

Club drugs

Club drugs is a term used to describe a variety of potentially dangerous drugs used mostly by young adults and youth at dance clubs and parties, including ecstasy, GHB, ketamine, crystal meth, and Rohypnol®.

Although users may think these drugs are harmless, little is known about long-term effects.

Club drugs are appealing because they are relatively inexpensive, widely available, and are used to enhance the dance experience. When you buy club drugs, you never know what you are getting. They are often used in combination with alcohol or other drugs with unpredictable and dangerous results.

Possessing, producing, and trafficking in illegal drugs can result in criminal charges. Mixing with other drugs or alcohol greatly increases the risk of overdose, and possible death.

Ecstasy

For more information, see the ABCs of Ecstasy.

Crystal meth

For more information, see the ABCs of Amphetamines.

Ketamine

Ketamine is a general anesthetic. Also called K, Ket, Special K, and Vitamin K, it is sold as a liquid, capsule, crystal, or white powder. It is colourless, odourless, and tasteless and is easily dissolved in a drink.

Short-term effects

- Effects can be felt in about 10 minutes and last for about one hour, depending on the dose.
- Users report feeling relaxed and sedated.
- At higher doses, ketamine distorts perceptions, and can cause confusion and blackouts.

Risks

- While there is very little risk of overdose, ketamine is addictive and there is a risk of dependence.
- Large doses can cause delirium, amnesia, high blood pressure, depression, and breathing problems.
- Some regular users become withdrawn, paranoid, and very uncoordinated.

GHB

GHB (gamma hydroxybutyrate) is a sedative hypnotic originally developed as a sleep aid. Also called G, or Liquid X, it is sold as a clear, salty tasting liquid or white powder.

Short-term effects

- Effects are felt in about 10 to 20 minutes and can last up to four hours.
- At lower doses, GHB produces effects similar to alcohol and can make the user feel relaxed, happy, and sociable.

Risks

- Overdose can occur quickly—combining with other drugs, including alcohol, greatly increases the risk.
- Large doses can produce dizziness, drowsiness, nausea, vomiting, headaches, loss of consciousness, loss of reflexes, impaired breathing, and death.
- Regular use may produce physical dependence.
- Withdrawal symptoms include insomnia, anxiety, tremors, and sweating.

Rohypnol®

Rohypnol® (flunitrazepam) is a tranquillizer. Also known as Roofies, or Roche, it is usually sold as a small, white tablet. It is colourless, tasteless, odourless, and is easily dissolved in drinks. It produces profound sedative effects, especially when mixed with alcohol, and is sometimes called the “date rape” drug because of its reported use in sexual assaults.

Short-term effects

- Effects can be felt in about 20 minutes and last from eight to 24 hours depending on the dose.
- Users report feelings of intoxication, relaxation, drowsiness, sedation, and loss of inhibitions.
- At higher doses it may cause low blood pressure, dizziness, confusion, headaches, slurred speech, and difficulty walking.
- Has been known to cause amnesia and blackouts.

Risks

- Prolonged use can produce physical and psychological dependence.
- Withdrawal symptoms include headaches, muscle pain, confusion, hallucinations, and convulsions.

For more information and to find an addiction services office near you, please call the 24-hour Helpline at 1-866-332-2322.