



GHB Fact Sheet

What is GHB?

GHB is gamma-hydroxybutyrate, a substance that the body produces in SMALL quantities. Historically, bodybuilders have used it to stimulate muscle growth. This use was never fully proven. It currently has one medical use for people with cataplectic narcolepsy, a rare neurological disorder.

What does it look like?

GHB is most commonly seen as a light-colored powder or a clear liquid. Some investigators have also found tablets and capsules containing GHB.

What does it do?

Alone, GHB can produce intense drowsiness, confusion, nausea, dizziness, disorientation, vomiting, seizures, respiratory depression, and reduced or loss of consciousness in as little as 10-20 minutes after ingestion. However, when mixed with alcohol, GHB can be extremely lethal. Coma and death are fairly common in overdoses. The effects of GHB can last up to 3-6 hours.

GHB is dangerous for several reasons including the ones listed above. One of the main dangers is that it takes so little of it to produce a big effect. Just 2 grams can induce a coma-like sleep where intubation is the only means to wake the user.

Where do people get it?

Most of the GHB in use today is “homegrown,” meaning that non-professional chemists are making it at home using ingredients and recipes found in health food stores and on the Internet.

How do people use it?

GHB is a “date rape drug.” Many times it is used in committing sexual assault and rape. The most common scenarios for the use of this drug take place at parties and bars. Perpetrators slip the drug into victims’ drinks; however, some victims will knowingly take the drug to experience the euphoric high. When the drug is dissolved in a drink, it is odorless and colorless.

What are some of GHB’s street names?

Grievous Bodily Harm, Liquid X, Liquid E, Liquid Ecstasy, Easy Lay, G, Vita G, Georgia Home Boy, G-Juice, Great Hormones, Somatomax, Bedtime Scoop, Soap, Gook, Gamma 10, Energy Drink, Salt Water, Liquid Dust, Cherry Meth, Fantasy, Organic Quaalude, and Sleep 500.

Is it detectable and how long does it stay in your system?

YES. A urine test can detect the presence of GHB by-products up to 24 hours after ingestion, but most experts say that 4-6 hours maximum can yield better results. This test must be ordered by a health professional because it is not part of a normal “tox screen.” Blood tests can also be done within 4 hours of ingestion. GHB can be difficult to detect because it is cleared very quickly by the body.

Is there anything else I should know about GHB?

When used as a date rape drug and mixed into drinks, it might have a slightly salty taste. Many perpetrators try to cover this by mixing it into a sweet or fruity drink or by calling it a special “health” or “energy” drink. Some studies show that GHB has a greater effect on women than it does on men. Remember, very little is very potent. As little as ½ of a gram can render a person unable to defend himself or herself against an assault.

What do I do if I think I have been drugged at a party?

Get to a safe place and call someone you trust with your life. Have your trusted friend get you to a hospital emergency room immediately. Remember, when mixed with alcohol, GHB can be fatal. Try to keep some of the beverage for testing if possible. Notify appropriate law enforcement (campus or community police). If you think you have been raped or sexually assaulted after ingesting a drug-laced beverage, call a rape crisis center. The NWA Rape Crisis center hotline is 1-800-794-4175 and the Benton County Rape Crisis Center hotline is 1-800-775-9011. If you decide to file a police report, do not shower, bathe, douche, change clothes, or brush your teeth until medical and legal evidence can be collected. Get to a hospital or clinic to receive treatment for any internal/external injuries (whether or not you see any – they may be undetectable to you), testing for pregnancy or STD’s, treatment for pregnancy or STD’s, and to receive support. Request a urine test to detect the presence of drugs as soon as possible.

Information adapted from the Rape Treatment Center of Santa Monica and the UCLA Medical Center, The Office of National Drug Control Policy, Drug-Free Resource Net (www.drugfreeamerica.org), and The National Coalition Against Sexual Assault

STAR Central – Office of Support, Training, Advocacy, & Resources on Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence
a program of



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