

## GHB

**Street Name:** (called G" or GHB" but others report hearing it referred to as liquid ecstasy")

**Chemical Name:** Gamma hydroxy butyrate.

**Routes Of Administration:** Oral

**Effects:** It is a nervous system depressant, like alcohol. The effects at recreational doses are similar to alcohol. At lower doses, its effects are similar to mild alcohol intoxication causing decreased motor skills, relaxation, reduction of social inhibitions.

**Risks:** At the overdose level, individuals may experience decreased level of consciousness, extreme dizziness, disorientation, vomiting, and respiratory depression. What seems like a small amount may actually be too much, and too much GHB can kill you.

GHB usually comes as an odorless liquid with a salty or bitter taste. More often than not, it comes in small bottles or vials. Given the high dose-response curve, the idiosyncrasies of your body's metabolism (including what you just ate), and the problem with not knowing the concentration of the drug you have in your hand, a "recreational dose" is likely to change constantly.

Just because it's sold in vials doesn't mean that a vial is a dose. In fact, taking the contents of an entire vial is probably something you should consider not doing. Liquids commonly referred to as "G" may actually be one of several different substances somewhat similar in GHB: GBL (gamma-butyrolactone), GHV (gamma-hydroxyvalerate), or BD" (1,4-butanediol). All these substances produce similar effects when ingested, but there are some important differences between them that may increase risk of overdose. GHB is a nervous system depressant, like alcohol.

The effects of GHB at recreational doses are similar to alcohol. At lower doses, its effects are similar to mild alcohol intoxication causing decreased motor skills, relaxation, reduction of social inhibitions and mood lift. By all the accounts we've heard, GHB seems to heighten feelings of sexuality. Users commonly claim that the drug makes them feel sexually more aggressive. At higher doses, effects can include dizziness, difficulty focusing the eyes, euphoric mood, slurring of speech, nausea, and grogginess.

"G" is dangerous because the line between recreational dose and overdose is a narrow one. At the overdose level, individuals may experience decreased level of consciousness, extreme dizziness, disorientation, vomiting, and respiratory depression. What seems like a small amount may actually be too much, and too much GHB can kill you.

What are the long-term risks? The addiction potential of GHB is well known. GHB is both physically addicting and mentally habituating for a small percentage of users. When GHB binds to receptors on brain cells, it tells the cell to stop transmitting dopamine. With repeated uses of GHB, your brain is getting the signal to stop producing dopamine. If you regularly consume GHB, your brain cells will eventually respond to this command creating a two-fold effect: you will need to consume more GHB to get your high and you will need GHB to feel normal.