

Behind the High: Party Drugs

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What is it?



- ❖ A group of psychoactive drugs that are most frequently taken by teenagers and young adults to improve sensory experiences and lower inhibitions in bars, nightclubs, concerts, Coachella and raves.
- ❖ Common types of party drugs
 - MDMA (Methylenedioxymethamphetamine) or Ecstasy
 - Ketamine
 - Rohypnol
 - LSD
 - Gamma-Hydroxybutyric acid (GHB)
- ❖ A mix of substances found in club drugs have an impact on your central nervous system and brain.
 - Depressants
 - Hallucinogens
 - Stimulants

HISTORY OF PARTY DRUGS



ORIGINS & EARLY USE (Mid-20th Century)

- Began as pharmaceutical or military research chemicals (anesthesia, sleep, psychiatric therapy)
- Recreational use emerged during the counterculture era (1960s-70s)

CLUB SCENE BOOM (1980s-90s)

- Rise of electronic dance music (house, techno, rave) created new social spaces for drug-enhanced experiences
- Movement spread from underground raves to mainstream festivals and nightlife

REGULATION & REINVENTION (present)

- Increasing reports of overdoses, assaults, and dependency led to strict global regulation and media backlash
- Party drugs remain in youth and LGBTQ+ nightlife culture
- MDMA, ketamine, and LSD being studied for mental health treatment

Party pill illusion

- These bright pills frequently contain unidentified or harmful ingredients.
- Party drugs and fake prescription medications including fentanyl, are commonly packaged and distributed in forms of candy



Party Drug Names ... Real vs. Fake?

Instructions:

- 1) Get into your presentation groups
- 2) For 5 minutes...
 - a) Decide which terms in the baggie are real vs. fake
 - b) Discuss your prior knowledge about the drug
 - c) Discuss effects of the drugs



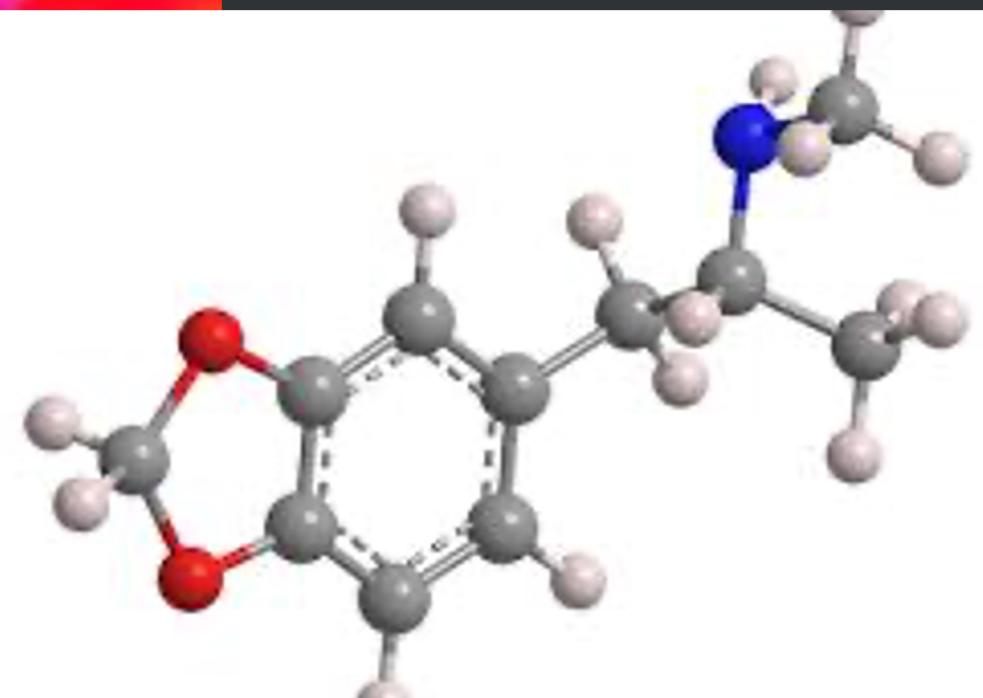


How much do you know?

