

The Benefits and Risks of LSD: Everything You Need to Know Available on Psychable



LSD

LSD is a potent psychedelic that has been around for a long time, but what exactly is it? Why do people take it? What are the risks and benefits of LSD use? [Psychable](#) is an online community connecting those interested in psychedelic therapy with professionals that can support them. We have gone through Psychable's content library on LSD to gather information for you on the benefits and risks of LSD.

What is LSD?

Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) is a psychedelic substance derived from the ergot fungus that is found in rye and other grains. Ergot was once called "common spirit" and was used medicinally by midwives to help ease labor pains as early as the 1500s.

LSD was discovered in 1938 by Swiss scientist Albert Hofmann, who experienced its mind-altering effects firsthand when he accidentally ingested it while studying ergot in a lab. It wasn't until 1943, however, that he intentionally ingested LSD to study its hallucinogenic effects. It was studied by other scientists in the 1950s and 1960s, and gained popularity among members of the counterculture movement during the 1960s and 1970s, but it still retains an aura of a mystery today.

In recent decades, research on LSD has been conducted by private institutions in Europe and North America. The substance remains illegal worldwide under UN conventions on narcotics and is considered a Schedule 1 drug under the Controlled Substances Act and is illegal for use in the United States.

How does it work?

“LSD interacts with chemical messengers (serotonin) within your cells to produce an altered state of consciousness and change how you experience things; for example, music may sound better or colors may look more vivid than usual”, explains Matt Zemon, Psychable Chief Strategy Officer and Co-Founder.



Matt Zemon, Psychable Chief Strategy Officer and Co-Founder

LSD is typically taken by placing a tab underneath the tongue, but can also be administered in liquid form or in gelatin or sugar cubes. By placing a blotter paper or tab of LSD underneath the tongue, the chemicals dissolve into mucous membranes and enter into circulation quickly without being metabolized by stomach acids first. The onset of effects usually begins in the first 30-60 minutes and has an average duration of about 12 hours depending on the dose and how it was ingested.

The Importance of Set & Setting

There are two fundamental factors that go into the experience of taking LSD; [set and setting](#). Set refers to both the short-term mindset one is in as well as one's overall outlook on life, including any past traumas that may affect the psychedelic experience. Setting refers to the physical surroundings where one takes LSD, as well as the people involved in the experience. These two elements combined will determine how an individual will react to the drug. It is also important to note that set and setting may be different each time a person experiences a psychedelic trip, meaning that the same person can react differently each time.

If someone has a positive outlook on life, they may have a better time with their trip than if they were feeling anxiety or fear about it beforehand. If somebody takes LSD at home alone or with a sober guide, rather than out in public, it is less likely that they will experience an adverse reaction.

Is there a safe dose for taking LSD?

Although lethal doses have been determined from experiments in several animal models, there has never been a recorded case of death exclusively attributed to LSD in humans. The appropriate amount of LSD to take will depend on the desired outcome.

Dosage can vary depending on the type of LSD as well as where it is sourced from but generally falls into one of two

categories: a full dose, or a microdose. A full dose (100-200 micrograms) is typically used for spiritual purposes and will produce mind-altering effects. A [microdose](#), which is a sub-perceptual amount of LSD (usually 20-30 micrograms) is often used to increase creativity and can be taken while going about one's daily activities. While a full dose of LSD can last for up to 12 hours, a sub-perceptual amount can last up to six or eight hours.

What are the benefits of taking LSD?

“LSD has been shown to help people have meaningful experiences, giving way for insightful new ideas,” says Jemie Sae Koo, Psychable CEO and Co-Founder. “Some people report that LSD helped them gain insight into themselves, their lives, and the nature of the universe. In one study, healthy subjects who were given a single 200 µg dose of LSD reported positive mood changes, positive social effects, and positive attitudes about life”.



[Jemie Sae Koo](#), **Psychable CEO and Co-Founder**

The benefits of taking LSD in sub-perceptual dosages (microdosing) may include feeling happier, increased self-awareness or insight into oneself, heightened sensory perception and increased creativity and productivity.

There has been clinical research conducted on the use of LSD as a therapeutic tool to treat alcoholism and addiction to drugs such as heroin, morphine, or methadone. While more research is needed, clinical trials have shown promising results so far. The studies have shown that LSD may be able to help an individual break the cycle of dependency by effectively altering their mental state and their self-perception, which is a huge factor in the success of curing alcohol dependency.

What are the risks of taking LSD?

Studies have shown that no severe acute adverse effects have been observed when administering LSD to healthy subjects in double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled studies. Mild adverse effects in some people included psychological reactions such as:

- Anxiety
- Delusions
- hallucinations
- panic attacks
- paranoia and feelings of confusion

and physical reactions such as:

- increased heart rate
- muscle tension
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- sweating profusely
- numbness or tingling sensations around the mouth or extremities (hands/feet)
- dizziness/lightheadedness
- chills/shivering spells
- blurred vision
- dry mouth
- tremors

- palpitations

In those who experienced them, these effects were shown to have completely subsided within 72 hours of dosage.

People who have a personal or family history of psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia should not take LSD. In such individuals, there is an increased risk of prolonged psychosis or chronic depression.

Probably the most common psychological risk of LSD is the fear of having a “bad trip” or what the psychedelic therapy world refers to as a challenging trip, so as to not label the experience good or bad, as many insights that are beneficial can come from difficult journeys. Psychedelics have a way of bringing up memories and emotions from the past. Though this is not necessarily a bad thing, it can sometimes lead to intense bouts of anxiety or depression. Additionally, altered perceptions of time and reality can lead to paranoia. Taking time to properly prepare for a psychedelic experience can help reduce the chances of experiencing a bad trip.

How to Minimize the Risk of a Challenging Trip

If you’re looking to have a psychedelic experience, it is recommended that you find a trained guide who is not under the influence of LSD as well. The role of this guide is to prevent you from engaging in dangerous activities and to help bring you back to a state of calm if you begin to feel scared or anxious.

A trained guide or “sitter” can help you ground your mind in the present moment by doing things like helping you focusing on an object or listening closely for familiar sounds around yourself like the sounds of birds singing or of soft music. The guide should also help you address physical needs, like staying hydrated.

If you begin to feel like you’re having a challenging trip,

there are a few things you can do (with the help of your guide).

- Try to keep calm and focus on your breathing. You can do this by sitting down, closing the curtains or blinds or turning off the light, and turning off any music that might be playing loudly nearby.
- You can also try to remember that hallucinogenic drugs can make you see, feel, and even hear things that are distorted or have no basis in reality. This is why it's important to be in a safe space and with people you trust. Your sitter or guide can help remind you of this.
- Knowing that time will return to its normal state of consciousness is also important. Those who understand this are less likely to experience anxiety or bad trips, making it an easier and more enjoyable journey overall.

Are there any long-term effects of taking LSD?

Research subjects given a single dose of LSD reported some long-lasting positive effects. These positive effects include increased optimism about the future and a sense of increased well-being and self-esteem as long-lasting changes.

Physically, LSD is considered to be one of the least toxic drugs. This is because it does not have any addictive properties and can be used in small doses. There are no documented deaths from an LSD overdose. LSD does not cause users to commit violent crimes or act recklessly without regard for their own safety.

It is important to note that scientific research on the use of LSD is ongoing, but survey data indicates that LSD is one of the least dangerous recreational drugs, along with psilocybin mushrooms and cannabis. Even so, if you are considering using LSD you should be sure to weigh the potential risks and benefits for your unique situation and make an informed, educated decision.