

# GAMMA HYDROXYBUTYRATE



## ■ ■ ■ General Information

Gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB) is produced in the breakdown of chemicals that help nerves transmit signals through the body. GHB can be found in many organs of the body, including kidneys, heart, skeletal muscle, and brown fat. It increases levels of a chemical in the brain that slows down breathing and causes sedation. It has been sold illicitly because it can produce a “high,” but it can also cause amnesia and sleep. It has been used as a date rape drug. These effects can be increased with use of alcohol and other sedatives.

## ■ ■ ■ Why Athletes Use It

Athletes use GHB because they believe it will increase growth hormone levels. Some athletes have tried to use GHB for weight control.

## ■ ■ ■ Adverse Effects

- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Vomiting
- Confusion
- Drowsiness
- Hypotension (low blood pressure)
- Unconsciousness
- Coma
- Seizures
- Respiratory depression (slow rate of breathing)
- Hypotonia (loss of muscle tone)
- Vertigo (feeling the room is spinning)
- Bradycardia (slow heart rate)
- Death

## ■ ■ ■ Pharmacology

When sold illicitly, GHB goes by many different street names, including “Grievous Bodily Harm,” “Georgia Home Boy,” “Liquid Ecstasy,” “Liquid X,” “GHB,” “GBH,” “Soap,” “Scoop,” “Easy Lay,” “Salty Water,” “G-Riffick,” “Cherry Menth,” and “Organic Quaalude.” It has also been illegally marketed under a variety of preparations, including sodium oxybate, sodium oxybutyrate, gamma hydroxybutyrate sodium, gamm-OH, 4-hydroxy butyrate, and Somatomax PM. Side effects begin with doses above  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 teaspoons. Onset of symptoms is usually within 15 to 60 minutes. Resolution of side effects usually occurs within 8 hours, but in some patients they last as long as 2 weeks. Symptoms are dose dependent, meaning you will have more symptoms if you take more of the drug, but are worse in the presence of alcohol and other depressants. Stimulants such as caffeine may reduce effects. No antidote exists for side effects other than supportive care. GHB is well absorbed when taken by mouth. When prepared improperly, GHB may be laced with sodium hydroxide, resulting in direct caustic effects to the lungs and esophagus.

## ■ ■ ■ Preventive Measures

Athletes should be encouraged not to use GHB. It has not been shown to increase performance, and at present there is no medical indication for its use.

Notes:

(Up to 4400 characters only)

Notes and suggestions