

THE  
TRUTH ABOUT

# LSD

Lysergic Acid Diethylamide



[drugfreeworld.org](http://drugfreeworld.org)

## WHY THIS BOOKLET WAS PRODUCED

**T**here is a lot of talk about drugs in the world—on the streets, at school, on the Internet and TV. Some of it is true, some not.

Much of what you hear about drugs actually comes from those selling them. Reformed drug dealers have confessed they would have said anything to get others to buy drugs.

Don't be fooled. You need facts to avoid becoming hooked on drugs and to help your friends stay off them. That is why we have prepared this booklet—for you.

Your feedback is important to us, so we look forward to hearing from you. You can visit us on the web at [drugfreeworld.org](http://drugfreeworld.org) and e-mail us at [info@drugfreeworld.org](mailto:info@drugfreeworld.org).





# WHAT IS LSD?

**LSD** is one of the most potent, mood-changing chemicals. It is manufactured from lysergic acid, which is found in the ergot fungus that grows on rye and other grains.

It is produced in crystal form in illegal laboratories, mainly in the United States. These crystals are converted to a liquid for distribution. It is odourless, colourless, and has a slightly bitter taste.

Known as “acid” and by many other names, LSD is sold on the street in small tablets (“microdots”), capsules or gelatin squares (“window panes”). It is sometimes added to absorbent paper, which is then divided into small squares

decorated with designs or cartoon characters (“loony toons”). Occasionally it is sold in liquid form. But no matter what form it comes in, LSD leads the user to the same place—a serious disconnection from reality.

LSD users call an LSD experience a “trip,” typically lasting 12 hours or so. When things go wrong, which often happens, it is called a “bad trip,” another name for a living hell.

# STREET NAMES FOR LSD

- Acid
- Battery acid
- Boomers
- Doses
- Dots
- Golden Dragon
- Hippie
- Loony toons
- Lucy in the sky with diamonds
- Microdot
- Pane
- Superman
- Tab
- Window pane
- Yellow sunshine
- Zen
- Trips
- Blotters



**A**t the age of 16 I was introduced to a drug that I abused for over three years—LSD. What I was unaware of was the fact that LSD is the most potent hallucinogen known to man.

“The drug came on a small piece of paper no bigger than my index finger, called a blotter. Fifteen minutes after putting the paper on my tongue my entire body got hot and I began to sweat.

“Some other reactions that I experienced while on the drug included dilated pupils, nausea and ‘goose bumps.’ While high on LSD I felt like there was a huge distortion both in my mind and body. The visual changes as well as the extreme changes in mood were like some strange scary trip—one in which I felt like I had no control over my mind and body.” — Edith

## WHAT IS A HALLUCINOGEN?

Hallucinogens are drugs that cause hallucinations. Users see images, hear sounds and feel sensations that seem very real but do not exist. Some hallucinogens also produce sudden and unpredictable changes in the mood of those who use them.



# WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF LSD?

The effects of LSD are unpredictable. They depend on the amount taken, the person's mood and personality, and the surroundings in which the drug is used. It is a roll of the dice—a racing, distorted high or a severe, paranoid\* low.

Normally, the first effects of LSD are experienced 30 to 90 minutes after taking the drug. Often, the pupils become dilated. The body temperature can become higher or lower, while the blood pressure and heart rate either increase or decrease. Sweating or chills are not uncommon.

