

# Tips for Teens: The Truth About Hallucinogens

**Slang--Lysergic acid diethylamide: LSD, Acid, Blotter.**

**Psilocybin: Magic Mushrooms, Shrooms.**

**Phencyclidine: PCP, Angel Dust, Boat, Ozone, Wack.**

**Ecstasy: E, X, XTC.**

## Get The Facts...

**Hallucinogens affect your brain.** Hallucinogens alter how the brain perceives time, reality, and the environment around you. They also affect the way you move, react to situations, think, hear, and see. This may make you think that you're hearing voices, seeing images, and feeling things that don't exist.

**Hallucinogens affect your heart.** The use of hallucinogens leads to an increase in heart rate and blood pressure. Hallucinogens can put you in a coma. They can also cause heart and lung failure. Hallucinogens affect your well-being. The use of hallucinogens may change the way you feel emotionally. They may cause you to feel confused, suspicious, and disoriented. Use of PCP may interfere with hormones related to normal growth as well as with the learning process.<sup>1</sup>

**Hallucinogens affect your self-control.** The impact of hallucinogens varies from time to time, so there is no way to know how much self-control you might maintain. They can cause you to mix up your speech, lose control of your muscles, make meaningless movements, and do aggressive or violent things.

## Before You Risk It...

**Know the law.** Hallucinogens are illegal to buy, sell, or possess.

**Get the facts.** Hallucinogenic drugs distort your perception of reality. Hallucinogens cause your sense of space and time to become distorted and cause you to see objects that aren't really there.

**Stay informed.** It's easy to quickly develop a tolerance to hallucinogens so that it takes more and more of the drug each time to get the same effect. This is dangerous because taking more and more of the same drug may lead to an overdose with severe effects.

**Know the risks.** Hallucinogens can cause flashbacks. Effects of the drugs, including hallucinations, can occur weeks, months, even years after use.

**Look around you.** The majority of teens are not using hallucinogens. According to a 1999 study, only 1 percent of teens use hallucinogens regularly and 94 percent of teens had never even tried hallucinogens.<sup>2</sup>

## Know The Signs...

How can you tell if a friend is using hallucinogens? Sometimes it's tough to tell. But there are signs you can look for. If your friend has one or more of the following warning signs, he or she may be using hallucinogens:

- Depression
- Weakness and lack of muscular coordination
- Anxiety or paranoia
- Trembling
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Facial flushing
- Dilated pupils

What can you do to help someone who is using hallucinogens? Be a real friend. Encourage your friend to stop or seek professional help.

## Q & A

**Q.** Do hallucinogens have long-term effects?

**A.** Yes. In addition to flashbacks, long-term effects may include decreased motivation, prolonged depression, anxiety, increased delusions and panic, and psychosis.

**Q.** Can I predict if I will have a "bad trip"?

**A.** There is no way to predict a "bad trip." There is no consistency in hallucinogenic drugs, so each "trip" may differ depending on the drug's strength and purity. The psychological effects of the hallucinogen are also dependent on the user's frame of mind.

**Q.** How can I help someone through a bad trip?

**A.** Don't try to handle this situation on your own; call 911 and a trusted adult immediately. While waiting, address the person by name, remind them who and where they are, talk to them calmly, make sure they're safe, and don't leave them alone.

The bottom line: If you know someone who uses hallucinogens, urge him or her to get help. If you're using them-stop! The longer you ignore the real facts, the more chances you take with your life.

It's never too late. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust. Do it today!

## Info

To learn more about hallucinogens or obtain referrals to programs in your community, contact:

Nebraska's Alcohol and Drug Information Clearinghouse  
800-648-4444 | Web site: [www.prevlink.org](http://www.prevlink.org)

## Footnotes

1. National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). NIDA Infobox, <http://165.112.78.61/Infobox/pcp.html> last accessed on December 18, 2000.
2. *1999 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse*. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 1999.