

A series from thelovetank

**Safer  
chillouts**

**LITTLE  
BACK  
POCKET  
GUIDE TO**

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**The Love Tank CIC acknowledges  
the expert health and legal advice  
that informed this booklet.**

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This guide is available in other  
languages – including Spanish,  
Portuguese, Italian and Polish:

[queerhealth.info/lbgt/chillouts](http://queerhealth.info/lbgt/chillouts)



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[thelovetank.info](http://thelovetank.info)  
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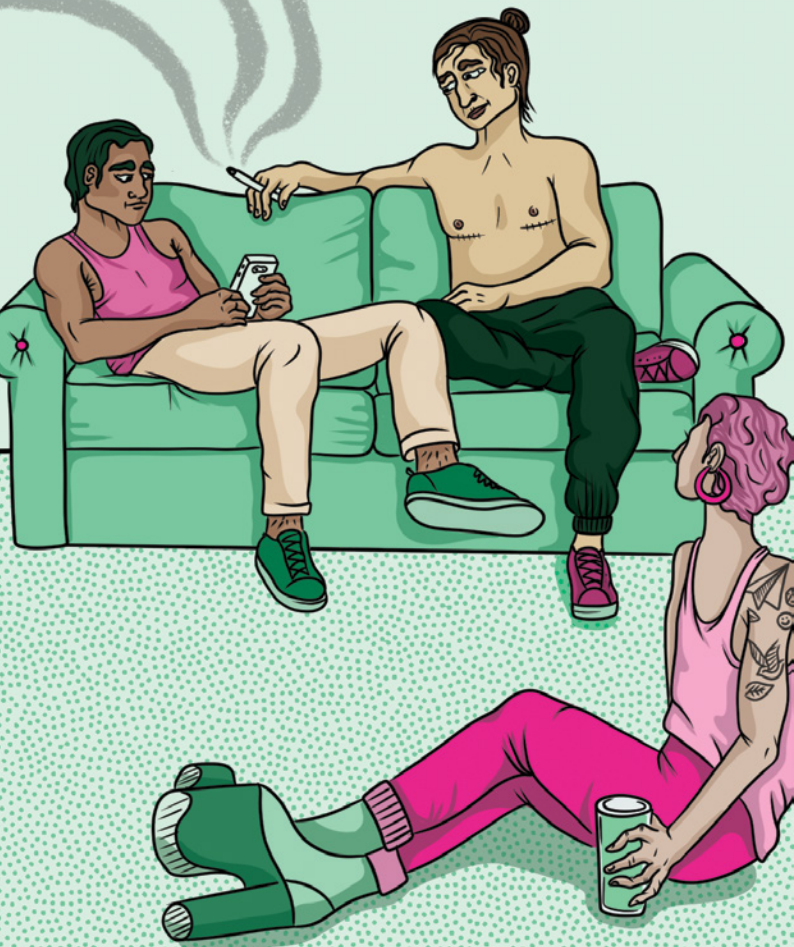
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Published March 2023

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## What is this Guide for?

Chillouts, sex parties, party ‘n’ play, getting high and fucking: whatever you call these events, they can be fun. They can be great places to meet up with friends or fuckbuddies, to make new friends, to try out new sex (and lots of it) and experience a little escapism. For lots of us, especially in big cities which can be lonely places, they act as a way to feel connected to others.

Like most things in life that bring us pleasure, chillouts aren’t without their risks. But most of these risks can be avoided if you go to sex parties well equipped to deal with them. The thing that makes chillouts risky is often just being unprepared. Luckily, we’ve put together a guide to make sure you can have the best (hottest) time at your next chillout and look after your wellbeing at the same time.

This guide is for people who have either been to a chillout, have wanted to go to one, or maybe you have been invited to use chems with someone and are thinking about it.

It's something you can read before you go and refer to (if you need to) while you're there. It contains advice about how to look after yourself – how to do things safely – and how to look after other people – how to treat people with care, compassion, and kindness (the way you deserve to be treated too).



