



[Study Confirms Why Cocaine Use Leads to Unsafe Sex](#)

Cocaine is a stimulant and the effects of the drug induce feelings of euphoria, heightened energy and hyper-alertness. Cocaine usage has been associated to high rates of impulsive behavior, including unprotected sex. Through a study funded by grants from the National Institute of Drug Abuse, Johns Hopkins researchers were able to conduct a study of people confirmed to be regular users of cocaine to evaluate the likelihood of unprotected sex while under the influence of the drug.

Matthew Johnson, Ph.D., associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine says, "Our study affirms and may help explain why people who regularly use cocaine are more willing to partake in risky sex when under the influence of cocaine, and underscores why public health officials and physicians should be ensuring that cocaine users are supplied with condoms to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted disease".

Results of the study, showed as effects of the drug in the participants rose, sexual desire also increased and increased dosages resulting in even greater sexual desire.

To assess the likelihood that participants would risk having sex without a condom under the influence of the drug, participants were asked to select a person they believed would be less like to have a Sexually Transmitted Infection ([STI](#)) and that they would be willing to have a hypothetical sexual enter with.

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Participants were also asked to assess their likelihood of using a condom if immediately available and their likeness of using a condom if forced to wait to get a condom before having sex for several periods of time ranging from 2 minutes to 30 minutes, to 1 hour and 3 to 6 hours.

The researchers found that people had a similarly high likelihood of condom use if one was immediately available — 80 to 87 percent — whether they were on cocaine or not. But the longer a participant on cocaine had to wait to use a condom, the more willing they were to have sex without one. This increased likelihood of unprotected sex due to waiting was greater when they were on cocaine compared to no cocaine. For example, participants on the highest dose of cocaine were on average 40 percent likely to wait an hour to use a condom, but the same participants were 60 percent likely to wait that long when given the zero-dose pill. (Johns Hopkins Medicine)

Afterward, participants were asked their likelihood of using a condom if there were an increased probability of contracting an ([STI](#)). When under the influence of cocaine, the participants that were most likely to use a condom while not under the influence of cocaine became more likely to not use a condom while under the influence and therefore increasing their risk of contracting an ([STI](#)).

“The bottom line is that cocaine appears to increase sexual desire, and even though users who are on cocaine report being likely to use a condom if they had one in a risky sex situation, if a condom isn’t available, cocaine makes people less willing to postpone sex to get a condom,” says Johnson. “They become more impatient when it comes to waiting for sex.”

According to Johnson, a similar study was conducted and published in 2016 relating to decision-making while under the influence of alcohol. Similar to cocaine, alcohol usage increased the likelihood that people would not wait for a condom; however, unlike cocaine, alcohol usage did not increase the intensity of sexual arousal.

Researchers acknowledge that the study was dependent upon hypothetical sexual situation and not real-life circumstances. To initiate and extend the effects of the drug, participants of the study swallowed cocaine in pill form instead of smoking or snorting it, as common with street usage. Oral ingestion of the drug provided ample time for the participants to complete the assessment; however, there is possibility that oral ingestion of the drug could change the effects of the drug.

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According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the usage of cocaine constricts the blood vessels and increases the heart rate, blood pressure and body temperature. Large quantities of the drug can cause erratic behavior, paranoia and anxiety. If too much of the drug is taken, users may suffer strokes, seizures, heart attacks and even death. Long term use of the drug leads to addiction.

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, in 2015, the estimate of about 1.9 million people aged 12 or older who were current users of cocaine.

"Study Affirms That Cocaine Makes Users More Likely To Risk Unsafe Sex - 02/02/2017."

Johns Hopkins Medicine, Based in Baltimore, Maryland. N.p., 2 Feb. 2017. Web. 23 Feb. 2017.

"Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health." *Samhsa.gov*. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Sept. 2016. Web. 23 Feb. 2017.

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