

LSD

What is LSD?

LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) is a powerful hallucinogen which can produce significant changes in perception, mood and thought. Only a very small amount is needed to cause visual hallucinations and distortions. These experiences are known as 'trips'.

LSD is usually sold in perforated sheets. Small paper squares ('tabs') are detached from these sheets and are usually decorated with small designs which are often culturally specific to the user groups.

LSD is so potent that trips are often torn or cut into halves or quarters and shared with others. It is usually swallowed.

LSD is manufactured in illicit laboratories and the majority of Australian LSD is believed to be imported from overseas, specifically Canada and the Netherlands. It is usually transported via the mail and is not easily detected due to it being colourless, odourless, tasteless and small.

LSD is also known as acid, tabs, trips, blotters and microdots.



How many people use LSD?

In Australia no information is collected specifically on the use of LSD. LSD is classified as a hallucinogen and according to the [2013 National Drug Household Survey](#), 9.4% of the Australian population (aged 14 and over) reported using hallucinogens at some time, with just over 1% having used them in the past 12 months.

The average age at first use was 18.5 years.

The [Australian secondary school students' use of tobacco, alcohol, and over-the-counter and illicit substances in 2011](#) indicated that the use of hallucinogens was uncommon with young people attending high school across Australia. Just under four percent of 12-17 year old males and 2.5% of females had ever experimented with hallucinogens.

What are the effects?

The short-term effects of using LSD may include:

- euphoria and well-being
- auditory and visual hallucinations
- distorted sense of time, space and body image
- rapidly changing emotions
- poor co-ordination
- increased body temperature and sweating, sometimes alternating with chills and shivering

What are the risks?

Unpleasant reactions to LSD include anxiety, depression, nausea and paranoia. Both experienced and inexperienced users can have a 'bad trip', which may lead them to cease using the drug.

The most commonly discussed long-term effect of using LSD is the experience of flashbacks—brief, but intrusive LSD-like experiences that occur after the effects of LSD have worn off. These experiences could be visual distortions, changes in mood or the experience of dissociation.

Another long-term risk of LSD use is Hallucinogen Persisting Perception Disorder (HPPD), which unlike flashbacks, involves a persistent, distressing and long-term experience of hallucinogen-like experiences.

The cause of these flashbacks is unknown, but they frequently occur after an LSD user smokes cannabis. Other trigger factors may include emotional stress, anxiety and even moving from a light to a dark environment.