

Club Drugs

Club drugs are used by young adults at all-night dance parties such as “raves” and at dance clubs and bars. “Raves” are described as high energy, all night dance parties that feature hard pounding techno-music and flashing laser lights. There all night parties become dangerous when drugs are used. As raves became popular in the 1990’s, the “rave” attendees thought the club drugs were just a part of the experience, necessary for a good “rave” experience. Yet, contrary to popular belief, no club drug is risk free, especially when the drugs are taken in conjunction with alcohol.

Another troubling issue is the relationship of club drugs to date rape. Date rape occurs when a person is coerced or forced to have sex. Date rape can occur between partners, dates, friends, or acquaintances. Club drugs are used for date rape, because the victim has no memory of events that occur while the drug is in their system. The drugs also lower a person’s inhibitions both in a sexual and physically affectionate way and make it impossible for the victim to think clearly and make appropriate decisions. These factors make it easier for a predator to take advantage of a victim. “Date rape” drugs are usually slipped into a person’s drink or food without them knowing.

MDMA (ecstasy), GHB, Rohypnol, ketamine, methamphetamine, and LSD are the popular club/party drugs. One reason for this is their inexpensive price and the stamina and intoxicating highs these drugs produce. Research has shown that the use of club drugs can cause serious health problems, and, in some cases, even death.

MDMA or “ecstasy” is the most popular club drug, acts like a stimulant, such as methamphetamine, or a hallucinogen, such as LSD. It is available as an aspirin-sized pill or capsule that can be easily hidden. MDMA can affect a person for up to 24 hours, but there are reports that it can cause depression, sleep problems, and anxiety for days and even weeks after taken. This is believed to occur because MDMA affects brain functioning. MDMA can produce several unwanted health effects, such as nausea, chills, sweating, involuntary teeth clenching, muscle cramping, and blurred vision. The symptoms of an overdose include high blood pressure, faintness, panic attacks, loss of consciousness, seizures, and death. Since peak levels of use in 2001, the prevalence of MDMA use has decreased by more than half. Other statistics show that over the past several years, high school students are showing more of a perceived risk of ecstasy.

GHB or “liquid ecstasy” acts as an intoxicant or sedative and is often used with alcohol as a “date rape” drug. It is available as a clear liquid, white powder, capsule, or pill. GHB effects begin 10 to 20 minutes after ingestion, and can last as long as four hours, depending on the dosage. Its overdose effects include loss of consciousness, impaired breathing, seizures, coma, and death.

Rohypnol or “roofies” act as a sedative and can cause an inability to remember events while under its influence. It is available as a white pill that dissolves easily in carbonated beverages and is the most popular “date rape” drug. A dose of Rohypnol as small as one milligram can impair a person for eight to twelve hours. Its overdose effects include confusion and possibly death when used with alcohol.

Methamphetamine or “speed” is a stimulant that causes a false sense of confidence, excitation, irritability, anxiety, and panic. Other serious health conditions include memory loss,

aggression, psychotic behavior, and potential heart and brain damage. It is highly addictive and is available as a pill, capsule, powder, or in chunks that can be ingested, snorted, injected, or smoked. The drug stimulates the central nervous system and its effects can last from eight to twenty-four hours. A user feels an intense rush or “flash” that lasts a few minutes when smoking or ingesting methamphetamine; euphoria is felt if the drug snorted or orally ingested. Overdose effects include agitation, extreme rise in body temperature, hallucinations, convulsions, and death. Methamphetamine damages brain cells, lungs, kidneys, and the liver. Methamphetamine abuse is linked to the spread of hepatitis and HIV/AIDS, especially among injection users who share needles and syringes.

LSD or “acid” is a hallucinogen that causes unpredictable sight and hearing hallucinations. Each user will experience different effects depending on their personality, mood, and expectations. It is available as a clear liquid, capsule, or on small pieces of blotter paper taken orally. Its overdose effects include flashbacks, psychosis, and possibly death. LSD can cause sensations that seem to “cross over,” the user then feels like he/she is hearing colors and seeing sounds. Users refer to their experience with LSD as a “trip” and refer to unwanted reactions from the drug as a “bad trip.” A “bad trip” can cause reactions that do not begin to clear for 12 hours.

Ketamine or “Special K” is an animal anesthetic that is similar to the hallucinogen PCP. Although it has been approved as both a human and animal anesthetic since 1970, 90 percent of the legally sold ketamine is for veterinary use. It is available as a liquid or white powder that can cause dreamlike states and hallucinations. It is usually injected, snorted, or smoked. Small amounts of ketamine result in impaired attention, learning disability, and memory problems. Its overdose effects include amnesia, delirium, impaired motor function, high blood pressure, depression, and death from respiratory problems.