# General Chillout Advice

If you're heading to a chillout, it might be a long one – so it's worth thinking about how to look after yourself and to make sure that having a good time doesn't come at the cost of your wellbeing.

The first thing you might want to do is to take a moment to check in with yourself and see how you are feeling. When you get an invitation to a chillout, it's always tempting – the sex is hot and it can be a great way to meet new people or just let off some steam. But chillouts and sex parties can be hard on your body and mind, especially in the days after when you are recovering. It's worth doing a scan of your mind and body and checking that you have the energy and mental health to party this way. There are lots of reasons you might want to consider waiting for a better moment to play. Maybe you aren't feeling your best, you haven't been sleeping well, you're feeling anxious or irritable, you have



a big deadline coming up or a busy day on Monday. There will always be other chillouts to go to – your body and mind will thank you for the rest and you might be better off finding something restful and restorative to do.

If you are going to a chillout, it's good to plan ahead of time if you can, instead of rushing out of the door. Prepare a bag to take with everything you need – with extras in case you end up staying out longer than you anticipated. Things you might want to pack include:

- Pills (including PrEP and any medications you might be on)
- Condoms (even if you don't use them, others at the chillout might) and lube
- Sex toys (if you use them)
- Fisting lube and gloves
- Clean needles (and other injecting equipment if you are injecting)
- Syringes (to measure G)
- A change of clothes, for the journey home
- A toothbrush or mouthwash
- A snack (something like protein bars or bananas to keep your energy up)
- A bottle of water
- A phone charger
- Anti-bacterial wipes and hand sanitiser

To prepare ahead of time, set reminders on your phone to take your medications (like HIV meds, PrEP, or antidepressants) and get some food and drinks in your fridge at home to have when you come back home (you might not have the energy to trek to the shops after partying).

If you can, let a friend know where you are going and try to keep them posted while you are out. If anything goes wrong or you need someone to talk to at any point, it's good to have somebody who cares about you and that knows where you are.

## Chillout self-care

Chillouts can be marathon events. While you're out and doing drugs, try to treat your body well – as if you were doing exercise. Make sure you are drinking fluids regularly, as well as eating. Drugs can interfere with your appetite, but you need to eat to maintain your energy levels. Things that are calorie dense but easy to swallow, like yoghurt, ice cream, smoothies or protein shakes will be best.

It's also a good idea to take regular breaks from the action. Enjoy resting in a quieter spot and chatting with people or just sitting silently for a bit. Having a moment to slow down and recover is another kind of pleasure at a group session.

If you are feeling burned out at a session, or you've just been up for a long time having sex, take some time to wash yourself and freshen up. Having a shower, changing into clean clothes (especially before you leave a party), and gently brushing your teeth or using mouthwash can make you feel really refreshed and relaxed and put you in a good headspace.



If you are not having a good time, or you've had enough of a chillout, it's OK to leave.

There is no pressure to stick around - even if someone is making you feel that way. If you're feeling tired or burned out, it's often best to say your goodbyes and head home and get some rest!

# GHB/GBL

If you're at a chillout, you might be using or be offered GHB or GBL. These drugs – usually called G – are closely related and come as a clear liquid. They're used at sex parties or chillouts because they make you feel horny and less inhibited, which heightens the way that sex feels and also makes it last longer.

You usually take G by mixing it with a little bit of a soft drink (like Fanta or Coca Cola). It tastes bitter even when it's mixed and can be harsh on your teeth, so it's good to drink some soft drink straight afterwards to wash it down.

## How do I use GHB/GBL safely?

The effects of G can feel amazing but it's crucial that you use it safely because overdosing can lead to unconsciousness and can be fatal.







