

Rohypnol

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What is Rohypnol?

Rohypnol (flunitrazepam), also known as roofies, is a sedative in the same recreational drug family as GHB and ketamine and the same prescription drug family as Valium, Halcion, Xanax, and Versed. It is a white tablet which is scored on one side. On the other side, the manufacturers name (ROCHE) is imprinted above the number 1 or 2 (indicating the milligram dosage).

Rohypnol is best known as a date rape drug, though it has gained popularity as a recreational drug. Colorless and odorless, it has been linked to numerous incidents of sexual assault because it is a fast-acting sleeping pill that can be slipped into a drink and leave the victim with little or no memory of the incident. The drug has been changed to leave telltale blue floating particles when mixed with liquids. If you see these in your drink, do not drink it. Get help and notify Police and Security immediately at 401.863-4111.

How is Rohypnol used?

Rohypnol is generally taken in pill form (it is rarely crushed and snorted). Rohypnol is extremely powerful (about 5 times as powerful as Valium). Even a small dose can affect the user for 8 to 12 hours.

Why do people take Rohypnol?

Though it is illegal in the United States, Rohypnol is a legal pharmaceutical sleeping pill in 60 countries. Like all sedatives, it reduces anxiety, induces sleep and depresses the central nervous system. At low doses, Rohypnol produces intoxication, muscle relaxation, and sedative-hypnotic effects lasting 2 to 8 hours. Many users combine Rohypnol with alcohol. Combining sedatives with alcohol can slow breathing and heart rate. At higher doses, the body shuts down and breathing stops.

Are there short-term risks to taking Rohypnol?

Amnesia is the most common side-effect of Rohypnol. Other common side effects include:

- Relaxation or sedation of the body
- Risk of sexual assault
- Rapid mood swings and violent outbursts of temper
- Breathing and heart rate slow down to dangerous levels
- Comas and seizures (especially when combined with amphetamines)
- Vomiting and headache
- Difficulty breathing and nausea.
- Harsh withdrawal symptoms like insomnia, anxiety, tremors and sweating.
- Memory loss
- Death

Overdose is a very real possibility when Rohypnol is combined with alcohol or any other sedating drug. Rohypnol also severely impairs a user's ability to drive or operate machinery.

Are there long-term consequences to taking Rohypnol?

General learning can be affected when sedatives like Rohypnol are taken for prolonged periods. It also causes physical and psychological dependence when used regularly (see below).

How do I recognize a problem with Rohypnol?

Some of the danger signs are:

- You use it more frequently.
- You need more and more to get the same effect.
- You become preoccupied with using it.
- You spend more money than you have on getting the drug.
- You miss class, fail to complete assignments, or miss other obligations.
- You make new friends who do it and neglect old friends who don't.
- You find it's hard to be happy or to relax without it.
- You have headaches or trouble sleeping without it.

If you find that you can't stop using Rohypnol, remember, there's help available.

Is Rohypnol addictive?

Rohypnol is addictive; and habitual use, even for just a few weeks, can lead to physical and psychological dependence. Significant tolerance to Rohypnol can also develop. Sudden withdrawal is dangerous because the central nervous system has adapted to the drug's effects. It's important to seek medical help if you are addicted to Rohypnol because of the dangerous withdrawal symptoms. These symptoms can occur a week or more after cessation of use and may include:

- Headache and muscle pain
- Extreme anxiety, tension, restlessness, confusion, and irritability
- Numbness and tingling of the extremities
- Hallucinations, delirium, convulsions, seizures or shock

Is Rohypnol illegal?

Yes, Rohypnol is illegal and its possession, use, and sale carry heavy prison sentences and fines and disciplinary consequences at Brown. See the Brown University Policy on Drugs on the Student Rights and Responsibilities web site

www.brown.edu/Student_Services/Health_Services/Health_Education/atod/od_rohypnol.htm

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