Club Drugs

The term “Club Drugs” refers to a wide variety of drugs often used at dance clubs, concerts and other gatherings central to loud music at EDM events. In any case, there is never any guarantee that any of these mostly illegally-manufactured drugs are unadulterated or pure. These drugs are therefore at least as dangerous as the other drugs of abuse listed in this manual.

1. PMA

PMA made its initial appearance in the U.S. as a street drug in the 1960s. Currently, PMA (paramethamphetamine) is produced in the U.S. for limited commercial applications. A small quantity is also allocated for Schedule I scientific research. Specifically, PMA is a synthetic hallucinogen that has a stimulant effect similar to MDMA or Ecstasy. However, PMA is more poisonous and can kill at lower doses than MDMA. Like Ecstasy, PMA can also cause a fatal rise in body temperature. It has been placed into Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act of 1973 which means it has no legal medical use. Street names for the drug include Death, and Mitsubishi Double-Stack. PMA is usually sold in tablet, capsule or powdered form and its appearance and cost are similar to MDMA.

The effects associated with PMA vary depending on dosage. Doses of less than 50 milligrams, usually one pill or capsule, produce effects similar to MDMA. Doses over 50 milligrams can produce irregular heartbeat, breathing problems, kidney failure, convulsions, coma and death. PMA is especially lethal when taken with other drugs.

2. DXM

Dextromethorphan Hydrobromide, when taken in low doses, has an effect similar to that of alcohol, such as inducing a carefree clumsiness. In a higher dose, imagination is stimulated and feelings of disassociation from the body can occur. With very high doses, “profound alterations in consciousness” can be experienced. The drug is contained in cough medicines and sometimes appears in pill form. Popular sources are Robitussin, Vicks Formula 44 and Drixoral. It has been reported that one in 10 American teens have abused DXM by taking huge doses of the drug as found in cough medicines. That means it is cheap, easy to get, and legal.

3. Gamma Hydroxy Butyrate

Gamma Hydroxy Butyrate (GHB) is a central nervous system depressant or anesthetic that breaks down inhibitions and increases libido much like Ecstasy. A significant difference is that on GHB, one can be depressed or slowed down to the point of falling asleep. In the 1980s, GHB was widely available over the counter in health food stores and was taken by many body builders and athletes to increase muscle and lose fat. Its nicknames include G, Liquid Ecstasy, Grievous Bodily Harm and Georgia Home Boy.

Ingredients to make GHB illegally can be obtained from Internet mail order operations. The ingredients are cooked with water, diluted and usually stored in empty sports drink bottles. The liquid looks like water and can have a slightly salty taste. White powder and tablets are also available. Analog/variations of GHB are also found in some dietary supplements that can be ordered through the Internet. Since most GHB is cooked by individual suppliers, the strength of each dose, usually a capful, varies widely. The drug’s effects typically last up to four hours and side effects can include sweating, headaches, decreased heart rate, nausea, vomiting, impaired breathing, loss of reflexes and tremors.

4. Ketamine

Ketamine, another so called “club drug”, is a central nervous system depressant that produces a rapid-acting disassociative effect (feeling separated from the body). It was developed in 1970 and approved in the medical field as an injectable anesthetic for use on humans and animals. In the U.S., it has been primarily used in veterinary surgery for the last 30 years. Human applications however do include pediatric burn cases, dentistry and experimental psychotherapy. The drug is marketed legally under the names of Ketlar or Ketaset. Its biggest legal users are veterinarians. Street names for Ketamine include Special K, K, Vitamin K, Kit Kat, Keller, Green, Super C, and Purple. Street names for the experiences related to the drug’s effects include K-hole, K-land, Baby Food and God.

K is another so called “club drug” which started to gain popularity among abusers in the 1980s, when it became apparent that large doses created effects similar to those of PCP. In low doses, it produces a floppy, relaxed feeling. In higher doses, it produces dissociation, near-death experiences and occasionally, powerful hallucinations which can be easily confused with...
reality. Other effects include dream-like states, delirium, amnesia, impaired motor function, high blood pressure, depression and potentially fatal respiratory problems. Gangs have been stealing K from veterinary clinics since the drug became fashionable. It is also smuggled into the U.S. from Mexico and sold at all-night dance parties / EDMs, clubs and bars.

