

LSD

What is LSD?

LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) is a powerful hallucinogen which can produce significant changes in perception, mood and thought. Only a very small amount is needed to cause visual hallucinations and distortions. These experiences are known as 'trips'.

LSD is usually sold in perforated sheets. Small paper squares ('tabs') are detached from these sheets and are usually decorated with small designs which are often culturally specific to the user groups. LSD is so potent that trips are often torn or cut into halves or quarters and shared with others. It is usually swallowed.

Unpleasant reactions to LSD include fear, anxiety and depression. Even more experienced users can have a 'bad trip', which may lead them to cease using the drug.

LSD is manufactured in illicit laboratories and the majority of Australian LSD is believed to be imported from the USA. It is usually transported via the mail and is not easily detected due to it being colourless, odourless, tasteless and small.

How many people use LSD?

In Australia no information is collected specifically on the use of LSD. LSD is classified as a hallucinogen and according to the 2001 National Drug Household Survey, 8% of the Australian population reported using hallucinogens at some time, with 1% having used them in the last 12 months.

The average age at first use was 19.1 years.

The 1999 Secondary School Survey indicated that hallucinogens were one of the more popular drugs with young people attending high school across Australia. Seven percent of 12-17 year old males had ever experimented with hallucinogens with 6% of females ever reporting use.

- 15% of 17 year old males reported ever using hallucinogens
- 9% of 17 year old females reported ever using hallucinogens
- 3% of 12 year old males reported ever using hallucinogens
- 2% of 12 year old females reported ever using hallucinogens

Other names for LSD

LSD is also known as acid, trips, holidays, blotters, microdots, tabs, and tickets. The street name for LSD is often dependent upon the design used on the blotting paper squares. For example, trips which have a red devil on them could be called 'red devils'.



What are the short-term effects of LSD?

The short-term effects of using LSD may include:

- euphoria and well-being
- auditory and visual hallucinations
- distorted sense of time, space and body image
- poor co-ordination
- increased body temperature and sweating, sometimes alternating with chills and shivering
- paranoia

What are the long-term effects of LSD?

The long-term effects of using LSD may include:

- panic attacks
- depression and anxiety
- paranoid delusions

The most frequently discussed long-term effect of using LSD is 'flashbacks'. It has been estimated that approximately 25% of all LSD users will experience flashbacks or Hallucinogen Persistent Perception Disorder (HPPD). A flashback is a spontaneous recurrence of a specific experience which occurred while taking the drug. These are usually brief, lasting from a few seconds to a few hours, but can occur days, weeks or even years after taking the drug. The cause of these flashbacks is unknown, but they frequently occur after an LSD user smokes cannabis. Other trigger factors may include emotional stress, anxiety and even moving from a light to a dark environment.