

# LSD ●

## What is LSD?

LSD (Lysergic acid diethylamide) is a synthetic chemical, made from a substance found in ergot, which is a fungus that infects rye (grain).<sup>1</sup>

LSD belongs to a group of drugs known as psychedelics. When small doses are taken, it can produce mild changes in perception, mood and thought. When larger doses are taken, it may produce visual hallucinations and distortions of space and time.<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes, what is sold as LSD can actually be other chemicals such as NBOMe or the 2C family of drugs (part of the new psychoactive substances). These can be quite dangerous, as their quality is inconsistent, plus the potential to take too much of these other substances can be fatal. A number of deaths have been reported due to people taking them.<sup>3</sup>

### What it looks like

In its pure state, LSD is a white odourless crystalline substance. However, LSD is so potent that an effective dose of pure drug is so small it is virtually invisible. As a result, it is usually diluted with other materials. The most common form of LSD, is drops of LSD solution dried onto gelatin sheets, pieces of blotting paper or sugar cubes, which release the drug when they are swallowed.<sup>2</sup> LSD is also sometimes sold as a liquid, in a tablet or in capsules.

### Other names

Acid, trips, tabs, microdots, dots, Lucy.

### How is it used?

LSD is usually swallowed or dissolved under the tongue, but it can also be sniffed, injected or smoked.<sup>1,4</sup>

## Effects of LSD

**There is no safe level of drug use.** Use of any drug always carries some risk. It's important to be careful when taking any type of drug.

LSD can affect everyone differently, based on:

- size, weight and health
- whether the person is used to taking it
- whether other drugs are taken around the same time
- the amount taken
- the strength of the drug (varies from batch to batch).

The effects of LSD usually begin in 30 – 45 minutes and can last for 4 to 12 hours.<sup>3</sup> The following may be experienced during this time:

- euphoria and wellbeing
- dilation of pupils
- perceptual changes, such as visual and auditory hallucinations.
- confusion and trouble concentrating
- headaches
- nausea
- fast or irregular heart beat
- increased body temperature
- breathing quickly
- vomiting
- facial flushes, sweating and chills.<sup>1,2</sup>

### Overdose

If you take a large amount, the negative effects of LSD are more likely to happen. If you or someone you know is having any of the following symptoms, call an ambulance straight away by dialling triple zero (000). Ambulance officers don't need to involve the police:

- panic
- paranoia
- increased risk taking
- psychosis.<sup>1</sup>

### Bad trips

Sometimes you can experience a 'bad trip', involving a disturbing hallucination. This can lead to panic and risky behaviour, like running across a road or attempting self-harm.<sup>1,2</sup>

### Coming down

In the following days after using hallucinogens, the following may be experienced:

- insomnia
- fatigue
- body and muscle aches
- feeling depressed.<sup>1</sup>

### Long term effects

Some people who regularly use LSD may eventually experience flashbacks. A flashback is when an LSD experience reoccurs, they are usually visual distortions that involve perceptual or emotional changes. Flashbacks can happen weeks, months or even years after the drug was last taken. This can be disturbing, especially if a frightening experience or hallucination is recalled.<sup>1,2</sup>

Flashbacks can be brought on by using other drugs, stress, tiredness or exercise and usually last for a minute or two.<sup>2</sup>

### Using LSD with other drugs

The effects of taking LSD with other drugs – including over-the-counter or prescribed medications – can be unpredictable and dangerous, and could cause:

- **LSD + ice, speed or ecstasy:** can increase the chances of a bad trip and can also lead to panic<sup>5</sup>
- **LSD + alcohol:** increased nausea and vomiting<sup>6</sup>

### Tolerance and dependence

Tolerance develops rapidly to the effects of LSD. After the third or fourth consecutive days of taking LSD, no amount of the drug can produce the desired effects. However, after a short period of abstinence (about 3-4 days) normal tolerance returns.<sup>2</sup>

### Withdrawal

There are no known physical withdrawal symptoms of LSD. Taking LSD regularly does not result in physical dependence, and although there have been reports of psychological dependence occurring, the evidence is limited.<sup>1,2</sup>

Find out more about withdrawal at [adf.org.au/alcohol-drug-use/supporting-a-loved-one/withdrawal/](http://adf.org.au/alcohol-drug-use/supporting-a-loved-one/withdrawal/)

### Getting help

If your use of LSD is affecting your health, family, relationships, work, school, financial or other life situations, you should seek help and support.

Help and support services directory:  
[adf.org.au/help-support/support-services-directory/](http://adf.org.au/help-support/support-services-directory/)

Information about treatment:  
[adf.org.au/alcohol-drug-use/supporting-a-loved-one/treatment/](http://adf.org.au/alcohol-drug-use/supporting-a-loved-one/treatment/)

### LSD and the law

Federal and state laws provide penalties for possessing, using, making or selling LSD, or driving under the influence.

### LSD statistics

#### National

- 9.4% of Australians aged 14 years and over have used hallucinogens one or more times in their life.<sup>7</sup>
- 1% of Australians aged 14 years and over have used hallucinogens in the previous 12 months.<sup>7</sup>

#### Young people

- Young Australians (aged 14–29) first try hallucinogens at 19.5 years on average.<sup>7</sup>
- 2.8% of 12-17 year olds have tried hallucinogens such as LSD.<sup>8</sup>

References

1. Campbell, A. (2001). The Australian illicit drug guide. Melbourne: Black Inc.
2. Brands, B. Sproule, B. & Marshman, J. (Eds.). (1998). Drugs & drug abuse (3rd ed.). Ontario: Addiction Research Foundation.
3. Independent Scientific Committee on Drugs. (2012). LSD / Acid. <http://www.drugscience.org.uk/drugs/psychedelics/lsd>
4. Erowid. (2001). Ask Erowid.
5. Community Alcohol and Drug Services (CADS). (2008). Drugs, LSD (acid, trips, tabs, A).
6. University of California. (2013). Alcohol and LSD / Acid.
7. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2017). National Drug Strategy Household Survey detailed report 2016. Canberra: AIHW.
8. White, V., & Williams, T. (2016). Australian secondary school students' use of tobacco, alcohol, and over-the-counter and illicit substances in 2014. Melbourne: The Cancer Council, Victoria.

Always call an ambulance on triple zero (000) if an overdose is suspected: tell the paramedic exactly what has been taken. Paramedics are there to help and will not involve the police unless there is a danger to themselves or others.

**Other help, support services and resources**

Links to further help and support • [adf.org.au/help-support/](http://adf.org.au/help-support/)

Information on the use of LSD as a therapeutic treatment  
[adf.org.au/insights/lsd-therapeutic-treatment/](http://adf.org.au/insights/lsd-therapeutic-treatment/)

● **Further information**

**DrugInfo • 1300 85 85 84**

Free confidential information and advice about alcohol and other drugs (9am - 5pm, Mon-Fri)

**Family Drug Help • 1300 660 068 • [www.familydrughelp.com.au](http://www.familydrughelp.com.au)** (Victorian-based)

Services are available to support those around you who may be affected by your drug use. As well as providing understanding, they can provide information about how best to help during treatment.

**Family Drug Support • 1300 368 186 • [www.fds.org.au](http://www.fds.org.au)** (Australia-wide)



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