term effects of alcohol abuse include damage to the liver, heart and brain, ulcers, gastritis, malnutrition, delirium tremors and cancer. Alcohol combined with the barbiturates/depressants can prove to be a deadly mixture.

**Amphetamines/Stimulants** - (speed, uppers, crank, caffeine, etc.) speed up the nervous system which can cause increased heart and breathing rates, high blood pressure, decreased appetite, headaches, blurred vision, dizziness, sleepiness, anxiety, hallucinations, paranoia, depression, convulsions and death due to a stroke or heart failure.

**Anabolic Steroids** - seriously affect the liver, cardiovascular, and reproductive system. Can cause sterility in males and females, as well as impotency in males.

**Barbiturates/Depressants** - (downers, quaaludes, valium, etc.) slows down the central nervous system which can cause decreased heart and breathing rates, lower blood pressure, slowed reactions, confusion, distortion of reality, convulsion, respiratory depression, coma, and death. Depressants combined with alcohol can be lethal.

**Cocaine/Crack** - (crack, crack cocaine, crack-rock, etc.) stimulates the central nervous system and is extremely addictive, both psychologically and physically. Effects include dilated pupils, increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure, insomnia, loss of appetite, hallucinations, paranoia, seizures, and death due to cardiac arrest or respiratory failure. **Hallucinogens** - (PCP, angel dust, LSD, etc.) interrupt the functions of the part of the brain which controls the intellect and instincts. May result in self-inflicted injuries, impaired coordination, dulled senses, incoherent speech, depression, anxiety, violent behavior, paranoia, hallucinations, increased heart rate and blood pressure, convulsions, coma, and heart and lung failure.

**Cannabis** - (Marijuana, hashish, hash, etc.) impairs short-term memory, comprehension, concentration, coordination, and motivation. May also cause paranoia and psychosis. Marijuana smoke contains more cancer-causing agents than tobacco smoke. The way in which marijuana is smoked - deeply inhaled and held in the lungs for a long period - enhances the risk of getting cancer. Combined with alcohol, marijuana can produce a dangerous multiplied effect.

**Narcotics** - (smack, horse, demerol, percodan, etc.) initially increases suboxone,alertness, thinking, and memory, and reduces pain, anxiety, and fear. With repeated use, tolerance develops rapidly and dependence is likely. Using contaminated syringes to inject such drugs may result in AIDS. **Tobacco/Nicotine** - some 170,000 people in the United States die each year from smoking-related coronary heart disease. Some 30% of the 130,000 cancer deaths each year are linked to smoking. Lung, larynx, esophagus, bladder, pancreas and kidney cancer strikes smokers at increased rates. Emphysema and chronic bronchitis are ten times more likely among smokers.

Further information concerning health risks may be found in the Student Health Center. You should also consult your personal doctor about the health risks associated with alcohol and drug use.