

Club Drugs



"**Club drug**" is a vague term that refers to a wide variety of drugs **including MDMA (Ecstasy), GHB, Rohypnol, ketamine, methamphetamine, and**

LSD. Uncertainties about the drug sources, pharmacological agents, chemicals used to manufacture them, and possible contaminants make it difficult to determine toxicity, consequences, and symptoms.

To some, club drugs seem harmless. In reality, these substances can cause serious physical and psychological problems—even death. Often, the raves where these drugs are used are promoted as alcohol-free events, which gives parents a false sense of security that their children will be safe attending such parties. These parents are not aware that raves may actually be havens for the illicit sale and abuse of club.

Attendance at raves can range from 30 people in a small club to thousands in a stadium or open field. Because MDMA can cause users to involuntarily grind their teeth, ravers often chew on baby pacifiers or lollipops to offset this effect. Additionally, ravers may use glowsticks and flashing lights to heighten the hallucinogenic properties of MDMA and the visual distortions brought on by its use.

There are numerous dangers associated with the use of club drugs. For example:

MDMA can cause a user's blood pressure and heart rate to increase to dangerous levels, and can lead to heart or kidney failure. It can cause severe hyperthermia from the combination of the drug's stimulant effect with the often hot, crowded atmosphere of a rave.

Studies have shown that some heavy MDMA users experience long lasting confusion, depression, and selective impairment of working memory and attention processes.

Rohypnol and GHB are predominantly central nervous system depressants. Because they are often colorless, tasteless, and odorless, they can be added to beverages and ingested.

Ketamine Low-dose intoxication from ketamine results in impaired attention, learning ability, and memory. At higher doses, ketamine can cause delirium, amnesia, impaired motor function, high blood pressure, depression, and potentially fatal respiratory problems.

Methamphetamine is a powerfully addictive stimulant associated with serious health conditions, including memory loss, aggression, and potential heart and brain damage. Users can also display a number of psychotic features, including paranoia, auditory hallucinations, mood disturbances, and delusions.

Because of the dangers associated with the use of club drugs, communities and law enforcement agencies are developing anti-rave initiatives to try to curb the use of club drugs. For example, they are passing new ordinances that establish juvenile curfews and licensing requirements for large public gatherings and are enforcing existing fire codes and health, safety, and liquor laws.

U.S. Department of Justice, National Criminal
Justice Reference Service, 2009
www.ncjrs.gov/spotlight/club_drugs/summary.html