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Rohypnol

Generic name: flunitrazepam
Brand Names: Rohypnol, others; not available legally in U.S. but is available in other countries.
Street names: Date Rape drug, Forget me drug, Roches, Roofies, Ruffies; other names include Circles, Forget Pill, Forget-Me-Pill, La Rocha, Lunch Money, Mexican Valium, Mind Eraser, Pingus, R2, Reynolds, Rib, Roach, Roach 2, Roaches, Roachies, Roapies, Robutal, Rochas Dos, Rope, Rophies, Ropies, Roples, Row-Shay, Wolfies.

What is Rohypnol?

Rohypnol is an intermediate-acting benzodiazepine with general properties similar to those of Valium (diazepam). It is used in the short-term treatment of insomnia, as a pre-medication in surgical procedures and for inducing anesthesia.

Since the 1990s Rohypnol has been used illegally to lessen the depression caused by the abuse of stimulants, such as cocaine and methamphetamine, and also as an aid for sexual assault. The so-called “date-rape drug” was placed unknowingly in the drinks of victims, often at a bar or party (“club drug”). Due to the strong amnesia produced by the drug, victims would have limited or no memory of the assault.

Like other benzodiazepines (such as Valium, Ativan and Xanax), Rohypnol's therapeutic effects include:

- sedation
- muscle relaxation
- reduction in anxiety
- prevention of convulsions.

However, the sedative effects of Rohypnol are approximately 7 to 10 times stronger than Valium. The action of Rohypnol appears 15 to 20 minutes after administration and last approximately four to six hours. Some residual effects can be found 12 hours or more after administration.

Why is Rohypnol called the date rape drug?

Amnesia is an expected pharmacologic effect of benzodiazepines. Rohypnol causes partial amnesia; individuals are unable to remember certain events that they experience while under the

influence of the drug. However, this effect is particularly dangerous when Rohypnol is used illicitly to aid in sexual assault. Victims may not be able to clearly recall the assault, the assailant, or the events surrounding the assault.

Learn More: Amnesia Overview

How is Rohypnol taken?

Rohypnol can be taken by mouth as a whole tablet, it can be crushed and snorted up the nose, or dissolved in a liquid prior to drinking.

Rohypnol may also be used with other drugs of abuse, such as alcohol or cocaine for various effects. Rohypnol can increase the intoxication of alcohol, or may be used to lower the irritability and anxiety linked with excessive cocaine use (binging).

Is Rohypnol available in the United States?

Rohypnol is not approved for medical use or manufactured in the United States and is not available legally.

However, it is legally prescribed in dozens of other countries and is widely available in Mexico, Colombia, and Europe where it is used for the treatment of insomnia and as a pre-anesthetic. Rohypnol is often smuggled into the U.S from other countries, such as Mexico.

Rohypnol DEA Drug Schedule

Rohypnol was placed into Schedule IV of the Controlled Substances Act in 1984. Schedule IV drugs are considered to have a lower abuse potential but can lead to physical or psychological dependence.

However, the penalties associated with the possession, trafficking, and distribution of Rohypnol involving one gram or more are equivalent to those of a Schedule I substance according to the DEA. Schedule I substances include heroin, LSD and MDMA (Ecstasy, Molly).

Can Rohypnol be detected in a urine drug test?

If Rohypnol exposure is to be detected, urine samples need to be collected within 72 hours of consumption and subjected to sensitive analytical tests. Very often, biological samples are taken from the victim at a time when the effects of the drug have already passed and only residual amounts remain in the body fluids. These residual amounts are difficult, if not impossible, to detect using standard screening assays available in the United States. Due to this, it is difficult to estimate the number of Rohypnol-facilitated rapes in the United States.

The problem is compounded by the onset of amnesia after ingestion of the drug, which causes the victim to be uncertain about the facts surrounding the rape. This uncertainty may lead to critical delays or even reluctance to report the rape and to provide appropriate biological samples for toxicology testing.

What does Rohypnol look like?

Rohypnol is no longer available legally in the United States.

Rohypnol, previously available as a white tablet that dissolved without color, taste, or smell is now formulated as an oblong caplet that is light green with a blue core. The manufacturer instituted this change to help identify tampered drinks at clubs. When dissolved in clear liquids the blue core will turn the clear liquid to blue. However, when dissolved in darker-colored liquids, the blue dye may not be noticeable. Generic versions of Rohypnol may not contain the blue dye.

What are the effects of Rohypnol?

While Rohypnol has become widely known for its use as a date-rape drug, it is abused more frequently for other reasons. It is abused by high school students, college students, street gang members, rave party attendees, and heroin and cocaine abusers to produce profound intoxication, boost the high of heroin, and modulate the effects of cocaine. Teenagers and young males age 13 to 30 years of age have been noted as the primary abusers of Rohypnol.

Rohypnol is usually consumed orally, and is often combined with alcohol. Rohypnol use causes a number of adverse effects, which may last 12 hours of more, including:

- drowsiness, sleep
- dizziness
- loss of motor control
- decreased reaction time
- impaired judgement
- lack of coordination
- slurred speech
- confusion
- aggression or excitability
- loss of memory of events while under the influence (amnesia)

- stomach disturbances
- respiratory depression with higher doses.

Can you get addicted to Rohypnol?

Chronic use of Rohypnol can result in physical dependence and the appearance of a withdrawal syndrome when the drug is discontinued.

Rohypnol impairs cognitive and psychomotor functions affecting reaction time and driving skill. The use of this drug in combination with alcohol is a particular concern as both are central nervous system depressants and will increase each other's toxicity. Injection of any illegal drug puts the user at risk of contracting HIV (human immunodeficiency virus), hepatitis B and C, and other blood-borne illnesses due to needle-sharing.

Withdrawal can occur with Rohypnol use, as with other benzodiazepines. Seizures, behavioral changes, anxiety, and insomnia can be side effects of long-term use. Some adverse reactions, such as insomnia, may occur after only a few days of use.

Consider joining the Drugs.com Withdrawal Support Group

What are examples of club drugs?

Other drugs that are considered club drugs and may be abused similar to Rohypnol include:

- gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB)
- ketamine
- MDMA (Ecstasy)
- methamphetamine

Related:

- Drug Testing FAQs

See Also

- Bath Salts
- Cannabis
- Cocaine

- Devil's Breath
- Ecstasy
- Fentanyl (Abuse/Overdose)
- GHB
- Gray Death
- Hashish (Hash)
- Heroin
- Ketamine
- Kratom
- Krokodil
- LSD
- Marijuana
- MDMA (Ecstasy, Molly)
- Mescaline (Peyote)
- Opium
- PCP (Phencyclidine)
- Psilocybin (Magic Mushrooms)
- Quaaludes
- Speed (methamphetamine)
- Synthetic Cannabinoids (Synthetic Marijuana, Spice, K2)
- TCP (Tenocyclidine)
- U-47700 (Pink)

Sources

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- Rohypnol. DEA Drug Fact Sheet. Accessed June 9, 2020 at https://www.dea.gov/factsheets/rohypnol

- Drug Facts. National Institute on Drug Abuse. Club Drugs (GHB, Ketamine, and Rohypnol). Accessed June 9, 2020 at https://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/drugfacts_clubdrugs_12_2014.pdf

Further information

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.