Ketamine can be made into a powder or a liquid. The powder is snorted. The liquid form is generally added to drinks producing a state of intoxication. One of the most potent ways of administering the drug is by injecting it intramuscularly or intravenously. When used in this manner, there is a risk of losing motor control before the injection is complete. K can also be made into a tablet or powder by evaporating the liquid and reducing it to a fine white substance that can be smoked with grass or tobacco, or snorted. Because of its appearance, K is often mistaken for crystal meth or cocaine. The effects of K last from 30 minutes to a few hours depending on the dose. Reports indicate it is usually a few days before the abuser feels “normal” again.

Internal effects of Ketamine at low dosages (25 to 100 milligrams) include psychedelic hallucinations, paranoia and aggressive behavior. At doses of 1 gram or more, effects can include convulsions and death. Physical signs of use include slurred speech, lack of coordination, respiratory distress, muscle rigidity and even paralysis.

5. Rohypnol

Rohypnol, pronounced “row-hip-nole”, the trade name for flunitrazepam, is a powerful member of the benzodiazepine family. This strong sedative was manufactured and distributed by a legitimate drug company in Europe. This family of drugs includes Valium, Halcion, Xanax, and Versed. Although it is still used in lower doses in some European hospitals, and currently prescribed in South America as a treatment for insomnia and pre-surgical sedation, the use of Rohypnol is illegal in the United States. Misconceptions about the drug on the street account, to some degree, for its use. Many abusers believe that, since it is packaged in pre-sealed bubble packs, it is unadulterated and therefore cannot be detected by a urine drug test.

Street names of the drug include roofies, rophies, roche, rib, rope, and the forget me pill. Street names of the drug include roofies, rophies, roche, rib, rope, and the forget me pill. Roofies are typically smuggled into this country. Because the use of Rohypnol can contribute to a loss of inhibition, long periods of feeling drunk (two to eight hours), the inability to resist sexual assault, and actual blackouts, the substance has been nick named the Date Rape drug. When a Rohypnol pill is dissolved in a drink, it adds no color or odor. Roofies come in the form of small white tablets with Roche inscribed on one side and an encircled “1” or “2” on the other, indicating the dose. These are common inscriptions for many of this company’s drug products and that, in itself, can create a danger. The pills can also be swallowed or crushed and snorted.

Rohypnol is sometimes used to enhance the “high” produced by heroin, as well as to ease the negative effects of crack or a cocaine binge. Many young adults may drive under the influence of Rohypnol, just as they do after drinking alcohol. These abusers often escape DUI charges because a routine benzodiazepine drug screen does not detect the drug.

Adverse effects of rohypnol use include respiratory distress, visual disturbances, urinary retention, blackouts, decreased blood pressure, dizziness, confusion, headaches, muscle pain and in some cases, aggressive behavior. Outward symptoms can include slurred speech, impaired judgment, difficulty in walking, general confusion, and the inability to remember events or instructions experienced or received while under the influence of the drug.

Hallucinogens

1. Lysergic Acid

Lysergic acid (LSD) is actually a hallucinogen that could be classified as a Club Drug based on current usage. However, it is also the primary hallucinogen that comes to mind when this class of drugs is mentioned.

LSD was invented in 1938 by a German chemist, Albert Hofmann, while working at a pharmaceutical laboratory in Switzerland. He was conducting research on possible medical applications for various Lysergic acid compounds derived from ergot, a fungus that develops on rye grass. The 25th such compound was called LSD-25. LSD (an abbreviation of the German words for lysergic acid, diethylamide) is the drug most commonly identified with the term “hallucinogen”. Five years after creating the drug, Hofmann accidentally ingested a small amount and experienced a series of frightening sensory effects that today would be referred to as “a very bad trip”.