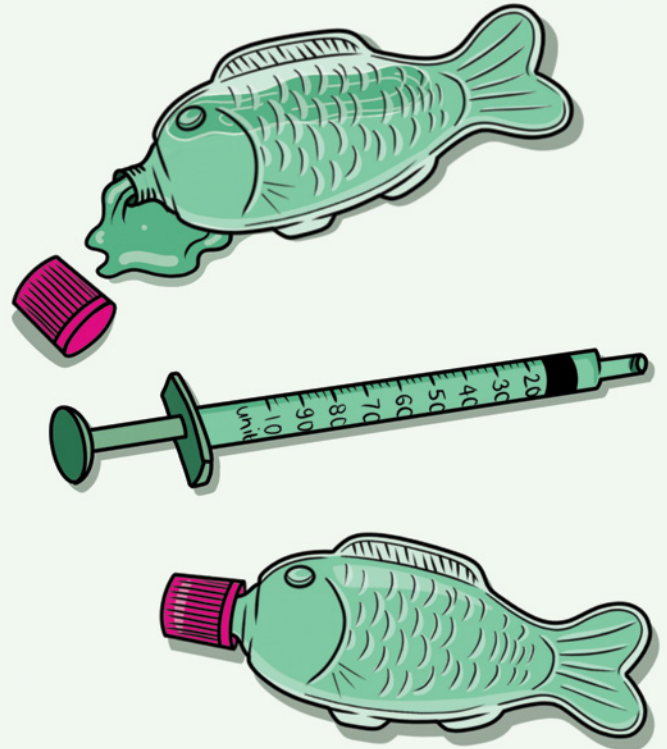
It's really important never to mix G with other drugs or substances that are depressants. These dangerously increase your risk of overdose.

Substances to avoid are: alcohol, ketamine, diazepam, benzos, sleeping pills, sedatives, opiates (like tramadol), and antihistamines.

## Dosing

The right dose of GHB or GBL for you will vary depending on a number of factors, including how regularly you use or the purity. If it's possible, it's best to measure your own doses using a syringe and to be a little cautious to begin with while you learn what dose is best for you. You can easily buy measuring syringes at pharmacies or online (you don't need to use sharp needles) to take to a chillout.

A light dose of G is 0.3-0.9 mL. A more common dose (for experienced users) is between 0.9-1.5 mL. Some people dose their G with a dropper or a soy sauce 'fish' bottle – usually because they have experience using it. If someone offers you to take a dose of G this way, ask them for a light dose to begin with because you won't be able to measure what you're taking.





Never allow anyone to pour your G.  
Do it yourself to ensure you are in full control of how much you are taking.

Sometimes you might find yourself in a situation where you are holding a drink and you aren't sure if there is G in it. Maybe you poured yourself some Coke but you can't remember if you put G in it because you got distracted or you're feeling pretty high. Maybe you picked up a drink that you found on the side. In all these cases, it's better to pour out whatever is in the glass and start again. It's not a waste – it's part of keeping everyone safe!

## Timing

After you have taken a dose of G, you should wait a while before taking another dose. Wait at least one hour before taking another dose. The best way to keep track of this is to run a stopwatch on your phone or writing it down somewhere when you dose.

It's easy to lose track of time when you're high and having fun, so if you or someone else can't remember exactly when they took their last dose, try to encourage waiting until everyone is certain that at least an hour has passed. It's better to wait a little longer than to have to stop the party completely because you took too much too soon.

## Withdrawals

It might surprise you to know that G is addictive. If you use G regularly, you can build up a tolerance, which means using higher doses each time to feel a high. Using high doses regularly – daily or every other day, for instance – can make you physically addicted.

If you stop using G and you are addicted, you might experience withdrawals. Withdrawal symptoms can start within 1 to 3 hours of last use and they can last a long time. Symptoms of withdrawal include:

- \* High levels of anxiety, including panic attacks, trembling, high heart rate, sweating
- \* Physical symptoms like diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting or lack of appetite
- \* Psychological symptoms like hallucinations, paranoia, delirium, depression, suicidal ideation
- \* Difficulty sleeping



Withdrawal is dangerous – it can lead to seizures that could be life-threatening.

