

# Clinical Toolkit

## Clinical Tool: Taking a Drug History

When taking a drug history, start with the more common substances such as tobacco, alcohol, and cannabis, then proceed to ask about amphetamines, hallucinogens, ecstasy, benzodiazepines, inhalants and opiates. Familiarise yourself with street names for these drugs and use the young person's language during your assessment – the [Australian Drug Foundation website](#) has a very helpful summary of key information about different drugs under 'Drug Facts' and includes a list of common street names at the top of each page (e.g. [methamphetamines](#)).

Remember to note the following:

- Age at first and last use, including reasons for initiating use
- Amount used and frequency – try to be specific e.g. 2 grams 3 x per day
- Whether the young person uses morning, daytime or night-time
- Methods
- Under what circumstances does the use occur (parties, clubs, with friends)
- Presence of others
- How the drug affects the young person
- Attempts to control use in the past, including drug free periods (days/weeks/months) and any previous treatment for control
- Withdrawal symptoms
- The young person's goals for future use or reduction
- Any 'change talk' – i.e. the young person's own statements that favour change.