

FACTS ABOUT GHB (FANTASY)

WHAT IS GHB

Also known as fantasy, liquid ecstasy, liquid E, liquid X, Gina or G, juice, blue nitro, fishies, Home Boy, grievous bodily harm, soap-e.

Gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB) is a depressant drug. It usually comes as a clear or blue liquid packaged in small bottles or vials, some shaped like a fish (such as those used for containing soy sauce). It may be in crystal or powder form.

EFFECTS OF GHB

GHB is usually swallowed and sometimes injected. An illicit drug, some people use it in dance and club environments for its elevated effects. It is known as a "date rape" drug as it has been used to spike drinks in sexual assault cases. The drug has sedative and anaesthetic effects, and no smell.

Effects depend on the person (age, weight, size, health and tolerance), as well as the strength, the amount taken, and if taken with other drugs, including alcohol. Once swallowed, effects are felt within 15 to 30 minutes and last for about 3 to 6 hours. The difference between a safe dose and overdose is small, making it very easy to overdose on this drug.

Short-term effects, both desired and undesired, may include...

- euphoria, feeling relaxed, more social
- lack of inhibition (do or say things you normally wouldn't)
- increased sex drive, heightened sensitivity to touch
- drowsiness, blurred vision, dizziness, lethargy, hot and cold flushes
- impaired movement and therefore increased risk of injury
- confusion, agitation
- vomiting, tremors, tunnel vision, hallucinations, blackouts and memory lapses.

There is not much known as yet about the long-term effects of taking this drug.

Long-term effects may include...

- heart disease, memory problems, hallucinations, anxiety, breathing problems
- GHB dependence.

OVERDOSE

Effects from overdosing: confusion, agitation, heavy sweating, vomiting, irregular or shallow breathing, muscle spasms, hallucinations, blackouts, unconsciousness, death.

If a person is experiencing an overdose or is unresponsive call 000 for an ambulance. If unconscious, put them in the recovery position. If not breathing, start CPR. Paramedics won't involve police unless the person is a danger to themselves or others.

HOW LONG DOES GHB STAY IN YOUR SYSTEM?

Depends on use and person. It can be detected in urine up to 12 hours and in blood up to four hours and in hair up to one month.

TIPS FOR REDUCING RISK

There is no safe way to use GHB. There will always be a health risk. Overdoses on GHB are relatively common as it can be hard to dose safely due to different potency between batches. Injecting GHB increases the risk of overdose. The only way to be safe is not to use. If you choose to use, the following will help reduce risk:

Before: take a friend and tell them what you plan on using, plan how to get home (to avoid driving under the influence). Injecting is not recommended, though if choosing to inject, get your own clean, sharp syringe and find a clean location.

During: go slow, start with a low dose then wait at least two hours to see effects before having a bit more, second dose will be more potent than first due to stacking, measure doses with an oral syringe, know and keep to your limits. Safely dispose of syringes.

Avoid: using GHB with other drugs, especially other depressant drugs such as opiates or alcohol, using too much or too often, needle sharing. While using don't be alone – be with someone you trust, don't do risky activities or be responsible for the care of others.

IS GHB BECOMING A PROBLEM?

It may be a problem if you agree with any of these statements:

- I struggle to limit or reduce the amount of GHB I'm using
- I spend a lot of time using GHB or affected by it
- I often feel strong urges to use GHB
- I'm unable to perform tasks at work, school or home due to GHB use
- I have developed a tolerance to GHB, so I need to have more to feel effects
- I have withdrawal symptoms – tremors, sweats, nausea or vomiting, poor appetite, diarrhoea, headache, anxiety, restlessness, increased heart rate and blood pressure.

TIPS FOR PROBLEMATIC GHB USE

- seek support from a health professional, as well as from family and friends
- avoid people, places, objects, feelings or situations associated with taking GHB
- start doing activities you enjoy that don't involve taking GHB
- look after yourself – get enough sleep, follow a healthy diet, adopt a balanced lifestyle
- set some personal goals.

GHB AND THE LAW

It is illegal to use, possess, make or sell GHB in Australia. In Queensland, it is illegal to possess needles or syringes if they are not disposed of safely and therefore pose a risk to others.

FOR SUPPORT – CALL DRUG ARM

CALL DRUG ARM CENTRAL INTAKE ON 07 3620 8880 DURING BUSINESS HOURS TO ACCESS FREE SUPPORT OR EMAIL INTAKE@DRUGARM.COM.AU. FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES, CALL 1300 656 800 OR EMAIL INFO@DRUGARM.COM.AU.

FOR 24/7 SUPPORT CALL:

ALCOHOL & DRUG INFORMATION SERVICE: 1800 177 833 (QLD) AND 1800 250 015 (NATIONAL).