

Clinical Toolkit

Clinical Tips: GHB

Extreme care should be taken with GHB (Gamma Hydroxybutyrate - also known as liquid ecstasy), and use avoided if there is any doubt or uncertainty about the dosage. Mixing GHB with alcohol and other depressants (e.g. benzodiazepines) greatly increases the risk of overdose, even at low-dose levels. While mixing with amphetamines or ecstasy increases the risk of seizures.

Because it is difficult to judge the concentration of GHB there can be a very fine line between the amount required to achieve the desired effect and the amount that leads to overdose and coma.

Signs that could indicate someone has overdosed on GHB include:

- It's not possible to wake them up
- They're talking nonsense, sweating or vomiting lots, and have shallow, irregular breathing
- They're not able to stand, have twitching or tensing muscles

If someone may be overdosing, Triple zero (000) should be called immediately. Ambulance officers don't have to involve the police.

GHB Harm minimisation strategies for young people

- Go low and slow – start with a low dose, and wait for the effects to wear off before taking more
- Avoid mixing with other drugs, especially alcohol and other depressants – this can lead to breathing difficulty, passing out and vomiting; and ecstasy and amphetamines as this can lead to seizures.
- If vomiting or convulsions occur, seek immediate medical attention – call triple zero (000) and notify paramedics of what has been taken
- Do not take GHB when alone, or with strangers. Make sure you tell your friends what and how much you have taken.
- Be aware of drink spiking – don't leave your drink unattended
- GHB should be kept in a container that cannot be mistaken for a drinking or water bottle. Consider colouring it with food colouring.
- Consider writing "GHB" or "G" on your hand so that services know what you have taken if something goes wrong.

[Find out more about GHB on the ADF website](#)