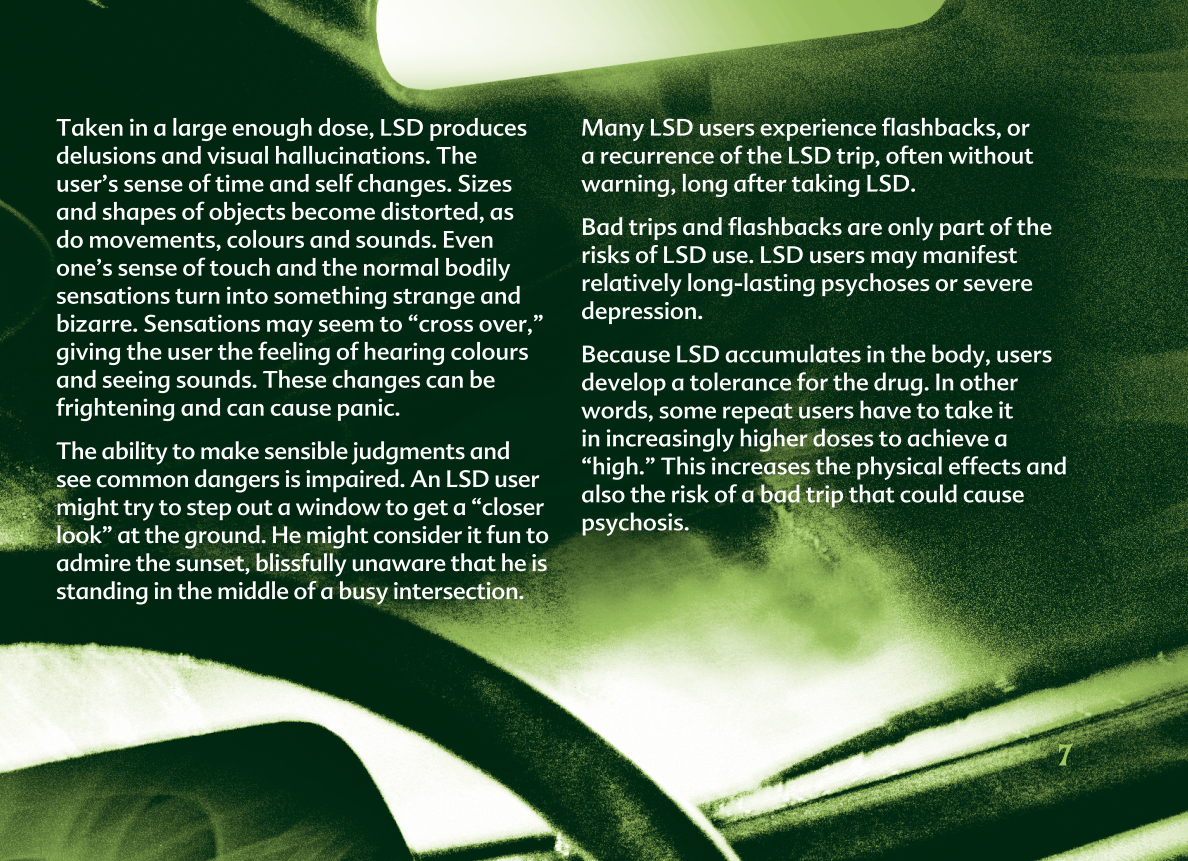
LSD users often experience loss of appetite, sleeplessness, dry mouth and tremors. Visual changes are among the more common effects—the user can become fixated on the intensity of certain colours.

Extreme changes in mood, anywhere from a spaced-out “bliss” to intense terror, are also experienced. The worst part is that the LSD user is unable to tell which sensations are created by the drug and which are part of reality.

Some LSD users experience an intense bliss they mistake for “enlightenment.”

Not only do they disassociate from their usual activities in life, but they also feel the urge to keep taking more of the drug in order to re-experience the same sensation. Others experience severe, terrifying thoughts and feelings, fear of losing control, fear of insanity and death, and despair while using LSD. Once it starts, there is often no stopping a “bad trip,” which can go on for up to 12 hours. In fact, some people never recover from an acid-induced psychosis.

\* paranoid: suspicious, distrustful or afraid of other people.



Taken in a large enough dose, LSD produces delusions and visual hallucinations. The user's sense of time and self changes. Sizes and shapes of objects become distorted, as do movements, colours and sounds. Even one's sense of touch and the normal bodily sensations turn into something strange and bizarre. Sensations may seem to "cross over," giving the user the feeling of hearing colours and seeing sounds. These changes can be frightening and can cause panic.

The ability to make sensible judgments and see common dangers is impaired. An LSD user might try to step out a window to get a "closer look" at the ground. He might consider it fun to admire the sunset, blissfully unaware that he is standing in the middle of a busy intersection.

Many LSD users experience flashbacks, or a recurrence of the LSD trip, often without warning, long after taking LSD.

Bad trips and flashbacks are only part of the risks of LSD use. LSD users may manifest relatively long-lasting psychoses or severe depression.

