

FACT SHEET THIRTY EIGHT

GHB

What is GHB?

Gammahydroxybutyrate is a manmade anaesthetic, it is usually sold as a colourless, odourless liquid but has also been seen in tablet and powder form. The liquid is taken orally, it has a slightly salty taste if taken straight and is often added to another drink. It is usually sold in 30ml bottles for around £15 and can vary considerably in strength.

GHB may also be referred to as GBH, liquid ecstasy (or liquid E) and liquid X. The effects experienced depend upon the amount of the drug that is taken and the strength of the dose, these effects can usually be felt between 10 minutes to an hour after taking the drug and have been known to last all day.

The Effects of GHB

Although GHB is technically a depressant, at lower doses, users report a feeling of euphoria, happiness, sensuality, increased libido and a decrease in inhibitions, many liken it to having a few alcoholic drinks. At higher doses the anaesthetic effects start to kick in and users feel sleepy and sedated.

The Side Effects of GHB

Variations in the preparation of GHB influence the experience people have, some liquids have been known to burn the users mouth on consumption and other users report feeling sick or disorientated from taking too much. Higher doses of the drug can also cause muscle spasms and numbness and there is a very real risk of overdosing on stronger formulations, leading to seizures, coma and even death.

Due to its depressant effects, it is dangerous to mix GHB with alcohol and other drugs that depress the Central Nervous System and because of its sedative effects and virtually undetectable taste there has been an alarming number of cases where it is suspected of being used as a date rape drug.

The long-term side effects of GHB have yet to be determined but it has already resulted in a number of hospital admissions and has caused several deaths, especially when taken with alcohol and other drugs. Tolerance, needing more of the drug to get the same effect, is likely with GHB as is the development of a physical and / or psychological dependency on it.

