

Club Drugs: What You Should Know

What are club drugs?

Club drugs are often found at parties, bars, nightclubs, and concerts, but they can also be used in other settings. Most of the drugs are illegal and can cause serious illness, injury, or even death. The main club drugs are GHB (“liquid ecstasy”), MDMA (“ecstasy”), flunitrazepam (“roofies”), ketamine (“special K”), LSD (“acid”), synthetic cannabinoids (“spice”), methamphetamines (“crystal meth”), and bath salts.

What do they do?

Club drugs can be unpredictable. They may have different ingredients than the user thinks. Many of the ingredients can affect the brain and nervous system. Stimulants can make people excitable. This may make the user feel open, aroused, and unafraid. Depressants slow the nervous system and may reduce the ability to physically and mentally react. Hallucinogens (hal-LOO-sin-oh-genz) affect the ability to think, feel, judge, and act. They make it hard to know what is real. They may cause users to forget periods of time.

Why should I worry about them?

People who use club drugs may believe they are safe because many of the drugs look like prescription medicines. Some people may use a certain drug

without knowing that it is combined with other drugs that can be very dangerous or addictive. Some people may not choose to use club drugs, but are given the drugs without knowing it. These drugs are sometimes referred to as “date rape drugs” because they can cause memory loss or knock you out.

What effects do club drugs cause?

Everyone reacts differently to club drugs. Symptoms can vary depending on the person, the drug, other ingredients added to the drug, and the dose. These symptoms and side effects often appear 10 to 20 minutes after the drugs are taken:

- Drowsiness
- Dizziness
- Blurry vision
- Nausea and vomiting
- Loss of muscle control
- Changes in heart rate or blood pressure
- Aggressive behavior
- Memory problems
- Impaired judgment
- Seeing or hearing things that aren't real
- Extreme heat or thirst
- Loss of consciousness

Club drugs can also cause seizures, coma, and death.

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This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <https://familydoctor.org>.

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Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

National Institute on Drug Abuse

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/club-drugs>

Partnership for Drug-Free Kids

<https://drugfree.org/>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

Administration

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>

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