



What are Hallucinogens?

Hallucinogenic drugs — both natural and synthetic — are substances that distort a person's perception of reality. Some common hallucinogens are LSD, PCP, Peyote, Mescaline, and Psilocybe Mushrooms. Not all people agree on what constitutes a hallucinogen. Many unrelated drugs such as cocaine, amphetamines, and steroids can produce hallucinations, delusions, or sensory disturbances under certain conditions. What distinguishes hallucinogens from other drugs is their ability to alter perception, thought, and feeling in a way not normally occurring except in dreams or during experiences of extreme mental and physical stress.

The Effects Of Hallucinogens

Under the influence of hallucinogens, the pupils dilate and the body temperature and blood pressure rise. Hallucinogens distort a person's sense of direction, distance, and time. If taken in large doses, the drug produces delusions and visual hallucinations. Under the influence of hallucinogens, a user may speak of seeing sounds and hearing colors. Occasionally, post-use depression is so severe that suicide is possible, but the most common danger is impaired judgment leading to rash decisions and accidents.

Persons in hallucinogenic states should be closely supervised and upset as little as possible, to protect themselves and others.

Long after hallucinogens are eliminated from the body, users may experience flashbacks — small recurrences of psychedelic effects — such as intensification of a perceived color, motion of a fixed object, or mistaking one object for another. Recurrent use produces tolerance, which tends to encourage the use of larger doses.

The History Of Hallucinogens

Throughout history, people in the Americas have used psychoactive plants in religious rites. Possibly the oldest record of hallucinogens is in South America in a 4,500 year old grave of an Indian, which contained a snuff tube and some snuff. This type of snuff, cohoba snuff, is still used today by native tribes in that region. Its active ingredient is dimethyltryptamine (DMT).

Prior to the 1960s, psychiatrists used hallucinogens in psychotherapy. Several psychedelic substances, such as mescaline, could be obtained with no restriction.

The 1960s brought a time of racial struggle, the Vietnam War, and many violent demonstrations. When the medical profession reported that hallucinogens allowed users to get in touch with themselves and achieve a peaceful inner serenity, some of those frustrated with "the establishment" tried to "turn on, tune in, and drop out" by using hallucinogens. Also, it was well publicized that natural hallucinogens were routinely used by some religions of Native Americans for spiritual experiences. This contributed to the mystical, supernatural aura associated with

hallucinogens. By the mid-1960s, federal regulatory agencies were concerned about the misuse of hallucinogens. Access was restricted, and laws against their distribution were passed.

What Is LSD?

LSD, or lysergic acid diethylamide-25, is probably the best known and most potent hallucinogen. It is produced from lysergic acid, a substance derived from the ergot fungus which grows on rye, or from lysergic acid amide, a chemical found in morning glory seeds.

LSD, commonly referred to as "acid," is sold on the streets in tablets, capsules, and as a liquid. It is odorless, colorless, and tasteless. Often LSD is added to absorbent materials — such as blotter paper, paper tattoos, sugar cubes, and small decorated squares — to make it easier to transport, consume, and hide.

The effects of LSD are unpredictable. They depend on the amount taken and the user's personality, mood, and expectations. Usually, the user feels the effects of the drug 30 to 90 minutes after taking it. The physical effects include dilated pupils, increased heart rate and blood pressure, sweating, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, dry mouth, and tremors. Sensations and feelings are affected more dramatically than the body. LSD users experience severe, terrifying thoughts and feelings, fear of losing control, fear of insanity or death, and despair.

What Is PCP

PCP, phencyclidine, is used as an animal anesthetic. Commonly referred to as "Angel Dust," PCP quiets animals without causing harmful side effects. However, people who use PCP suffer horrible side effects. PCP

is produced as a pill or capsule, in a powder form, or as a liquid. The powder form may be sprinkled on marijuana or cigarettes. Users ingest liquid PCP which is absorbed directly into the bloodstream.

Except for the "high," no one can guess how PCP will work in the body. PCP may affect the same person differently each time taken. PCP often causes a kind of insanity that leads to suicide or violence. PCP brings on hallucinations and gives users a false sense of strength. Many users believe they can fly. While high on PCP, some users become violent and try to fight off imaginary attackers.

When ingested, PCP is stored in the brain. In some people it can remain there for months. Once in the brain, PCP can cause repeated flashbacks, which can make a person go insane.

Peyote and Mescaline

Another dangerous hallucinogen is mescaline which comes from the peyote cactus plant.

Mescaline, the primary active ingredient of the peyote cactus is located in the fleshy parts, or the button, of the plant. Peyote cactus has been used by Native American Indians in northern Mexico from the earliest recorded time as a part of traditional religious rites. Peyote, or mescal buttons should not be confused with mescal, the colorless Mexican liquor distilled from the leaves of maguey plants. Mescaline is usually ground into a powder. Mescaline can also be produced synthetically.

Psilocybe Mushroom

Another drug, psilocybin, comes from a mushroom. On the street it is called "mushrooms," "shrooms," "Mexican" and "magic." Like the peyote cactus, Native American

Indians have used psilocybe mushrooms in religious rites for centuries. When eaten, these mushrooms affect mood and perception in a manner similar to mescaline and LSD.

Peyote, mescaline and psilocybe mushrooms are addictive. In strong doses they cause paranoia and panic. Paranoid users may hurt themselves or others. Because the active ingredients in these drugs are chemically related to LSD their side effects are similar.



MESCALINE



PEYOTE



LSD



ANGEL DUST - PCP

PCP