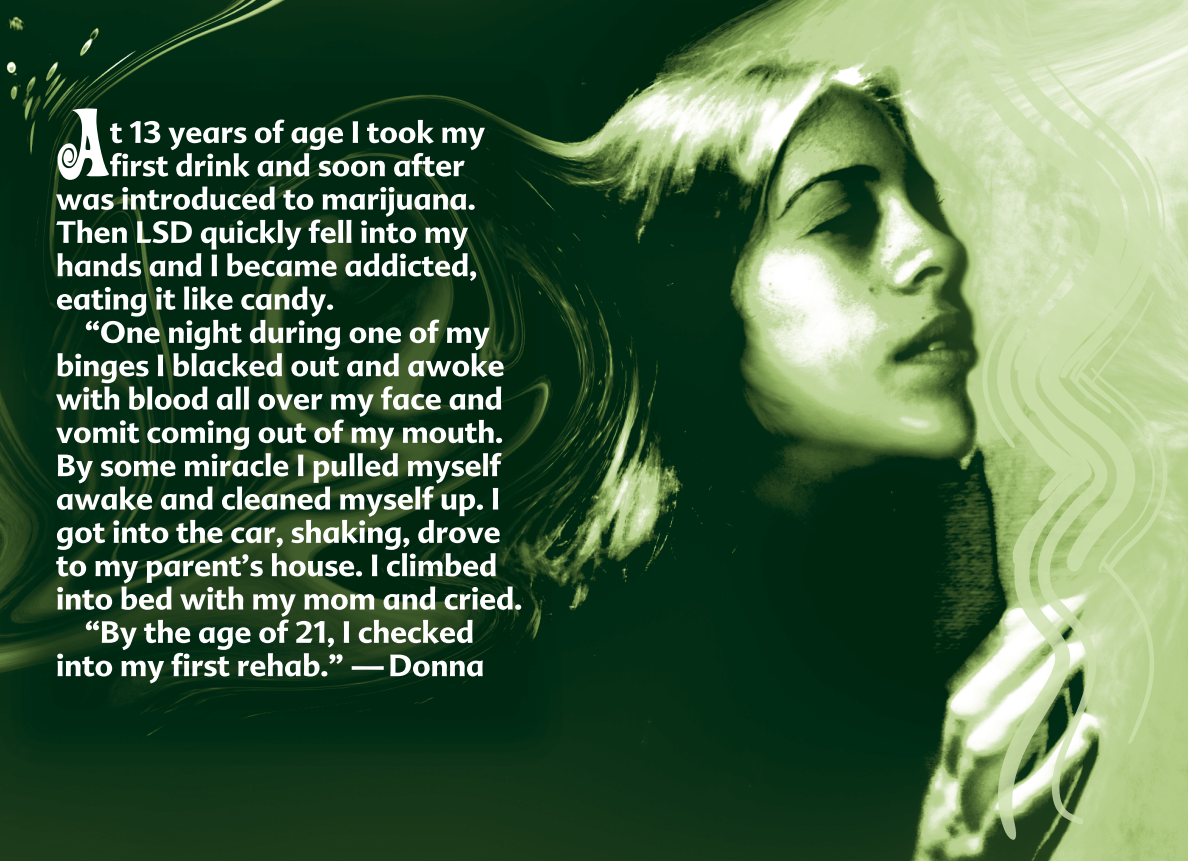
Because LSD accumulates in the body, users develop a tolerance for the drug. In other words, some repeat users have to take it in increasingly higher doses to achieve a "high." This increases the physical effects and also the risk of a bad trip that could cause psychosis.

**A**fter taking the acid, I imagined that we had driven head-on into an 18-wheeler and were killed. I could hear the screeching metal, then a dark and evil quiet. I was terrified at this point, I actually thought we were dead... For a year I wouldn't go into any cemetery because I was terrified I would find my own grave." — Jenny

On LSD, which is often taken in tab form (below), an intense, altered state transforms into disassociation and despair. Often there is no stopping "bad trips," which can go on for up to 12 hours.







**A**t 13 years of age I took my first drink and soon after was introduced to marijuana. Then LSD quickly fell into my hands and I became addicted, eating it like candy.

“One night during one of my binges I blacked out and awoke with blood all over my face and vomit coming out of my mouth. By some miracle I pulled myself awake and cleaned myself up. I got into the car, shaking, drove to my parent’s house. I climbed into bed with my mom and cried.

