

# GHB

## What is GHB?

GHB (gamma hydroxybutyrate) is a depressant drug that slows down the messages travelling between the brain and body.

GBL (gamma butyrolactone) and 1,4-BD (1,4-butanediol) are chemicals that are closely related to GHB. Once GBL or 1,4-BD enter the body, they convert to GHB almost immediately.

GHB usually comes as a colourless, odourless, bitter or salty liquid, which is usually sold in small bottles or vials. It can also come as a bright blue liquid known as 'blue nitro', and less commonly as a crystal powder.

### Other names

G, fantasy, grievous bodily harm (GBH), juice, liquid ecstasy, liquid E, liquid X, Georgia Home Boy, soap, scoop, cherry meth, blue nitro, fishies.

### How is it used?

GHB is usually swallowed, but sometimes it's injected or inserted anally.

## Effects of GHB

**There is no safe level of drug use.** Use of any drug always carries some risk. It's important to be careful when taking any type of drug.

GHB affects everyone differently, based on:

- The amount taken
- The strength of the drug (varies from batch to batch)
- Size, weight and health
- Whether the person is used to taking it
- Whether other drugs are taken around the same time

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The following effects may begin within 15 to 20 minutes of taking GHB and may last for around 3 to 4 hours:

- Feelings of euphoria
- Increased sex drive
- Lowered inhibitions
- Memory lapses
- Drowsiness
- Clumsiness
- Dizziness or headache
- Lowered temperature, heart rate
- Tremors
- Nausea
- Diarrhoea
- Urinary incontinence

The chemical composition of GHB is highly variable. It's very easy to take too much GHB: the difference between the amount needed to get high and the amount that causes an overdose can be hard to judge.

Symptoms of a GHB overdose include:

- Vomiting
- Sweating
- Irregular or shallow breathing
- Confusion, irritation and agitation
- Hallucinations
- Blackouts and memory loss
- Unconsciousness that can last for 3 to 4 hours
- Seizures
- Death

### **Long-term effects**

Little is known about the long-term effects of GHB use. However, it is known that regular use can lead to tolerance and dependence, which means larger amounts of GHB are needed to get the same effect.

## Using GHB with other drugs

- **GHB + alcohol or benzodiazepines:** chance of overdose is greatly increased.
- **GHB + amphetamines or ecstasy:** enormous strain on the body and risk of seizures.

Using GHB to help with the symptoms of the 'comedown' after using stimulants can lead to a cycle of dependence on both drugs.

## Withdrawal

Giving up GHB after using it for a long time is challenging because the body has to get used to functioning without it. This is why it's important to speak to a health professional when planning to stop using GHB.

Withdrawal symptoms usually start about 12 hours after the last dose and can continue for about 15 days.

These symptoms can include:

- Confusion and agitation
- Anxiety and panic
- Feelings of doom and paranoia
- Restless sleep
- Muscle cramps and tremors
- Sweating
- Hallucinations
- Fast heartbeat

Sudden withdrawal from high doses can result in bowel and bladder incontinence and blackouts.

## Further Information

The Druginfo website has information on:

- Overdose
- Treatment
- Help and support
- References for this fact sheet

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