MDMA

Methylenedioxymethamphetamine

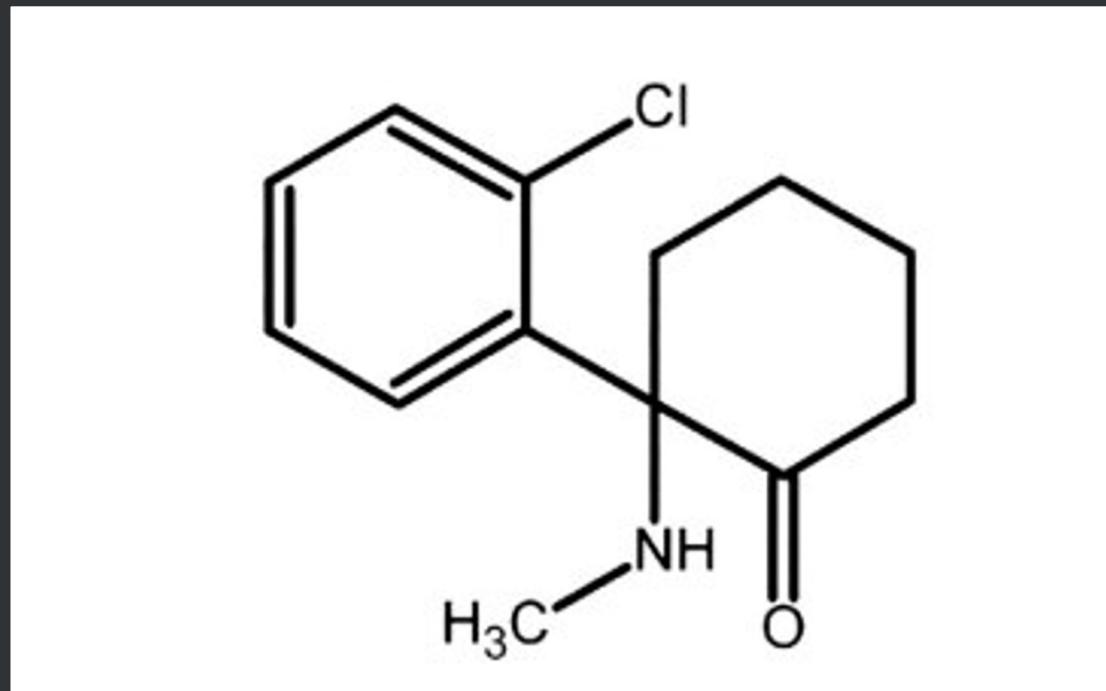
- Common slang terms: Molly or Ecstasy
- Synthetic drug that acts as a stimulant
 - Influencing 3 neurotransmitters
- Sold as colorful tablets, capsules
- Experience effects within 45 minutes
- Effects include...
 - Energetic and alert
 - Increased senses
 - Increased sense of happiness
 - Feeling closer to oneself and others
- Can lead to negative health effects
- Can potentially be addictive





How much do you know?

Ketamine



- **FDA approved for use as a general anesthetic only**
- **“Dissociative anesthetic”: causes user to feel disconnected from pain and environment**
- **Used as a party drug due to its hallucinogenic effects**
- **Enhances and alters auditory and visual sensations**
- **Some people prefer ketamine over other club drugs like PCP and LSD because it produces a shorter trip (30 minutes to an hour)**
- **More recently being used for patients with treatment-resistant depression at “ketamine clinics” with ketamine infusions and nasal sprays. Studies suggest ketamine promotes neuroplasticity, “rewiring brain”**



How much do you know?