“By the age of 21, I checked into my first rehab.” — Donna

# THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF LSD

## PHYSICAL EFFECTS

- Dilated pupils
- Higher or lower body temperature
- Sweating or chills (“goose bumps”)
- Loss of appetite
- Sleeplessness
- Dry mouth
- Tremors

## MENTAL EFFECTS

- Delusions
- Visual hallucinations
- An artificial sense of euphoria or certainty
- Distortion of one’s sense of time and identity
- Impaired depth perception
- Impaired time perception, distorted perception of the size and shape of objects, movements, colour, sounds, touch
- and the user’s own body image
- Severe, terrifying thoughts and feelings
- Fear of losing control
- Panic attacks
- Flashbacks, or a recurrence of the LSD trip, often without warning long after taking LSD
- Severe depression or psychosis



✧ I started drinking at the age of 15. Then I progressed to taking Ecstasy, speed, cocaine and LSD.

“I found it difficult to hold down a job and became depressed and thought I would never overcome my obsession with drugs. I attempted suicide twice by overdosing on pills. I was put under psychiatrists who gave me even more drugs, antidepressants and tranquilizers, which just made matters worse.

“As an outlet for my feelings I turned to self-harm—I started cutting and burning myself.”

—Justin



# INTERNATIONAL STATISTICS

In Europe, as many as 4.2% of those aged 15 to 24 have taken LSD at least once. When surveyed, the percentage of people in this age group who had used LSD in the past year exceeded 1% in seven countries (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Italy, Latvia, Hungary and Poland).

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

In 2004, Federal agents in Australia seized approximately 190 millilitres of suspected liquid LSD and 212,000 tabs of paper allegedly being prepared for LSD distribution, following a series of raids in northern NSW.

According to the 2001 National Drug Household Survey, 8 percent of the Australian population reported using hallucinogens at some time, with one percent having used them in the last 12 months.

A study released in January 2008 found that about 3.1 million people in the US aged 12 to 25 said they had used LSD.

# LSD POTENCY

LSD: Most powerful hallucinogenic  
(mind-altering) drug

LSD is 100  
times more  
potent than  
hallucinogenic  
mushrooms

LSD  
100X



Hallucinogenic  
Mushrooms



LSD is 4000  
times stronger  
than mescaline

LSD  
4000X



Mescaline



I started hanging out at strip clubs, casinos and became very promiscuous, visiting brothel after brothel and soon to be introduced to other drugs.

"I had now lost all my inheritance and had to move into a crack-house where I stayed for a year watching people die, losing my business and becoming a thief.

"I was arrested in November 2003 for attempted hijacking and went to prison.

"I had hurt and lost everyone that loved me and I was disowned.

"I ended up homeless and on the streets living and sleeping in a cardboard box by the [train] station, begging and struggling to find ways to get my next meal." —Fred

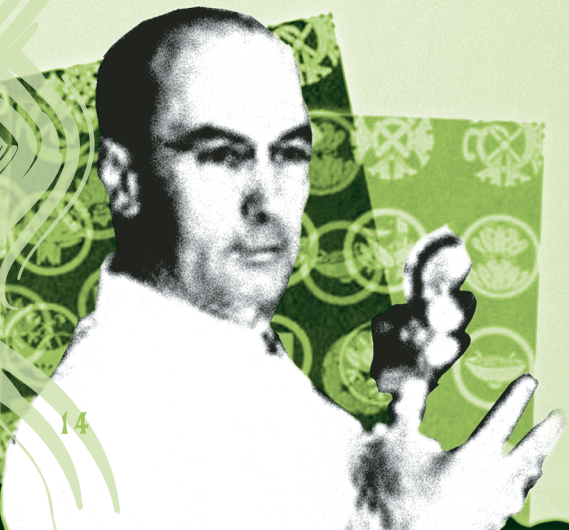
# LSD ♦ A SHORT HISTORY

**A**lbert Hofmann, a chemist working for Sandoz Pharmaceutical, synthesised\* LSD for the first time in 1938, in Basel, Switzerland, while looking for a blood

stimulant. However, its hallucinogenic effects were unknown until 1943 when Hofmann accidentally consumed some LSD. It was later found that an oral dose of as little as 25 micrograms (equal in weight to a few grains of salt) is capable of producing vivid hallucinations.

