

The Campus Assistance Program

The Campus Assistance Program can help. A counselor will be available to assist you in finding the answers and resources that can help. The CAP is a free service provided to you by the university. The CAP counseling services are short term. However, if long term services are required and a referral to an outside agency is appropriate, the CAP counselor will work with you to find the services that would best help you. Any contact that you have with the Campus Assistance Program is **Confidential**.

How Do I Contact the CAP?

For more information or for an appointment with a counselor, please call: **568-8888**. A counselor is on call and available to you 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The CAP is located in the Clinical Education Building, 1542 Tulane Ave. Office 866.



For Help. Call Today.

Campus
Assistance
Program

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LSU
Health Sciences
Center

Campus
Assistance
Program

Facts About Drugs: GHB



Prepared by The LSUHSC
Campus Assistance Program.
568-8888

<http://www.lsubsc.edu/no/organizations/campushealth/>

What is GHB?



GHB (gamma hydroxybutyrate) is typically an odorless, colorless liquid, with a slightly salty taste

GHB (Gamma Hydroxybutyric Acid) is a synthetic depressant usually produced in illegal labs. It is available as a prescription for sleep disorders in some countries but GHB was banned (in the U.S.) by the FDA in 1990 be-

cause of the dangers associated with its use. In 2002, GHB was approved for treatment of a rare form of narcolepsy. Most of the GHB used in the U.S. is illegally manufactured within its borders. Like Rohypnol, GHB and its analogs are considered "date rape" drugs because they can be mixed with liquids (even water) and a victim wouldn't notice by smelling or looking at it. GHB, by itself, has a soapy or salty taste--but when mixed in a drink it may be difficult to detect.

GHB is a clear odorless liquid (usually mixed with alcohol) or a white powder (usually made into tablets or capsules.) GHB is snorted, smoked, or mixed into drinks. The most commonly abused form is the liquid. The effects of the drug begin 10 to 20 minutes after taking it and last up to 4 hours.

On the street, it is usually sold as a liquid by the dose (a capful from a bottle or drops). In some cities, GHB is put into water guns, and users buy it by the squirt. In other instances, candy, such as a lollipop, is dipped in GHB and sold.

Some of the common street names of GHB are: Georgia Home Boy, liquid ecstasy, soap, soapy water, salty water, scoop, and everclear.

Symptoms, Effects, and Awareness

In low doses GHB is a CNS depressant, sometimes referred to as sedatives and tranquilizers, and has similar effects like alcohol. It can induce a sense of calm, relieve anxiety and cause generalized relaxation. When combined with alcohol and other CNS depressants, it can cause severe lethargy, mental confusion, coma and even breathing difficulties. As of November 2000, the DEA documented 71 GHB-related deaths. The number of reported GHB-related deaths probably underestimates the true number, since GHB does not remain in the body very long and is usually not tested for at autopsy.

Medical Help

Because GHB leaves the body's system relatively quickly, it is not easily detected by medical tests. It is important to tell a medical provider that you have been using GHB so that you can get appropriate medical help.

GHB can easily be slipped into someone's drink undetected. If you start to feel symptoms that don't make sense with what you are drinking, get help immediately.

If someone passes out from known or suspected GHB use, always seek medical attention immediately, no matter what anyone else tells you.

Protecting Yourself

GHB has been used as a "Date Rape" drug for some time. There are simple ways to decrease your chances of becoming a victim of this crime.

- When in bars or clubs always get your drink directly from the bartender and do not take your eyes off the bartender or your order; don't use the waitress or let somebody go to the bar for you.
- At parties, only accept drinks in closed containers: bottles, cans or tetra packs. Do not drink from open beverage sources like punch bowls, pitchers or tubs.
- Don't leave your drink unattended. If YOU are not watching your drink then YOU can never be sure if your drink has not been dosed.

If you suspect that you have been dosed seek medical attention and inform the medical staff of your suspicions.

Addiction and Treatment

Ghb is highly addictive and habitual use, even for a short time, can lead to physical and psychological dependence. Withdrawal can include delirium, disorientation, and hallucinations that may last up to two weeks.

Withdrawal

Missing a dose by more than a few hours sends the addict into significant withdrawal symptoms. This is first characterized by profuse sweating, anxiety attacks, and may be accompanied by soaring blood pressure and pulse. BP at dangerous levels has been documented. This may subside on its own after two or three days or in response to medication. Thus, on day three, a patient may "seem" to be doing "fine" and may be released from a treatment center unfamiliar with GHB withdrawal.

The second phase of withdrawal, which may include hallucinations and altered mental state, may begin earlier, but may also be delayed to around day four or five.

Treatment

Treatment of the GHB withdrawal syndrome is not yet clearly defined. Treatment may involve use of different medication. Although tapering GHB doses prior to detoxification may help reduce the severity of the withdrawal, attempts by some addicts to self-detoxify, without medical assistance, have been fatal, because the withdrawal syndrome may be severe and unpredictable. Additionally, as most addicts are unable to tolerate the ongoing symptoms of withdrawal, this method is frequently unsuccessful as well as dangerous.

If you, or anyone you know, has a problem with heroin, or any other drug, please contact the **LSUHSC Campus Assistance Program** at **568-8888** for a **free** and **Confidential** evaluation.