If you are experiencing withdrawal symptoms, go to accident and emergency (A&E) at a hospital to get medical attention. If you know you are dependent and are planning to stop, go to A&E or a local drugs and alcohol service before you do so.

# Meth & Mephedrone



Crystal meth (or tina) and mephedrone are commonly used at parties. Some people choose to inject them because it's a fast and intense way to get high. This is often called 'slamming' – but it carries some risks. Even though it can be done safely with the right tools and technique, you could hurt yourself when injecting or get an infection (and it's easier for this to happen when you're high).

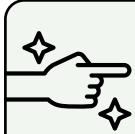
There are other, safer ways to take your drugs. Tina and mephedrone, for instance, can be taken as a booty bump – dissolved in sterile water and injected into your arsehole using a syringe without a needle. They can also be snorted or swallowed as a bomb (wrapped in a rolling paper or a small piece of toilet paper). You can also smoke crystal meth using a glass pipe. You can read more about safer

alternatives to injecting at some of the links on our website [queerhealth.info/lbgt/chillouts](http://queerhealth.info/lbgt/chillouts).

If you or one of your friends are going to inject, here's what you need to know:

## Needles

The best needles to inject with are thin and short to minimise damage to your veins. Insulin needles, which can be easily bought online or accessed at needle exchanges, are best and easiest to use.



It's important that you don't share your needles. You risk getting or passing on an infection this way, including HIV or Hepatitis C.

You also need to use a fresh needle for every injection. If you run out of clean needles, make sure you re-use a needle that only you have used.

In this case, it's a good idea to store your used needles somewhere you can remember and identify them as your own (e.g. a freezer bag with your name on it). Otherwise, you could mark your syringe in some way that identifies it as yours (e.g. with a permanent marker or by scratching a letter into the side of it).

## Dissolving your drugs

All of the equipment you use to prepare your drugs should be sterile. You can dissolve your drugs in sterile cups called Stericups, which are available at needle exchanges or to buy online. Otherwise you can use a regular teaspoon, which you can disinfect in boiling water.

## Preparing your injection site

Before you inject, wash your hands thoroughly and then wipe the injection site with an alcohol pad or rubbing alcohol and a cotton pad. Alcohol wipes and rubbing alcohol are easily available to buy online or at chemists. If you don't have alcohol to clean the site with, you can wash it thoroughly with soap and water and dry it with a clean paper towel or tissue.

## Choosing an injection site

When injecting, you need to make sure you are injecting into a vein.



The safest place to find a vein is on the inside of your elbow and the inside of your lower arms above the wrist. Veins that are close to the skin show up as a blue-ish colour.

You can use a tourniquet, available at needle exchanges or online, to raise veins and make them easier to hit. You should only use one if you can't find a vein without it. Wrap it around your arm above where you are trying to inject.

The tourniquet should be removed after you have put the needle in your arm but before you plunge the syringe.

If you don't have access to a medical tourniquet, you can use something non-absorbent, long enough to tie round your arm easily, and not too skinny so it won't dig into your arm. If nothing else is available, you can use a (non-lubricated) condom as a tourniquet or tie two condoms together to make it easier to put around your arm.

As with needles, don't share your tourniquet as it may end up carrying traces of blood from injections.

## Injecting

After you have cleaned the site and you have identified a vein, put the needle into your arm at a 45 degree angle (with the hole of the needle head facing upwards towards the ceiling). Pull the plunger of the syringe back a little. If you are in a vein, a little bit of dark red blood should appear, which is correct.



# SITES INJECTION

no-go
safer
safest

If dark red blood does appear, this is when you loosen the tourniquet and slowly inject your drugs. You can then remove the needle and apply a little bit of pressure to the injection site (preferably with an alcohol wipe or cotton swab).