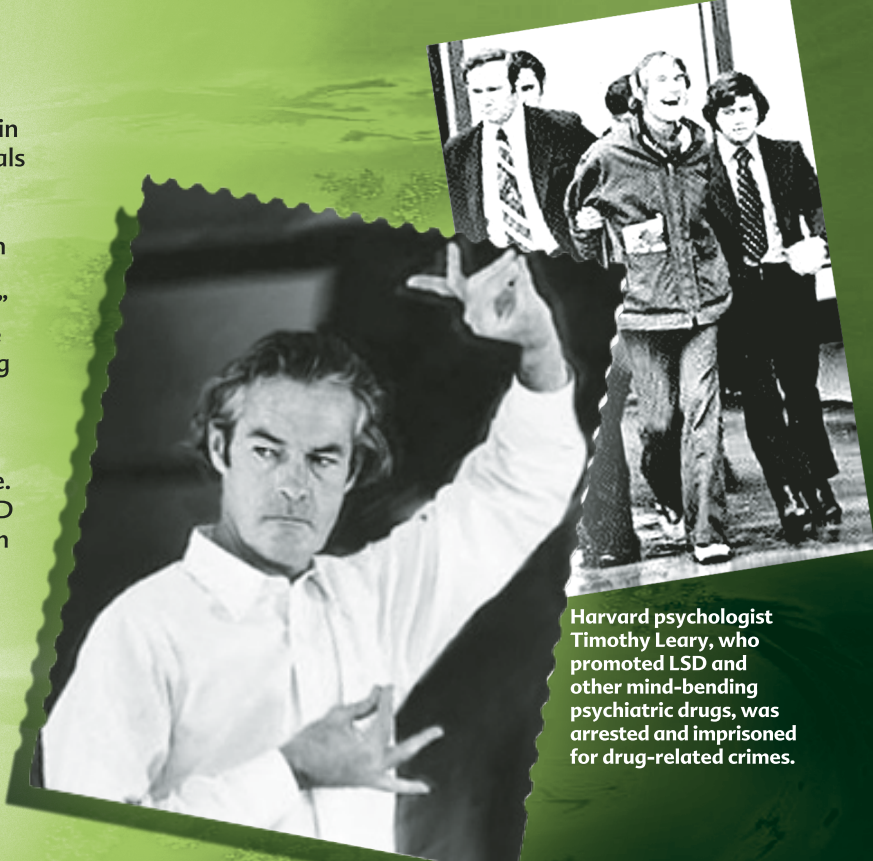
Because of its similarity to a chemical present in the brain and its similarity in effects to certain aspects of psychosis, LSD was used in experiments by psychiatrists through the 1940s, '50s and '60s. While the researchers failed to discover any medical use for the drug, the free samples supplied by Sandoz Pharmaceuticals for the experiments were distributed broadly, leading to wide use of this substance.

\* synthesise: to make (a drug) by combining chemicals.





LSD was popularised in the 1960s by individuals such as psychologist Timothy Leary, who encouraged American students to “turn on, tune in, and drop out.” This created an entire counterculture of drug abuse and spread the drug from America to the United Kingdom and the rest of Europe. Even today, use of LSD in the United Kingdom is significantly higher than in other parts of the world.



Harvard psychologist Timothy Leary, who promoted LSD and other mind-bending psychiatric drugs, was arrested and imprisoned for drug-related crimes.

# CIA Infiltrated 17 Area Groups, Gave Out LSD

## Murder Revealed

By Thomas H. Stone  
Washington Post Staff Writer

A former employee of the Department of State, who was secretly paid \$250,000 to give LSD to anti-CIA groups, has been charged with the murder of a man who was allegedly a CIA agent.

The man was given the drug while living a double life with CIA personnel. He was a top agent who had been recruited to work for the CIA, but was later discovered to be a double agent.

He was not made aware of the CIA's role in the murder. He was a top agent who had been recruited to work for the CIA, but was later discovered to be a double agent.

## District the Focus

By Bill Richards  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Agents working for the CIA were charged in the murder of a man who was allegedly a CIA agent. The man was given the drug while living a double life with CIA personnel.

The man was not made aware of the CIA's role in the murder. He was a top agent who had been recruited to work for the CIA, but was later discovered to be a double agent.

