

# TIPS

## HALLUCINOGENS



### THE TRUTH ABOUT HALLUCINOGENS

**SLANG:** LSD: acid, yellow sunshine, tab, blotter, yellow submarine, tripping; **MUSHROOMS/PSILOCYBIN:** little smoke, magic mushrooms; **PEYOTE:** cactus, buttons; **PCP:** angel dust, peace pill, dippers, greens<sup>1</sup>

## GET THE FACTS

**HALLUCINOGENS HAVE A RANGE OF NEGATIVE EFFECTS.** Hallucinogens are a group of drugs that include those listed above, as well as ayahuasca, ketamine, and salvia. They may alter a person's awareness of his or her surroundings, thoughts, and feelings, or they might cause someone to see or feel things that aren't real.<sup>2</sup>

**HALLUCINOGENS CAN AFFECT YOUR BRAIN LONG-TERM.** Hallucinogens can affect the brain chemical serotonin—which regulates things such as sleep, muscle control, and mood—and the chemical glutamate—which regulates pain perception, learning, and memory, among other areas.<sup>3</sup> Because of its impact on the brain, hallucinogens can cause lasting consequences for a user, such as psychosis or mental disorders.<sup>4</sup>

**HALLUCINOGENS CAN BE UNPREDICTABLE.** A person can feel the effects of using hallucinogens as soon as 20 minutes after using them, but the effects can last as long as 12 hours.<sup>5</sup>

**HALLUCINOGENS CAN BE ADDICTIVE.** People can develop an addiction to or tolerance of hallucinogens. If a person uses LSD on a regular basis, for example, they would need to take higher doses over time to feel its effects, which can lead to dangerous outcomes, such as risky behavior potentially resulting in injury and death due to an altered perception of reality.<sup>6</sup>

**Q. IF DEXTROMETHORPHAN (DXM) IS USED IN THE COUGH MEDICINES I CAN BUY AT A PHARMACY, DOESN'T THAT MEAN IT'S SAFE TO USE ON ITS OWN TOO?**

**NO.** When a substance such as DXM is used in an over-the-counter medicine, the medicine is only safe when taken according to the directions. DXM toxic effects include hallucinations, distorted perceptions, impaired muscle movement, impaired memory, and possibly seizures with some cough medications.<sup>7</sup> Also, your heart and lung functions can slow or even stop, potentially causing an overdose death. Misusing these medications with alcohol is even more dangerous as they work more strongly together.<sup>8</sup>

**Q. IF SALVIA ISN'T ILLEGAL, DOESN'T THAT MEAN I'M ALLOWED TO USE IT?**

**NO.** Even though there aren't federal laws prohibiting the use of salvia, it is illegal in 29 states and several countries. Research shows that the effects of salvia can include hallucinations, vision changes, and being unable to tell what's real and what isn't.<sup>9</sup>

**Q. PEYOTE COMES FROM A CACTUS. IF IT'S FROM A PLANT, IT MUST BE SAFE, RIGHT?**

**NO.** Peyote has side effects including hallucinations, altered body image, severe vomiting, headaches, muscle weakness, and impaired motor coordination.<sup>10</sup>

Hallucinogens are dangerous and can be deadly. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust if you have questions.

Get the latest information on how drugs affect the brain and body at [teens.drugabuse.gov](https://teens.drugabuse.gov).

**SAMHSA**  
1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) (English and Español)

TTY 1-800-487-4889

[www.samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov) | [store.samhsa.gov](https://store.samhsa.gov)



**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration



# BEFORE YOU RISK IT!

**1** **KNOW THE LAW.** Hallucinogens are illegal for use by people of any age, and law enforcement officials are trained to recognize when someone may have used hallucinogens.<sup>11</sup>

**2** **KNOW THE RISKS.** While there are different risks depending on the hallucinogen used, they all have dangerous potential outcomes. If a person takes a high dose of PCP, they could have a seizure, go into a coma, or even die.

**3** **LOOK AROUND YOU.** Even if you think your peers are using hallucinogens, the truth is that a very small number of teens use hallucinogens. The latest research shows that 1.5 percent of young people between ages 12 and 17 had used hallucinogens in the past year in 2018.<sup>12</sup>



## MORE INFORMATION

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR FOR RESOURCES USED IN THIS**

**visit [store.samhsa.gov](https://store.samhsa.gov) or call  
1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)  
(English and Español).**

PEP NO. 20-03-03-001 REVISED 2020



How can you tell if a friend is using hallucinogens? Potential side effects and symptoms include:<sup>13</sup>

- **Hallucinations**
- **Nausea/vomiting**
- **Loss of appetite**
- **Mixed senses (e.g., "seeing" sounds or "hearing" colors)**
- **Excessive sweating**
- **Paranoia**
- **Weight loss**
- **Memory loss**
- **Anxiety**
- **Depression and suicidal thoughts**
- **Persistent psychosis/hallucinations**
- **Speech problems**
- **Social withdrawal and disorganization**



## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP SOMEONE WHO IS USING HALLUCINOGENS?

### BE A FRIEND. SAVE A LIFE.

Encourage your friend to stop using or seek help from a parent, teacher, or other caring adult.

**For 24/7 free and confidential information and treatment referrals in English and Spanish, call SAMHSA's National Helpline at:**

**1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)**

or visit the SAMHSA Treatment Services Locator at: [findtreatment.gov](https://findtreatment.gov)

<sup>1,2,3</sup>National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). (2016). Hallucinogens. *Drug Facts*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/hallucinogens>

<sup>4</sup>Office of National Drug Control Policy. (n.d.). Drug facts: Hallucinogens. *Above the Influence*. Retrieved from <https://abovetheinfluence.com/drugs/hallucinogens/#facts>

<sup>5,6</sup>NIDA. (2016). Hallucinogens. *Drug Facts*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/hallucinogens>

<sup>7</sup>National Institutes of Health (NIH), U.S. National Library of Medicine, National Center for Biotechnology Information. Compound Summary: Dexamethasone. *PubChem Database*. Retrieved from <https://pubchem.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/compound/5743>

<sup>8</sup>NIDA. (2017). Cough and cold medicine (DXM and codeine syrup). *NIDA for Teens*. Retrieved from <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/cough-and-cold-medicine-dxm-and-codeine-syrup>

<sup>9</sup>NIDA. (2017). Salvia. *NIDA for Teens*. Retrieved from <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/salvia>

<sup>10,11</sup>U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration. (2017). *Drugs of abuse: A DEA resource guide*. Retrieved from [https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/sites/getsmartaboutdrugs.com/files/publications/DoA\\_2017Ed\\_Updated\\_6.16.17.pdf#page=70](https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/sites/getsmartaboutdrugs.com/files/publications/DoA_2017Ed_Updated_6.16.17.pdf#page=70)

<sup>12</sup>Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2019). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (HHS Publication No. PEP19-5068, NSDUH Series H-54). Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/2018-nsduh-annual-national-report>

<sup>13</sup>NIDA. (2016). Hallucinogens. *Drug Facts*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/hallucinogens>