If a lot of bright red blood enters the syringe when you pull back on the plunger, you have hit an artery and you will need to remove the needle, then the tourniquet, and apply pressure on the site with your arm held in the air until the bleeding stops.

If no blood appears when you pull back on the plunger, you did not hit a vein and you will need to remove the needle, then remove the tourniquet and start the process again.

If you inject again later, be sure to choose a different injection site to let your injection sites heal. At least 1 cm away from the initial injection site, or on your other arm, is fine.

## **Disposing of needles**

Ideally, once you are done with your needles, you should cap them and place them in a special sharps bin. If there is not a sharps bin on hand, collect your syringes and needles (with the caps on) in a plastic bag to dispose of later.

Some local pharmacies can dispose of your used needles safely for you.

If none of these options are available to you, to avoid posing a risk to the people that handle our rubbish, place used needles inside a plastic bottle with the lid on or another hard, tightly sealed container before placing them in the bin.

## **Infections**

If you develop any signs of infection from injecting, including pain in your arm or difficulty moving your arm; tenderness or swelling at the injection sight; or fever and sweating – seek medical attention at A&E.



# Emergencies

Even with the best laid plans and intentions, things can go wrong at a chillout: accidents happen, mistakes are made and drugs are being used that can be risky. When things do go wrong, you might find yourself in a situation that seems scary (especially if you have heard about a worst case scenario).

Try to stay calm.

You can use the following advice about what to do if you are facing an emergency situation.



You can find more resources about what to do in an emergency situation on our website:  
[queerhealth.info/lbgt/chillouts](http://queerhealth.info/lbgt/chillouts)

## What do I do if someone has overdosed on G?

If someone passes out or falls asleep because they have taken too much G, it's important that you take this seriously. If they remain unconscious, they might stop breathing, which could be fatal.

If someone is passed out and they have been taking G, the first thing to do is to see if you can wake them. Try hard to wake them by shaking them gently at first, then vigorously, and then giving them a firm squeeze on their trapezius muscle (the muscle between their neck and shoulder). If you can wake them up, keep them awake and move them somewhere safe within the premises, preferably into another room where there is less action going on and fewer people. Don't head back to the party straight away. Stay with them and make sure they are okay.

Once they are awake, do not give them any more drugs. Although you might think that a stimulant - like tina or mephedrone - might help keep them safe by keeping them awake, this will add more toxins to their body (which is the reason they are passing out) and put them at further risk.

Unless they are very thirsty, you should also avoid giving them any liquid, as this can accelerate the

movement of drugs into the bloodstream and make the situation worse.

GHB does not linger very long in the system, so the good news is that someone who has taken too much G and can be kept awake will feel completely better within 3-6 hours. Try to stay with them for as long as you can while they come round. Make sure that nobody takes photographs of them or is a troubling presence.

If someone has taken too much G and passed out, they might feel ashamed or scared. Reassure them and keep them feeling positive. Be a calming presence for them. Remind them that these things can happen to anyone and that you are there to make sure that they are safe. Think about how you would want to be treated in this situation and try to model this. In scenarios like this, we are one another's most important source of care and safety and this can start with you.



If someone is passed out and you cannot wake them, you will need to call 999 for an ambulance.

You might be worried about calling an ambulance, but calling emergency services could save someone's life.



