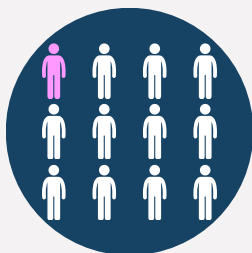


# Substances At A Glance: LSD

LSD was originally derived from ergot, a fungus that grows on rye and other grains.<sup>1</sup>



**What is Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD)?** LSD, also known as “acid,” is odorless, colorless, and has a slightly bitter taste and is usually taken by mouth. Often LSD is added to absorbent paper, such as blotter paper, and divided into small, decorated squares, with each square representing one dose.



**LSD use among youth:** In 2024, 5% of youth in grades 7-12 reported using hallucinogens like LSD in the past 12 months.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, 8.4% of post-secondary age youth reported past year use of hallucinogens in 2022.<sup>3</sup>



**Why do young people use LSD?** The most common reported reasons for a person to use LSD involve using either to feel high or to experience out of body, spiritual or religious events more intensely. LSD use was previously popular in youth counterculture, as well as at parties or in clubs.<sup>4</sup>



**Short and long-term effects:** LSD causes varying levels of hallucinations. It can also cause synesthesia, which describes confusing senses of hearing, taste and sight. LSD can also cause difficulty with concentration, weightlessness, impaired memory, extreme mood swings, reduced depth perception and panic attacks. LSD use can cause dizziness, sweating, increased blood pressure & heart rate, fluctuations in body temperature, tremors and numbness.<sup>1</sup>



**Hallucinogen Persisting Perception Disorder (HPPD)** is a lesser-known disorder caused mostly by the use of hallucinogens like LSD. HPPD can cause lasting or continuous hallucinations hours, days or even years after using drugs. These hallucinations and effects can include seeing trails or rings of light (halos) around objects, experiencing flashbacks, visual problems, flashes of color, or issues with understanding whether or not objects are moving.<sup>5</sup>



# Substances At A Glance: LSD

LSD use can cause flashbacks, a condition where a person who used LSD may experience the effects again weeks or months after taking the drug.



**LSD and the law:** LSD possession, sale or production is prohibited in Canada, and charges can include fines, prison terms or both. There are currently no approved therapeutic uses for LSD in Canada.<sup>1</sup>



**What are the risks of LSD use?** LSD use can also increase the risk of developing or worsening symptoms of psychosis.<sup>1</sup> LSD can also contribute to a condition known as Serotonin Syndrome, where the body stores up too much serotonin resulting in significant health risks such as high blood pressure, irregular heart beat, fever or seizures.



**How can someone reduce the risks of LSD use?** Those with a history of pre-existing heart or psychological conditions, or anyone using medications that boost serotonin levels, should limit or avoid use of LSD. LSD can cause overwhelming or terrifying hallucinations, so it should only be used in a safe space around trusted individuals. Contact emergency medical services if you or someone you know is reacting in unsafe or harmful ways to using LSD.



**How can I help my kids understand the risks of LSD?** When speaking with your kids, having meaningful conversation can include asking what they know about LSD, considering the risks together and ensuring that if your children ever are in a situation involving substance use where they feel unsafe, they can rely on you for support. Remind them of the importance of seeking medical attention if they or someone they know is experiencing adverse effects as a result of LSD use.



**LSD-related complications to pregnancy:** LSD use is not advisable during pregnancy. Limited research suggests that LSD use can interfere with blood flow through the placenta from a mother to an unborn child, and increase the risks of both miscarriage and birth defects.<sup>1</sup>

## Reference List

1. Government of Canada, 2023. [LSD](#).
2. Government of Canada, 2025. [Canadian Student Alcohol And Drugs Survey 2023-2024](#).
3. Government of Canada, 2024. [Canadian Post-Secondary Education Alcohol & Drug Use Survey 2021-2022](#).
4. Center for Addiction and Mental Health, 2010. [LSD](#).
5. Orsolini et. al., 2017. [The “Endless Trip” among the NPS Users: Psychopathology and Psychopharmacology in the Hallucinogen-Persisting Perception Disorder. A Systematic Review](#)