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## Substance use - LSD

LSD stands for lysergic acid diethylamide. It is an illegal street drug that comes as a white powder or clear colorless liquid. It is available in powder, liquid, tablet, or capsule form. LSD is usually taken by mouth. Some people inhale it through the nose (snort) or inject it into a vein (shooting up).

Street names for LSD include acid, blotter, blotter acid, blue cheer, electric Kool-Aid, hits, Lucy in the sky with diamonds, mellow yellow, microdots, purple haze, sugar cubes, sunshine tabs, and window pane.

### LSD's Effects on Your Brain

LSD is a mind-altering drug. This means it acts on your brain (central nervous system) and changes your mood, behavior, and the way you relate to the world around you. LSD affects the action of a brain chemical called serotonin. Serotonin helps control behavior, mood, the senses, and thinking.

LSD is in a class of drugs called hallucinogens. These are substances that cause hallucinations. These are things that you see, hear, or feel while awake that appear to be real, but instead of being real, they have been created by the mind. LSD is a very strong hallucinogen. Only a tiny amount is needed to cause effects such as hallucinations.

LSD users call their hallucinogenic experiences "trips." Depending on how much you take and how your brain responds, a trip may be "good" or "bad."

A good trip may be stimulating and pleasurable and make you feel:

- As if you are floating and disconnected from reality.
- Joy (euphoria, or "rush") and less inhibition, similar to being drunk from alcohol use.
- As if your thinking is extremely clear and that you have superhuman strength and are

not afraid of anything.

A bad trip can be very unpleasant and frightening:

- You may have terrifying thoughts.
- You may have many emotions at once, or move quickly from feeling one emotion to feeling another.
- Your senses may become distorted. Shapes and sizes of objects are altered. Or your senses may "cross over." You may feel or hear colors and see sounds.
- Fears that you normally can control are out of control. For example, you may have doom and gloom thoughts, such as thoughts that you will soon die, or that you want to harm yourself or others.

The danger of LSD is that its effects are unpredictable. This means when you use it, you do not know if you will have a good trip or a bad trip.

How fast you feel the effects of LSD depends on how you use it:

- Taken by mouth: Effects usually start in 20 to 30 minutes. The effects peak in about 2 to 4 hours and last up to 12 hours.
- Shooting up: If given through a vein, LSD's effects start within 10 minutes.

## Harmful Effects of LSD

LSD can harm the body in different ways and lead to health problems such as:

- Increased heart rate, blood pressure, breathing rate, and body temperature
- Sleeplessness, loss of appetite, tremors, sweating
- Mental problems, including anxiety, depression, schizophrenia

Some LSD users have flashbacks. This is when parts of the drug experience, or trip, return, even without using the drug again. Flashbacks occur during times of increased stress. Flashbacks tend to occur less often and less intensely after stopping use of LSD. Some users who have frequent flashbacks have a hard time living their daily life.

## Tolerance to LSD

LSD is not known to be addicting. But frequent use of LSD can lead to tolerance. Tolerance means you need more and more LSD to get the same high.

## Treatment Options

Treatment begins with recognizing there is a problem. Once you decide you want to do something about your LSD use, the next step is getting help and support.

Treatment programs use behavior change techniques through counseling (talk therapy). The goal is to help you understand your behaviors and why you use LSD. Involving family and friends during counseling can help support you and keep you from going back to using (relapsing).

Because LSD use may cause mental problems, medicines may be also prescribed to help treat symptoms of anxiety, depression, or schizophrenia.

## Your Ongoing Recovery

As you recover, focus on the following to help prevent relapse:

- Keep going to your treatment sessions.
- Find new activities and goals to replace ones that involved your LSD use.
- Spend more time with family and friends you lost touch with while you were using LSD. Consider not seeing friends who are still using LSD.
- Exercise and eat healthy foods. Taking care of your body helps it heal from the harmful effects of LSD. You will feel better, too.
- Avoid triggers. These can be people you used LSD with. They can also be places, things, or emotions that can make you want to use it again.

## Resources

Resources that may help you on your road to recovery include:

- Partnership for Drug-Free Kids -- [drugfree.org/](https://drugfree.org/) [<https://drugfree.org/>]
- LifeRing -- [www.lifering.org/](https://www.lifering.org/) [<https://www.lifering.org/>]
- SMART Recovery -- [www.smartrecovery.org/](https://www.smartrecovery.org/) [<https://www.smartrecovery.org/> ]

Your workplace employee assistance program (EAP) is also a good resource.

## When to Call the Doctor

Call for an appointment with your health care provider if you or someone you know is using LSD and needs help stopping.

## Alternative Names

Substance abuse – LSD; Drug abuse – LSD; Drug use – LSD; Lysergic acid diethylamide; Hallucinogen – LSD

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## Review Date 5/10/2020

Updated by: Fred K. Berger, MD, addiction and forensic psychiatrist, Scripps Memorial Hospital, La Jolla, CA. Also reviewed by David Zieve, MD, MHA, Medical Director, Brenda Conaway, Editorial Director, and the A.D.A.M. Editorial team.



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Page last updated: 26 February 2021