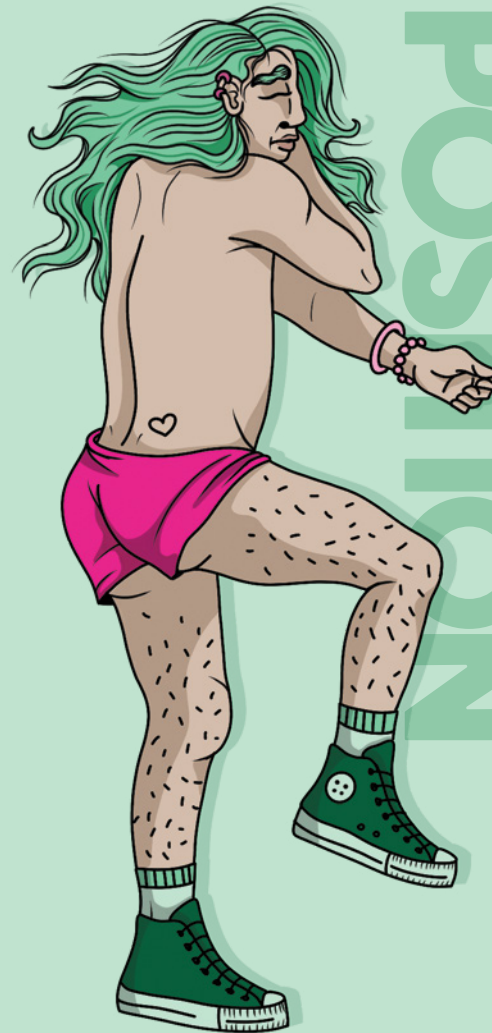
While you are waiting for an ambulance to arrive, lay the unresponsive person in the recovery position – on their side, with the arm that is underneath them stretched out in front of them. This will stop them choking if they vomit and will help them breathe while you wait for help.

It's important to remember that the possession, purchase, or sharing (even amongst friends) of illegal drugs is unlawful. Under these circumstances and while waiting for emergency services to arrive, people might consider cleaning up evidence of drug use and asking people to leave, but actions like this may be a serious criminal offence. In most circumstances, there is no positive requirement to speak to a police officer, but if you do then you should make sure that you are truthful with what you say.

## What do I do if someone is having a psychotic episode?

Sometimes tina and other drugs can make people feel paranoid and experience hallucinations, especially at the end of a long weekend.

If someone around you is having a psychotic episode, don't touch them without permission. Don't tell them that they are behaving strangely or criticise them for how they are behaving. If they are having irrational



thoughts, don't dismiss them or try to rationalise them away.

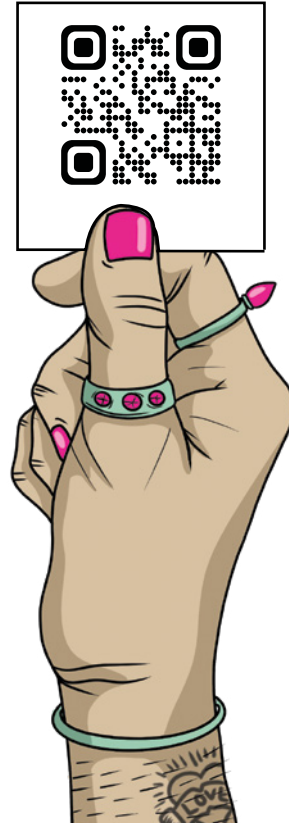
If you are in a better state of mind, talk to them gently and calmly. Listen attentively to what they are saying and try to understand the feelings that they are having. You could try to make their mood more positive by asking them about things that you know they enjoy. If you are very concerned about their safety, you may need to call 999 for help.

If you start to feel uncomfortable at the party - perhaps very self-conscious, worrying excessively about what other people are thinking about you, or having obsessive thoughts - this could be an early warning sign of a bad episode. It's a good idea, if you feel this way, to get yourself somewhere that you feel safe. Perhaps your home or a friend's place.

If you do go to a friend's, let them know how you are feeling so they can help create a calming environment for you.

Once you are somewhere safe, try to distract yourself. Music, food and hot drinks can help or you might preoccupy yourself by doing some household chores like cleaning.

Scan the QR code below to visit our website, where you can find links to more helpful resources, including: support with drugs and sex, STI testing resources, information about PrEP, sexual assault services, more first aid advice for emergency situations, and safer alternatives to injecting drugs.



