

LSD

What is LSD?

LSD (Lysergic acid diethylamide) is a synthetic chemical, made from a substance found in ergot, which is a fungus that infects rye (grain).

LSD belongs to a group of drugs known as hallucinogens (also known as 'psychedelics'). When small doses are taken, it can produce mild changes in perception, mood and thought. When larger doses are taken, it may produce visual hallucinations and distortions of space and time.

Sometimes, what is sold as LSD can actually be other chemicals such as NBOMe or the 2C family of drugs (part of the new psychoactive substances). These can be quite dangerous, as their quality is inconsistent, plus the potential to take too much of these other substances can be fatal and a number of deaths have been reported due to people taking them.

What it looks like

In its pure state, LSD is a white odourless powder. However, it usually comes in squares of gelatine or blotting paper that have been dipped or soaked in LSD. LSD is also sometimes sold as a liquid, in a tablet or in capsules.

Other names

Acid, trips, tabs, microdots, dots, Lucy.

How is it used?

LSD is usually swallowed, but it can also be sniffed, injected or smoked.

Effects of LSD

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

LSD can affect everyone differently, based on:

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

The effects of LSD usually begin in 30 – 45 minutes and can last for 4 to 12 hours. The following may be experienced during this time:

- Euphoria and wellbeing
- Dilation of pupils
- Seeing and hearing things that aren't there (hallucinations)
- Confusion and trouble concentrating
- Headaches

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- Nausea
- Fast or irregular heart beat
- Increased body temperature
- Breathing quickly
- Vomiting
- Facial flushes, sweating and chills

Overdose

If a large amount is taken, the negative effects of LSD are more likely to happen. If any of the following effects are experienced an ambulance should be called straight away by dialling triple zero (000). Ambulance officers don't need to involve the police.

- Panic
- Paranoia
- Increased risk taking
- Psychosis

Bad trips

Sometimes a 'bad trip' may be experienced, involving a disturbing hallucination. This can lead to panic and risky behaviour, like running across a road or attempting self-harm.

Coming down

In the following days after using hallucinogens, the following may be experienced:

- Insomnia
- Fatigue
- Body and muscle aches
- Depression

Long term effects

People who regularly use LSD may eventually experience flashbacks. Flashbacks are hallucinations that occur weeks, months or even years after the drug was last taken. This can be disturbing, especially when the hallucination is frightening.

Flashbacks can be brought on by using other drugs, stress, tiredness or exercise and usually last for a minute or two.

In addition to flashbacks, regular use of LSD may eventually cause:

- Psychological dependence on hallucinogens
- Financial, work and social problems

Using LSD with other drugs

The effects of taking LSD with other drugs – including over-the-counter or prescribed medications – can be unpredictable and dangerous, and could cause:

- **LSD + ice, speed or ecstasy:** can increase the chances of a bad trip and can also lead to panic.
- **LSD + alcohol:** increased nausea and vomiting.

People who regularly use LSD may eventually experience flashbacks.

Tolerance and dependence

Tolerance develops rapidly to the effects of LSD. After the third or fourth consecutive days of taking LSD, no amount of the drug can produce the desired effects. However, after a short period of abstinence (about 3-4 days) normal tolerance returns.

Withdrawal

Taking LSD regularly does not appear to result in physical dependence but there have been reports of psychological dependence occurring. People withdrawing from LSD may experience:

- Cravings
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Reduced ability to experience pleasure

Further Information

The Druginfo website has information on:

- Help & support services
- Treatment
- References for this fact sheet
- Drug facts

Go to druginfo.adf.org.au

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Level 12, 607 Bourke Street, Melbourne
PO Box 818 North Melbourne Victoria Australia 3051

Email druginfo@adf.org.au Telephone **1300 85 85 84**

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May 2016