

# Rohypnol and GHB

## Just the Facts



Often found at nightclubs and rave parties, Rohypnol and GHB are two strong sedatives that are abused by teenagers, nightclub attendees, and individuals with the intent of committing a sexual assault.

Often consumed or taken with alcohol to increase the drug's effects, the combination of alcohol and either Rohypnol or GHB has caused death. When abused, both drugs can cause addiction and dependence with severe withdrawal symptoms.

### What is Rohypnol?

**A strong** sedative, which is manufactured and distributed by Hoffman-La Roche. It is a member of the benzodiazepine family, which includes drugs such as Librium, Xanax, and Valium. Rohypnol is about ten times the strength of

Valium. Although Rohypnol is used as a presurgical anesthetic or insomnia medication in many countries, the drug has never been approved for use in the United States. Typically, Rohypnol is smuggled into Texas from the Mexican pharmacies; supplies in Florida come from Latin America.

### What is GHB?

**GHB was** once sold in health food stores as a performance enhancing additive to body builder formulas. Although rumored that GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyrate) stimulates muscle growth, this claim has never been proven. GHB is a central nervous system depressant that is abused for its intoxicating effects. In 1990, the FDA banned the use of GHB except under the supervision of a physician because of many reports of severe, uncontrollable side effects.

### How is Rohypnol used?

**It's taken** orally, although there are reports that it has been ground up and snorted. Rohypnol is manufactured as small, white tablets, with "Roche" inscribed on one side and marked with an encircled "1" or "2" indicating a 1 or 2 mg dose. These tablet markings are commonly found on other Roche pharmaceuticals, and a pattern of abusing drugs made by Roche has developed.

### How is GHB used?

**It's consumed** orally in capsule form or as a grainy, white to sand-colored powder. Powdered GHB is often dissolved in liquids like water or alcoholic beverages and then consumed. However, it is most frequently sold as a slightly salty, clear liquid in small bottles where users pay by the capful or by the teaspoon. Often substituted for Ecstasy, another club drug, a capful may cost the user \$3 to \$5 per dose. GHB is also used as a sedative to come down off stimulants like ephedrine, Ecstasy, speed, or cocaine.

# J u s t   T h e   F a c t s

## Why are Rohypnol and GHB called "Sexual Assault" drugs?

**They have** been called "sexual assault" drugs because of their potential to cause blackouts and amnesia at high doses. In the past decade, cases of sexual assault and gang rape, where victims were sedated by Rohypnol or GHB, have been reported across Texas. In response to the

GHB, which can be clear, is often poured into bottles of water, juice or soda to conceal its use.

abuse of Rohypnol and GHB, the Drug-Induced Rape Prevention and Punishment Act of 1996 was enacted into federal law. This law makes it a crime to give someone a controlled substance without a person's knowledge and with intent to commit a violent crime. The law also stiffens the penalties for the possession and distribution of Rohypnol and GHB.

## How long does Rohypnol stay in the user's body?

**It can** be detected in the blood several hours after ingestion and a metabolite of flunitrazepam called 7-aminoflunitrazepam can be detected in the urine for upwards of 48 to 72 hours after taking the drug.

## How long does GHB stay in the user's body?

**GHB can** be detected in the urine only up to 12 hours after ingestion. Metabolized rather quickly, the largest amount of the drug is excreted two to four hours after ingestion.

## What are Rohypnol's effects?

**After taking** the user may feel intoxicated, then sleepy, a feeling that may last up to eight hours. Users under the influence may exhibit slurred speech, impaired judgment, and difficulty walking. Rohypnol can cause deep sedation, respiratory distress, blackouts that can last up to 24 hours, and amnesia where users forget events experienced while under the influence. In some cases, the drug has paradoxical effects and causes users to become aggressive.

## What are GHB's effects?

**Intoxication followed** by deep sedation. Once ingested, the drug will begin to take effect in 15 minutes to an hour, lasting one to three hours. GHB can cause nausea, vomiting, delusions, depression, vertigo, visual disturbances, seizures, respiratory distress, loss of consciousness, amnesia, and coma. When combined with alcohol and other drugs, the potential for deadly overdoses escalates rapidly. Numerous overdoses in Texas, and nationwide, have required emergency room treatment and mechanical assistance to breathe.

## COMMON NAMES:

Rohypnol, R-2, Run-Trip-And-Fall, Rope, Rib, Roofies, Roach, Roche, The Forget Pill, Mexican Valium, GHB, Grievous Bodily Harm, Liquid X, Gamma 10, Zonked, G-riffick, Cherry Meth, Scoop, Salty Water, Fantasy, Soap

## Are teenagers and young adults at-risk?

**Yes. The most common method used to drug someone has been to slip it into a drink at a bar, nightclub, rave, or party. If Rohypnol or GHB is added to your drink without your knowledge, your drink will neither look nor taste out of the ordinary. If you see someone attempt to spike a drink, report him or her immediately. Allowing someone to use alcohol or other drugs for incapacitating a person could make you a conspirator in a very serious crime.**

### What should I do if I think I may have been exposed to Rohypnol or GHB?

**If you** believe that you may have been assaulted, contact a rape crisis center or hospital emergency department immediately, and go there as soon as possible. Be certain to tell them if you suspect that you may have been drugged so they will preserve the evidence and all of your legal options for the future. Furthermore, it is important to get medical attention because of the threat of sexually transmitted diseases, HIV infection, and pregnancy. For more information, contact the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault at 512.474.8161 for a referral in your neighborhood or check your phone book for additional resources.

If you attend rave parties and nightclubs, be aware that there is a segment of users who use Rohypnol and GHB to not only incapacitate both men and women for purposes of sexual assault, but also to target both men and women for other criminal acts such as robbery.

### How much GHB is too much?

**Doses between** 10 and 20 mg produce painkilling effects, plus amnesia. Doses higher than 50 mg can result in general anesthesia with respiratory depression and coma. Most GHB is created in clandestine laboratories where purity and quality cannot be guaranteed, resulting in overdoses.

### How to protect yourself from Rohypnol & GHB

- When attending parties, always go with a group of friends who will watch out for each other.
- Be on your guard and be aware of your surroundings.
- Always watch your drink being pored and never leave your drink unattended.
- If you start to feel "out of it" or "woozy," tell someone you trust.

### Who should I contact if someone close to me has a problem with Rohypnol or GHB?

**Contact the** Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse's toll-free hotline at 800.832.9623 or your local Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse for referral assistance. You may also contact your family physician, hospital, or yellow pages for other intervention and treatment options.

## Narcotics Tip Line 972-941-STOP

City of Plano Police Department  
909 14th Street  
Plano Texas 75074  
[www.planopolice.org](http://www.planopolice.org)