# Consent



Chillouts and sex parties can be fun places to experiment with sex. Maybe you're having sex in a big group, bottoming for a crowd, or trying a new kink for the first time. It's important, though, that any sex you have under these conditions is sex you feel comfortable with and have consented to.

Although it is very important to remember to ask somebody for their consent before performing any kind of sex act on or with them, when sex is high, spontaneous, and in big groups, consent can sometimes be assumed. It's important, therefore, that you can say no if something or someone is making you uncomfortable. You might be afraid of hurting someone's feelings or killing the mood but it is important that everyone involved is aware of what you do and do not want to do and acts accordingly.

Besides, there are ways to let someone down gently if you don't want to have sex with someone. For instance, you might tell them that you are very flattered by their interest but you are focussed on having sex with someone else in the room for the moment.

Remember that securing consent in sex doesn't just mean consent to sex acts. It encompasses videos and photography. If you are filming someone or being filmed during sex, even if faces are obscured and even if the footage is only for personal use, you need to secure their permission or give yours. Consent also encompasses safer sex techniques too. It's not okay, for instance, to deliberately remove a condom during sex with someone who has told you that they only fuck with condoms.

Drugs can help heighten feelings and desires and also reduce your inhibitions, making you feel more open and receptive to new experiences. They can also make it harder to know what your boundaries are and to maintain them, especially in the context of sex parties. It's possible that you might agree to do something when you are high that you might feel upset about in the days after the party. If this does happen, try not to be too harsh with yourself. You might feel ashamed, especially if you are also experiencing a comedown, but punishing yourself is

unkind and unhelpful. Instead, consider talking to a non-judgmental friend about how you are feeling and seek the compassion you deserve. You might also reflect on the experience and think about how to set yourself firmer boundaries about what you will and will not do when you are high (but once again, not punishing yourself excessively if you cannot always secure these).

Drugs can also incapacitate you to the point that you cannot say no even when you want to.



It's never okay to have sex with someone who is incapacitated.

We have a collective duty to make sure everyone understands this. If somebody has sex with you when you are incapacitated, this is non-consensual and is sexual assault. If this does happen to you, there are services that can offer support and advice.

Galop, for example, is a dedicated service for LGBT+ people who have experienced abuse, including sexual assault. They can talk to you about what you have experienced and advise you on the next steps to take. For a full list of services available to you to speak about sexual assault, please visit our website: [queerhealth.info/lgbt/chillouts](http://queerhealth.info/lgbt/chillouts).

# HIV Meds, PrEP, PEP, and STIs

If you're going out to party and have fun, remember that your usual self-care and sexual health routines still apply.

## HIV treatment

If you're living with HIV, remember to take your meds at the usual time. Bring your meds with you if this will coincide with when you are at the chillout and set reminders on your phone (if you don't already have them) to take them. Keep your phone charged or on low power mode, in case it runs out of battery and you miss your alarm.

## PrEP

If you don't have HIV and are having sex at chillouts and prefer not to use condoms, it would make sense to consider using PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis).



PrEP is a way of preventing HIV infection. You take a pill, on an ongoing basis, before sex and after sex. It's most commonly taken as a once-a-day pill.



PrEP is free to access in the UK from NHS sexual health services.

You can find out more information about how to access PrEP here: [prepster.info/free-prep-uk](https://prepster.info/free-prep-uk).

If you are taking PrEP and going to chillouts, it's important that you don't miss your dose – especially if you're having a long weekend and going to lots of sessions. Carry your PrEP – or some of your pills – with you to chillouts and set yourself a reminder on your phone to take your pill at the same time you usually do every day.

## PEP

If you had any sex without a condom at a chillout and you are HIV-negative and aren't on PrEP, you can access PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) via a sexual health clinic or (at weekends when clinics are closed) at the accident and emergency departments of hospitals.

