

**Table 6–1**  
**Routes of administration, effects and risks**

Route	Effect	Risks
Intravenous	Intense peak effect within seconds of administration lasting a few minutes, then reduction in intensity over the next 4–6 hours.	<p>Intoxication with any drug may lead to risk taking behaviour such as sharing needles or equipment, hence increasing risk for contracting blood borne viruses (BBV).</p> <p>Injection risks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inflammation, infection, scarring, or abscess at IV site</li> <li>• introduction of contaminants, which may result in thrombosis</li> <li>• increased risk of developing tolerance and dependence</li> <li>• acute intoxication risks from IV use such as psychosis, seizures, cardiovascular complications (incl. arrhythmias, cerebrovascular accident), hallucinations, accidents and injury.</li> </ul>
Smoking/ inhalation 'chasing the dragon'	Slightly less intense onset and duration of effect.	<p>Best route for controlling dose, though relatively uncommon. This route is second to injection for rapidity of effect.</p> <p>May have sore throat, bloody sputum, and potential exacerbation of asthma.</p>
Snorting	Weaker onset and slower reduction in intensity relative to injecting but slightly longer lasting.	Damages epithelium and nasal septum, potentially causing nasal ulcers, runny nose, sinusitis, and septum perforation.
Swallowing or 'bombing'	Delayed absorption (about 30 minutes to 'come on', slower peak, slower reduction, lasting around 6 hours).	<p>Impatience waiting for effect, inability to control the dose, or seeking a stronger or more intense effect may result in taking more drug/s, possibly increasing intoxication risks, and duration of effects.</p> <p>Variable effect depending on presence of food and rate of gastric emptying (speed can inhibit this process to produce an anorexic-like effect).</p>
Anal (shelving)	Effects unpredictable, vary with quality and quantity of drug, and form (powder, capsule, wrapping).	<p>Highly acidic forms may irritate mucosal lining.</p> <p>Time is required for absorption to occur before effect is experienced (see oral use above).</p>