



LSD

What Is It?

LSD is a strong hallucinogen drug. It stands for **L**ysergic **A**cid **D**iethylamide. LSD goes by many other names including dots, acid, blotter, window pane, mellow yellow, and California sunshine.

WARNING: Buyer Beware! LSD is an illicit drug. Always assume illicit drugs may contain a very dangerous mixture of potentially lethal synthetic (man-made) opioids like fentanyl and other additives..

What Does It Look Like?

LSD is usually sold as small pieces of paper, sometimes printed with pictures or cartoons. It can also be sold as powder, pills, or mini powder pellets (“microdots”). LSD crystals may also be dissolved into liquid that can be sold in small breath-freshener droppers or applied to things like gum, candy, and sugar cubes.

How Does It Work?

LSD binds to specific brain cell receptors and alters how the brain responds to signals. This can change a person's mood, thoughts, senses, and perceptions of themselves and of the world around them. People using LSD may hear, taste, feel and smell differently. LSD can produce intense hallucinations (seeing and hearing things that are not there). While some people may experience temporary euphoria, others may feel unhappy, scared, and unsettled.

A “trip,” or LSD experience, can last up to 12 hours. It’s common to feel depressed or let down for 12-48 hours after taking LSD.

Why Is It Dangerous?

LSD can have widespread effects on a person's life including physical, mental, and social harms. LSD often leads to dangerous and unpredictable behaviour and situations, because it distorts how we perceive reality. Injuries and deaths associated with LSD are usually the result of accidents due to errors in judgment from sensing or seeing something abnormally. For example, a person using LSD may be convinced that they can fly or can walk through traffic unharmed.

The unpredictable effects of LSD can result in severe psychological distress and long-term negative effects on mental health. Using LSD can lead to rare, but serious long-term effects like flashbacks, paranoia, psychosis or depression. It may also trigger or worsen existing mental illness.

What Does Hallucinogen Toxicity Look Like?

Hallucinogen toxicity can result in erratic behaviour, high blood pressure, fast heart rate, sweating, vomiting, change in breathing, convulsions, and loss of consciousness. It is rare for people to die from overdose of hallucinogens, however deaths do occur due to suicide, accidents, dangerous behavior,



accidentally eating poisonous plant material, or using two or more drugs at the same time (polysubstance use).

If you are concerned about someone who you think may have been using hallucinogenic drugs, [call 9-1-1](#) and stay with them if it is safe to do so. Help them remain calm and relaxed in a safe, quiet, dark room until help arrives and encourage them to drink water. **If in doubt, give Naloxone.** Party drugs, like LSD, can contain dangerous additives like fentanyl or carfentanil. Naloxone will not cause further harm. The **Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act** protects you from drug possession charges when helping in an overdose situation.

Safer Use Tips

If you are using LSD, here are some tips to decrease your risk:

- **Consider your mindset before using hallucinogenic drugs.** Be aware that using hallucinogenic drugs when you feel stressed, anxious, or depressed can lead to a negative experience and result in long-lasting psychological effects.
- **Consider your environment before using hallucinogenic drugs.** Be aware that being in an environment where you feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or with people you don't trust can also increase the risk of panic and paranoia.
- **Start low and go slow.** Start with a "tester dose" and wait before taking more. **Take breaks!** Allow time to feel the effects before taking more.
- **Don't use alone.** If you are using alone, call NORS -- the National Overdose Response Service Hotline, at 1-888-688-NORS (6677) so you can get help if you need it.
- **Don't mix with other substances**, including alcohol and prescription or over the counter medications.
- **Stay hydrated.** Drink water and use lip balm.
- **Know the signs of an opioid overdose and act!** Stay within cell range or have access to a satellite phone in case you need to call 9-1-1. **Always carry Naloxone with you and know how to use it.** Kits are available for free at locations across the NWT – **make sure your kit doesn't freeze!**
- **Take a photo of the drug** before you use it. If you end up getting sick, this can help keep other people safe and makes it easier to help you.

Need Help?

Reach out to your local health centre, community counsellor/mental health professional, or call 8-1-1.