

Psilocybin / 'magic mushrooms'

What are magic mushrooms?

Psilocybin / 'magic mushrooms' are naturally occurring and are consumed for their hallucinogenic effects. They belong to a group of drugs known as hallucinogens (also known as 'psychedelics'). The key ingredient found in magic mushrooms is psilocybin. When psilocybin is taken, it is converted in the body to psilocin, which is the chemical with the psychoactive properties.

What do they look like?

'Magic mushrooms' look much like ordinary mushrooms. There are many different types of magic mushrooms. The most common ones in Australia are called 'golden tops', 'blue meanies' and 'liberty caps'. 'Magic mushrooms' look similar to poisonous mushrooms that can cause a person to become very sick and can result in death.

They can also come as dried material in capsules. Synthetic psilocybin appears as a white crystalline powder that can be processed into tablets or capsules, or dissolved in water.

How are they used?

'Magic mushrooms' are eaten fresh, cooked or brewed into a tea. The dried version is sometimes smoked, mixed with cannabis or tobacco.

Other names

Also known as shrooms, mushies, blue meanies, golden tops, liberty caps.

Effects of magic mushrooms

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.

'Magic mushrooms' 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 mushroom (varies depending on the type of mushroom)

There are many different types of magic mushrooms.

The most common ones in Australia are called 'golden tops', 'blue meanies' and 'liberty caps'.

The effects of 'magic mushrooms' usually begin in 30 minutes when eaten, or within 5–10 minutes when taken as a soup or tea, and can last for approximately 4–6 hours.

During this time, the person may experience:

- Euphoria and wellbeing
- Change in consciousness, mood, thought and perception (commonly called a 'trip')
- Dilation of pupils
- Seeing and hearing things that aren't there (hallucinations)
- Stomach discomfort and nausea
- Headaches
- Fast or irregular heartbeat
- Increased body temperature
- Breathing quickly
- Vomiting
- Facial flushes, sweating and chills

Overdose

The use of 'magic mushrooms' rarely results in any life-threatening symptoms. If a large amount or a strong batch of mushrooms is consumed, the person may experience:

- Agitation
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Loss of muscle control
- Panic or paranoia
- Psychosis
- Seizures
- Coma

Bad trips

Sometimes a person may experience the negative effects of 'magic mushrooms' and have what is called a 'bad trip' and may experience the following:

- Unpleasant and/or intense hallucinations
- Anxiety
- Paranoia
- Panic or fear

Coming down

After ingesting 'magic mushrooms', delayed headaches may occur, which can continue for up to 2 days. After taking mushrooms a person may experience:

- Exhaustion
- Depression
- Anxiety

Long-term effects

People who regularly use 'magic mushrooms' may 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 'magic mushrooms' may eventually cause:

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

Using mushrooms with other drugs

'Magic mushrooms' + ice, speed or ecstasy: Can increase the chances of a bad trip and can also lead to panic.

'Magic mushrooms' + some psychiatric medications: Mushrooms should not be taken by people on psychiatric medications as a relapse or worsening of the condition could occur.

Tolerance and dependence

Tolerance develops rapidly with continued use. Discontinuing use for a week or so will return people to their normal tolerance level.

Health and safety

The main risk involved with taking 'magic mushrooms' is that some of them look very like certain types of poisonous mushrooms. So it is important to know what you are taking – if in doubt, do not take them.

If you believe you or someone else may have eaten a poisonous mushroom do not wait for symptoms to occur, contact the **Victorian Poisons Information Centre (Tel 13 11 26)**.

If the person has collapsed, stopped breathing, is having a fit or is suffering an anaphylactic reaction, **immediately ring triple zero (000) for an ambulance.**

Withdrawal

Taking mushrooms regularly does not appear to result in physical dependence but there have been reports of psychological dependence occurring.

People withdrawing from 'magic mushrooms' may experience:

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

Further Information

The Druginfo website has information on:

- Withdrawal
- Help and support
- References for this fact sheet

Go to druginfo.adf.org.au

These fact sheets
are funded by



Factsheet

Stay informed

twitter.com/austdrug
[linkedin.com/company/australian-drug-foundation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/australian-drug-foundation)
[facebook.com/AustralianDrugFoundation2](https://www.facebook.com/AustralianDrugFoundation2)
grogwatch.adf.org.au
adf.org.au/subscribe

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

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

Psilocybin

Page 4 / 4

May 2016

© The Australian Drug Foundation, 2016. ABN 66 057 731 192. This fact sheet offers general information only. The Australian Drug Foundation recommends that you obtain professional advice based on your individual circumstances before acting on information in this fact sheet.