



LSD

Acid, blotter, dots, drop, flash, hawk, L, lightning flash, liquid acid, Lucy, micro dot, paper mushrooms, rainbows, smileys, stars, tab, trips, window and many other names, some of which describe the pictures on the squares (such as strawberries).

Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) is a hallucinogen derived from ergot, a fungus growing wild on rye. As a street drug it is often sold as a liquid absorbed into paper sheets that are divided into small squares.

Only tiny amounts are needed to get an effect and the strength of LSD can vary widely. The drug is usually taken orally and effects usually come on within 30 minutes.

Users often report visual effects such as intensified colours, distorted shapes and movement in stationary objects. Distortion of sound and changes in the sense of time and place are also common. The 'trip' can be a positive experience but hallucinations may also be frightening. Trips can last up to 20 hours.

Some LSD users experience 'flashbacks'. This is when a 'trip' is re-experienced some time afterwards. Flashbacks tend to be short lived but can be disturbing, especially if the user does not expect them.



The law

LSD is controlled as a class A drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act. It is not available for medical use and is illegal to possess or supply. Maximum penalties are 7 years imprisonment and a fine for possession, and life imprisonment and a fine for supply. However, maximum sentences are unlikely to be given in practice.

Popularity

According to Home Office statistics published in 2016, LSD use amongst 16-59 year olds in England and Wales was 0.2%. (0.6% amongst 16-24 year olds - 42,000 people). This is a slight reduction on previous years, where the trend has been largely flat.



Harm reduction

How the trip goes can be affected by your surroundings, who you're with and your mood. If you are going to use LSD it is best to start low (half a tab) and be in a safe place with people you can trust and with whom you feel comfortable. Hallucinations can last for up to 20 hours but users experiencing bad trips can often be calmed down and reassured by others. It is very dangerous to drive or operate machinery while using LSD.