Psychiatric mind-control programs focusing on LSD and other hallucinogens created a generation of acidheads.

June 1975

## Report to the President by the COMMISSION ON CIA ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE UNITED STATES



While the '60s counterculture used the drug to escape the problems of society, the Western intelligence community and the military saw it as a potential chemical weapon. In 1951, these organisations began a series of experiments. US researchers noted that LSD "is capable of rendering whole groups of people, including military forces, indifferent to their surroundings and situations, interfering with planning and judgment, and even creating apprehension, uncontrollable confusion and terror."

Experiments in the possible use of LSD to change the personalities of intelligence targets, and to control whole populations, continued until the United States officially banned the drug in 1967.

Use of LSD declined in the 1980s, but picked up again in the 1990s. For a few years after 1998 LSD had become more widely used at dance clubs and all-night raves by older teens and young adults. Use dropped significantly in 2000 or so.

The days following my LSD use, I was filled with anxiety and extreme depression. Following my first 'trip' on LSD, I would eat it frequently, sometimes up to four or five times per week for an extended period. Each time I would take the drug, mentally I was drifting more and more out of reality. The eventual effect was the inability to feel normal in my own skin." — Andrea



# WHAT DEALERS WILL TELL YOU

When teens were surveyed to find out why they started using drugs in the first place, 55% replied that it was due to pressure from their friends. They wanted to be cool and popular. Dealers know this.

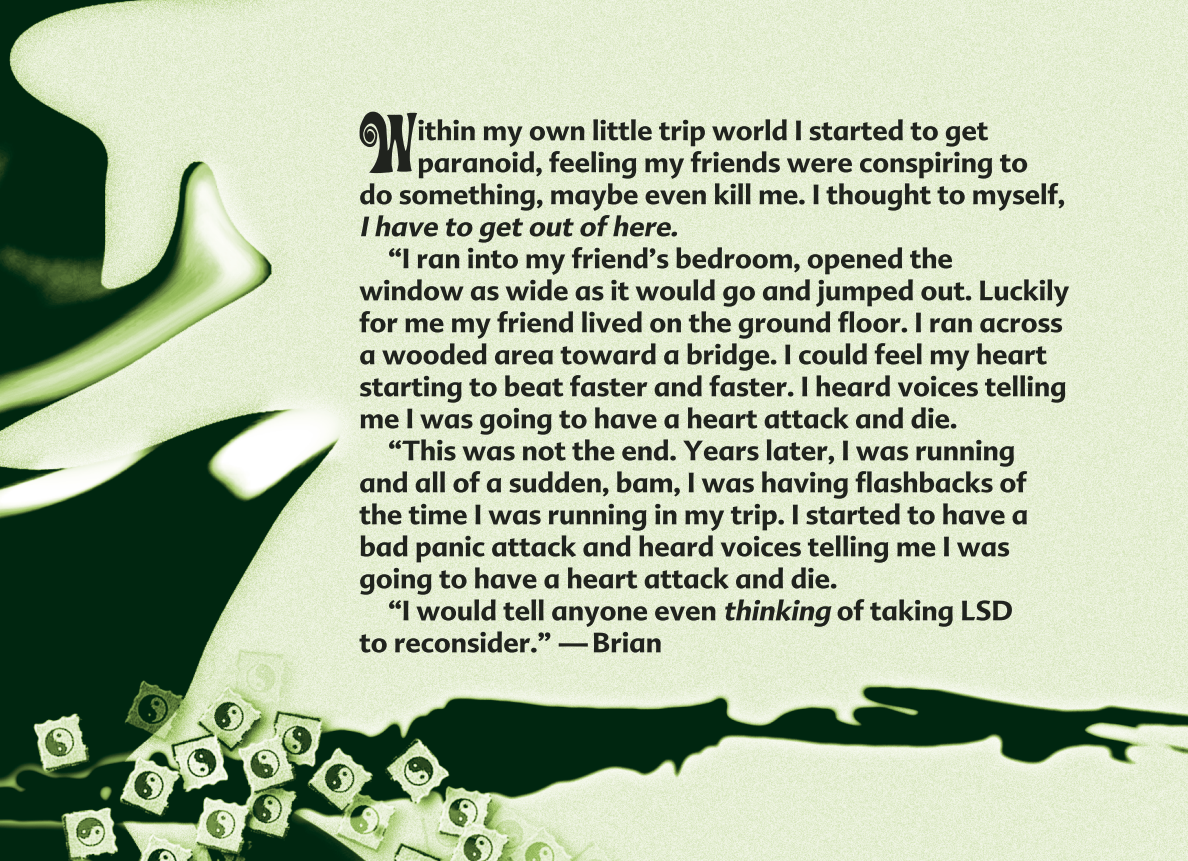
They will approach you as a friend and offer to “help you out” with “something to bring you up.” The drug will “help you fit in” or “make you cool.”