Pictured here is a 1.2-mg tablet with packaging. “Roofies,” as they are known on the street, are sold inexpensively in Mexico.
LSD is generally ingested by swallowing pieces of blotter paper on which the liquid drug has been dripped. It is also sold in squares of gelatin called windowpanes. The effects of LSD typically begin within 30 to 90 minutes of ingestion and last from three to 12 hours. Street names for LSD include Lucy in the Sky, Microdot, White Lightning, Blue Heaven, Windowpane and Sugar Cube.

While the drug’s exact effects are widely unpredictable, the major effects are emotional and sensory. Colors, smells, sounds and other sensations are highly intensified and, in some cases, may seem to blend together. In some of these situations, the person may appear to hear or feel colors and see sounds. The user’s emotions may also shift through a wide range from fear to euphoria, with transitions so rapid that the user may seem to experience several emotions simultaneously. These hallucinations can be powerful and are generally completely out of sync with reality.

LSD’s effects are influenced by the amount ingested and the user’s personality, mood, and expectations, as well as the physical situation at the time of the use. Should conditions be less than ideal, negative experiences can be triggered, with descriptions from users ranging from terrifying thoughts and nightmarish feelings of anxiety and despair, to complete loss of control, fear of insanity, and death. Some users report devastating psychological effects that persist after the “trip” has ended. These long-lasting psychotic-like states may include dramatic mood swings, vivid visual disturbances and additional uncontrollable hallucinations.

2. Peyote

Peyote is a cactus plant that grows in certain parts of northern Mexico. It contains a hallucinogenic drug, mescaline, whose properties have been understood by Mexican Indian tribes for at least the past six hundred years and probably much longer. American Indians, including the Mescalero Apaches, from whom mescaline got its name, have used this drug in their ceremonies for the last one hundred years. Mescaline, peyote’s psychoactive ingredient, was first identified pharmacologically in the late 1880s. Dr. Arthur Heffter, a leading German researcher, was able to obtain some dried samples of peyote “buttons” from a colleague who had received them through a legitimate pharmaceutical company in the United States. The top of the peyote cactus, also referred to as the crown, sits above ground and consists of these disc-shaped buttons. The buttons are generally chewed or soaked in water to extract the intoxicating drug. When dried, the buttons can also be ground into a white powder. Depending upon dosage, peyote’s intoxicating effect lasts up to 12 hours.

3. Psilocybin

Psilocybin is the main active ingredient in so-called Magic Mushrooms or shrums, a form of mushroom plant that grows out in nature. It has hallucinogenic properties, and is closely related to mescaline in structure. It was known as a drug for centuries by Aztecs in Mexico. The mushroom can be made into a soup or can be chewed and swallowed.

4. 2C-B

2C-B is also written 2GB and 2-CB. 2C-B, called Bees, eros, Venus, Nexxus and bromo-mescaline, on the street, is a psychedelic, which for some has an effect similar to that of Ecstasy and/or LSD. Many times the drug is misrepresented and sold as either one of those drugs. It was first synthesized in 1974 by a chemist and is considered both a psychedelic and an entactogen. Entactogen is a term used by psychiatrists to classify Ecstasy and related drugs. It is generally sold in small, white 5 milligram capsules but can be snorted. However, snorting this drug is supposedly very painful. 2C-B is also very dose sensitive and if taken at a high dosage, can produce an edgy and uncomfortable feeling. A bad trip is certainly possible as this drug requires a command of chemistry to produce. The effects generally last about four hours.
**Designer**

*Designer* was a term first used to refer to Fentanyl, a very potent opioid pain killer. Later it was used to refer to MDMA/Ecstasy which is actually in the amp/meth family. It became a common term that now refers to drugs which are made in illicit laboratories and compounded with the goal of producing the same effects in the brain as the originals. Because there is no way to know what the manufacturer actually put into the drugs, there are no reliable statistics on their effects and detection time frame in the body. The most common of these drugs include:

1. Spice/K2 (synthetic compound designed to affect the brain just like THC — the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana).
2. Bath Salts/Plant Food (synthetic compound that is designed to affect the brain like cocaine).
3. Smiles/NBOMe (synthetic compound that is designed to affect the brain like LSD).

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*Spice/K2 = synthetic marijuana*  
*Bath Salts/Plant Food = synthetic cocaine*  
*NBOMe/Smiles = synthetic LSD*