

# Club Drugs

## Aren't "Fun Drugs"

by Alan I. Leshner, Ph.D., Director, National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health

(NAPS)- Across the country, teens and young adults enjoy all-night dance parties' known as "raves" and increasingly encounter more than just music. Dangerous substances known collectively as club drugs- including Ecstasy, GHB, and Rohypnol- are gaining popularity. These drugs aren't "fun drugs."

Although users may think these substances are harmless, research has shown that club drugs can produce a range of unwanted effects, including hallucinations, paranoia, amnesia, and in some cases, death. When used with alcohol these drugs can be even more harmful. Some club drugs work on the same brain mechanisms as alcohol and, therefore, can dangerously boost the effects of both substances. Also, there are great differences among individuals in how they react to these substances and no one can predict how he or she will react. Some people have been known to have extreme, even fatal, reactions the first time they use club drugs. And studies suggest club drugs found in party settings are often adulterated or impure and thus even more dangerous.

Because some club drugs are colorless, tasteless, and odorless, they are easy for people to slip into drinks. Some of these drugs have been associated with sexual assaults, and for that reason they are referred to as "date rape drugs."

### An Introduction to Club Drugs

"X," "Adam," and "MDMA" are slang names for Ecstasy, which is a stimulant and a hallucinogen. Young people may use Ecstasy to improve their moods or get energy to keep dancing; however, chronic abuse of Ecstasy appears to damage the brain's ability to think and regulate emotion, memory, sleep, and pain.

"G," "Liquid Ecstasy," "Georgia Home Boy" or Gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB) may be made in homes by using recipes with common ingredients. At lower doses, GHB can relax the user, but, as the dose increases, the sedative effects may result in sleep and eventual coma or death.

"Roofie" or "Roche" (Rohypnol) is tasteless and odorless. It mixes easily in carbonated beverages. Rohypnol may cause individuals under the influence of the drug to forget what happened. Other effects include low blood pressure, drowsiness, dizziness, confusion, and stomach upset.



"Special K" or "K" (Ketamine) is an anesthetic. Use of a small amount of ketamine results in loss of attention span, learning ability, and memory. At higher doses, ketamine can cause delirium, amnesia, high blood pressure, depression, and severe breathing problems.

"Speed," "Ice," "Chalk," "Meth" (Methamphetamine) is often made in home laboratories. Methamphetamine use can cause serious health concerns, including memory loss, aggression, violence, psychotic behavior, and heart problems.

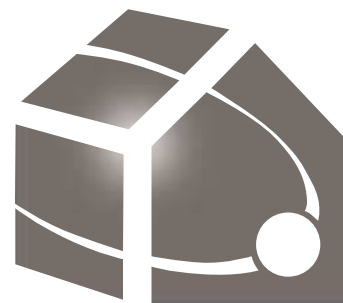
"Acid" or Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD) may cause unpredictable behavior depending on the amount taken, where the drug is used, and on the user's personality. A user might feel the following effects: numbness, weakness, nausea, increased heart rate, sweating, lack of appetite, "flash-backs," and sleeplessness.

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### Research Continues

"Raves" or all-night dance parties continue to attract teens and young adults who may think Ecstasy, GHB, Rohypnol, and other club drugs are harmless. This is not true. While researchers continue to study club drugs with a sense of urgency, treatment and prevention strategies are being developed. And the bottom line is simple: even experimenting with club drugs is an unpredictable and dangerous thing to do.