Drug dealers, motivated by the profits they make, will say anything to get you to buy their drugs. They will tell you that taking LSD will “expand your mind.”

They don’t care if the drugs ruin your life as long as they are getting paid. All they care about is money. Former dealers have admitted they saw their buyers as “pawns in a chess game.”

Get the facts about drugs. Make your own decisions.





**W**ithin my own little trip world I started to get paranoid, feeling my friends were conspiring to do something, maybe even kill me. I thought to myself, *I have to get out of here.*

“I ran into my friend’s bedroom, opened the window as wide as it would go and jumped out. Luckily for me my friend lived on the ground floor. I ran across a wooded area toward a bridge. I could feel my heart starting to beat faster and faster. I heard voices telling me I was going to have a heart attack and die.

“This was not the end. Years later, I was running and all of a sudden, bam, I was having flashbacks of the time I was running in my trip. I started to have a bad panic attack and heard voices telling me I was going to have a heart attack and die.

“I would tell anyone even *thinking* of taking LSD to reconsider.” — Brian

# The Truth About Drugs

Drugs are essentially poisons. The amount taken determines the effect.

A small amount acts as a stimulant (speeds you up). A greater amount acts as a sedative (slows you down). An even larger amount poisons and can kill.

This is true of any drug. Only the amount needed to achieve the effect differs.

But many drugs have another liability: they directly affect the mind. They can distort the user's perception of what is happening around him or her. As a result, the person's actions may be odd, irrational, inappropriate and even destructive.

Drugs block off all sensations, the desirable ones with the unwanted. So, while providing short-term help in the relief of pain, they also wipe out ability and alertness and muddy one's thinking.

Medicines are drugs that are intended to speed up or slow down or change something about the way your body is working, to try to make it work better. Sometimes they are necessary. But they are still drugs: they act as stimulants or sedatives, and too much can kill you. So if you do not use medicines as they are supposed to be used, they can be as dangerous as illegal drugs.



**The real answer is to get  
the facts and not to take  
drugs in the first place.**



## WHY DO PEOPLE TAKE DRUGS?

People take drugs because they want to change something in their lives.

Here are some of the reasons young people have given for taking drugs:

- To fit in
- To escape or relax
- To relieve boredom
- To seem grown up
- To rebel
- To experiment

They think drugs are a solution. But eventually, the drugs become the problem.

Difficult as it may be to face one's problems, the consequences of drug use are always worse than the problem one is trying to solve with them. The real answer is to get the facts and not to take drugs in the first place.



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PHOTO CREDITS: Page 5: DEA; Page 14: The Albert Hofmann Foundation; Page 15: DEA/Timothy Leary arrest.

Millions of copies of booklets such as this have been distributed to people around the world in 22 languages. As new drugs appear on the streets and more information about their effects becomes known, existing booklets are updated and new ones created.

In Australia the campaign is coordinated by Drug-Free Ambassadors Australia, a recognised charity with the Department of Family and Community Services' Harm Prevention Register.

The booklets are published by the Foundation for a Drug-Free World, a nonprofit public benefit organisation headquartered in Los Angeles, California.

The Foundation provides educational materials, advice and coordination for its international drug prevention network. It works with youth, parents, educators, volunteer organisations and government agencies—anyone with an interest in helping people lead lives free from drug abuse.



# FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

This booklet is one in a series of publications that cover the facts about marijuana, alcohol, Ecstasy, cocaine, crack cocaine, crystal meth and methamphetamine, inhalants, heroin, LSD and prescription drug abuse. Armed with this information, the reader can make the decision to live a drug-free life.

**For more information or to obtain more copies of this or other booklets in this series, contact:**



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