LSD

- Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) is a hallucinogen that has high abuse potential (schedule 1 drug)
- In its pure state, it is a white odorless substance, but it can be in forms of blotting sheets and sugar cubes
- Effects on the body:
 - High body temperature
 - Increased heart rate and blood pressure
 - Dilated pupils
 - tremors
- The person using may have distorted perceptions of things' size and shape, movements, colors, sound, touch, and their own body image while under the influence.
- HPPD



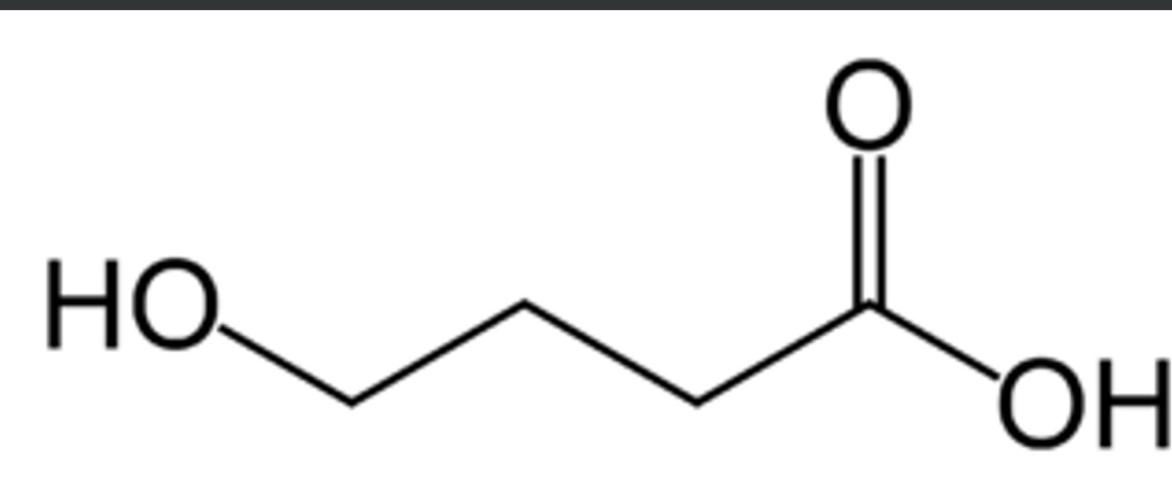


How much do you know?

Gamma-Hydroxybutyric Acid (GHB)



- FDA approved to treat fatigue and muscle weakness in narcolepsy patients
- Gamma butyrolactone (GBL) and 1,4-butanediol (BD)
 - Analogs available legally, used in pesticides and other industrial products
 - Sold by the bottle as “fish tank cleaner,” “ink stain remover”, etc.
- Euphoric and calming effects, but for some causes aggression
- Muscle building/weight loss
- High lasts 3-6 hours depending on dose
- Overdose can cause coma and death





How much do you know?

Rohypnol (Flunitrazepam)

WHAT IS IT?

- Powerful benzodiazepine (sedative) not approved in the U.S.
- Used medically for severe insomnia in some countries
- Known as a “date rape drug” due to its sedative + amnesic effects
- Part of the party drug scene for its calming high or misuse in assaults

HOW IT'S TAKEN

- Orally as pills or dissolved in drinks (odorless, tasteless, colorless)

EFFECTS & RISKS

- Drowsiness, confusion, muscle relaxation, memory loss
- In higher doses or mixed with alcohol: loss of consciousness, coma, or death
- Addictive with repeated use → leads to dependence and withdrawal





QUIZ TIME!!!!

Resources

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/club-drugs.page>

<https://www.dea.gov/factsheets/lsd>

<https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/mdma-ecstasy-molly#treatment>

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41398-023-02451-0>

<https://www.dea.gov/factsheets/ketamine>

<https://www.dea.gov/factsheets/ghb-gamma-hydroxybutyric-acid>

<https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/Rohypnol-2020.pdf>

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3135986/>