

Ecstasy and Club Drugs

The term “club drug” refers to drugs being used by youth and young adults at all-night dance parties such as “raves” or “trances,” dance clubs and bars. MDMA (Ecstasy), GHB, Rohypnol, Ketamine, Methamphetamine, and LSD are among the drugs referred to as “club drugs.”

“Raves” are a form of dance and recreation that is held in a clandestine location with fast-paced, high-volume music, a variety of high-tech entertainment and usually the use of “club drugs.”

Ecstasy

Ecstasy or MDMA (methylenedioxyamphetamine) is a stimulant that combines the properties of methamphetamine or “speed” with mind-altering or hallucinogenic properties. It is considered to be the most commonly used club (or “designer” drug).

Ecstasy is an illegal drug (it was declared illegal by the federal government in 1985) 90% of which is manufactured in the Netherlands and Belgium.

In its most common form, Ecstasy is a small tablet that is impressed with any one of a number of logos intended to attract young people. It can also be in capsule or powder form and can be injected.

Among the street names for Ecstasy are Adam, X-TC, Clarity, Essence, Stacy, Lover’s Speed, Eve, etc.

The Ecstasy high can last from 6 to 24 hours, with the average “trip” lasting only about 3-4 hours.

Users of Ecstasy report that it causes mood changed and loosens their inhibitions; they become more outgoing, empathetic and affectionate. For this reason, Ecstasy has been called the “hug drug.” It also suppresses the need to eat, drink or sleep, enabling users to endure parties that can last for two or three days. As a result, Ecstasy users frequently suffer effects such as dehydration or exhaustion.

Ecstasy tablets cost \$.20-\$.40 to produce and are sold in America for \$30-\$40 apiece.

Ecstasy users are generally easy to identify. One of the effects of the drug is jaw muscle tension and teeth grinding. Users suck on pacifiers or lollipops to relieve the tension. They also use light sticks, or “glow” sticks to heighten the psychedelic experience at rave parties.

Many teens perceive Ecstasy as low risk. The drug can, however, lead to depression, fatigue, dehydration and long-term kidney, liver and brain damage. Scientists have only recently begun to document the long-term effects of Ecstasy use.

Ecstasy – Crime Prevention Initiatives

There are a number of crime prevention initiatives law enforcement can use to address the problem of Ecstasy use.

- The access to the drug can be reduced by targeting both the owner of buildings where raves are staged or the promoter (who is seldom the owner of the building).
- Education of youth through such programs as DARE or School Resource Officers.
- Parents can be educated about the drug and its use and, particularly, warning signs of Ecstasy use.
- The media can be encouraged to provide information about Ecstasy and its use.
- Information about Ecstasy can be placed in law enforcement agencies' Internet web sites.

GHB (Gamma-hydroxybutyrate)

Slang or street name; Grievous Bodily Harm, G, Liquid Ecstasy, Georgia Home Boy

GHB can be produced in clear liquid, white powder, table, and capsule forms, and it is often used in combination with alcohol, making it even more dangerous. GHB has been increasingly involved in poisonings, overdoses, "date rapes, and fatalities. The drug is used predominantly by adolescents and young adults, often when they attend nightclubs and raves. GHB is often manufactured in homes with recipes and ingredients found and purchased on the Internet.

- GHB is usually abused either for its intoxicating/sedative/euphoria properties or for its growth hormone-releasing effects, which can build muscles.
- Some individuals are synthesizing GHB in home laboratories.
- GHB is a central nervous system depressant that can relax or sedate the body. At higher doses it can slow breathing and heart rate to dangerous levels.
- GHB's intoxicating effects begin 10-20 minutes after the drug is taken; the effects typically last up to 4 hours, depending on the dosage. At lower doses, GHB can relieve anxiety and produce relaxation; however, as the dose increases, the sedative effects may result in sleep and eventual coma or death.
- Overdose of GHB can occur rather quickly and the signs are similar to those of other sedatives: drowsiness, nausea, vomiting, and headache, loss of consciousness, loss of reflexes, impaired breathing, and ultimately death.
- GHB is cleared from the body relatively quickly, so it is sometimes difficult to detect in emergency rooms and other treatment facilities.

Rohypnol

Slang or street names: Roofies, Rophies, Roche, Forget-me Pill

Rohypnol (Flunitrazepam) is not approved for prescription use in the United States, although it is approved in Europe and is used in more than 60 countries as a treatment for insomnia, as a sedative, and as a pre-surgery anesthetic.

- Rohypnol is tasteless and odorless, and it dissolves easily in carbonated beverages. The sedative and toxic effects of Rohypnol are aggravated by concurrent use of alcohol. Even without alcohol, a dose of Rohypnol as small as 1mg can impair a victim for 8 to 12 hours.
- Rohypnol is usually taken orally, although there are reports that it can be ground up and snorted.
- Rohypnol is "the forget-me pill" and it has been reportedly used in sexual assaults.

- Other adverse effects associated with Rohypnol include decreased blood pressure, drowsiness, visual disturbances, dizziness, confusion, gastrointestinal disturbances, and urinary retention.

Ketamine

Slang or street names: Special K, K, Vitamin K, Cat Valiums

Ketamine is an injectable anesthetic that has been approved for both human and animal use in medical settings since 1970. About 90 percent of the ketamine legally sold today is intended for veterinary use.

- Ketamine gained popularity for abuse in the 1980s, when it was realized that large doses cause reactions similar to those associated with use of phencyclidine (PCP), such as dream-like states and hallucinations.
- Ketamine is produced in liquid form or as a white powder that is often snorted or smoked with marijuana or tobacco products.
- At higher doses, ketamine can cause delirium, amnesia, impaired motor function, high blood pressure, depression, and potentially fatal respiratory problems.
- Low-dose intoxication from ketamine results in impaired attention, learning ability, and memory.

Methamphetamine

Slang of street names: Speed, Ice, Chalk, Meth, Crystal, Crank, Fire, Glass

Methamphetamine is a toxic, addictive stimulant that affects many areas of the central nervous system. The drug is often made in clandestine laboratories from relatively inexpensive over-the-counter ingredients. Diverse groups, including young adults who attend raves, in many regions of the country, are using it.

Available in many forms, methamphetamine can be smoked, snorted, injected or orally ingested.

- Methamphetamine is a white, odorless, bitter-tasting crystalline powder that easily dissolves in beverages.
- Methamphetamine is not sold in the same way as many other illicit drugs, it is typically sold through networks not on the street.
- Methamphetamine use is associated with serious health consequences, including memory loss, aggression, violence, psychotic behavior, and potential cardiac and neurological damage.
- Methamphetamine abusers typically display signs of agitation, excited speech, decreased appetite, and increased physical activity levels.

LSD (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide)

Slang or street names: Acid, Boomers, Yellow Sunshines

LSD is a hallucinogen. It induces abnormalities in sensory perceptions. The effects of LSD are unpredictable depending on the amount taken, on the surroundings in which the drug is used, and on the user's personality, mood, and expectations.

- LSD is typically taken by mouth. It is sold in tablet, capsule, and liquid forms as well as in pieces of blotter paper that have absorbed the drug.
- Typically and LSD user feels the effects of the drug 30 to 90 minutes after taking it. The physical effects include dilated pupils, higher body temperature, increased heart rate and blood pressure, sweating, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, dry mouth, and tremors.
- LSD users report numbness, weakness, or trembling, and nausea is common.
- There are two long-term disorders associated with LSD, persistent psychosis and hallucinogen persisting perception disorder (which used to be called "flashbacks").