PEP is a course of medication that usually lasts 28 days. It can prevent you from becoming infected with

HIV if you might have been exposed to it. You can start PEP at any time within 72 hours (or three full days) after you think you might have been exposed.

## Testing

It's important for all of us who are having sex to regularly test for STIs (at least every three months if having lots of sex). You can access testing and treatment for free at sexual health clinics, as well as vaccinations for infections like MPOX, HPV, and hepatitis A and B.

If you live in London (and have no symptoms of infection), Sexual Health London can send you a free STI kit that you can use at home. Just visit [shl.uk](https://shl.uk).



# Aftercare

After the party, you'll need to look after yourself. It's normal to experience a comedown after taking drugs, which might leave you feeling grumpy, irritable or even feeling a little down in the days after.

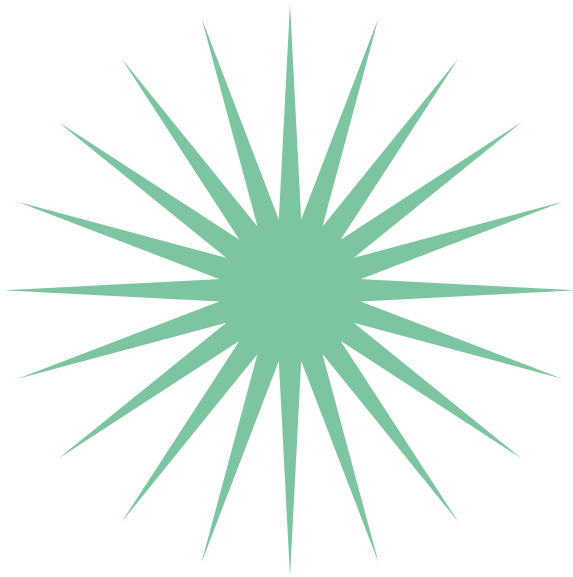
Prioritise rest and sleep because your body will need it. Eat something nutritious and delicious – a favourite food that makes you feel good in mind and body.

Once you've rested, consider doing something active but gentle: tidy your room, go for a walk and get some fresh air, drop in to a friend to catch up.

If you're struggling to recover after a chillout, it might be a good idea to consider how you can better prepare yourself next time.

Perhaps you need to space out your sessions so that they are less regular. Perhaps you need to book time off work afterwards and to treat chillouts like you would treat another big event. Perhaps you need to find other ways to look after yourself during the sessions.

If nothing seems to help and you are still struggling after the party, open up to a friend about it or consider seeking additional support.



# Help with Drugs


For many of us, drugs, and the kind of sex you have on them, are a really fun and enjoyable part of life. In some cases, however, our relationship to drugs and sex on drugs can start to interfere with the rest of our life.

Things can start to spiral out of control, affecting our relationships, our work, our quality of life, our mental health, and so on.


If you think, after checking in with yourself kindly and honestly, that your relationship to drugs and sex on drugs is beginning to impact upon your quality of life, there is support available to you.



If you are based in London, London Friend offer drugs and alcohol support for LGBT people via a programme called Antidote. They offer one-to-one sessions and drop-ins to discuss issues with alcohol and drugs.

Visit: [londonfriend.org.uk](http://londonfriend.org.uk) 

Alternatively, Controlling Chemsex is a free online service that offers help and support for people struggling with their relationship to chems. They can offer anonymous one-to-one support, including therapy and peer mentoring, as well as provide advice about managing withdrawals from G and how to have great sex without the use of drugs.

Visit: [controllingchemsex.com](http://controllingchemsex.com) 

There are other services available to you if you need help and are looking for something different. For links to these visit our website:

[queerhealth.info/lbgt/chillouts](http://queerhealth.info/lbgt/chillouts)

Scan the QR code below to visit our website, where you can find links to more helpful resources, including: support with drugs and sex, STI testing resources, information about PrEP, sexual assault services, more first aid advice for emergency situations, and safer alternatives to injecting drugs.





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