

PHENCYCLIDINE (PCP)

Phencyclidine (PCP) was originally developed in the 1950s as an intravenous anesthetic. In 1965 use of PCP as an anesthetic for humans was discontinued because patients often became agitated, delusional and irrational while recovering from its effects. It is classified as a dissociative anesthetic: Its sedative and anesthetic effects are trance-like and patients experienced a feeling of being "out of body" and detached from their environment. PCP is now manufactured illegally in laboratories and sold on the street under an eclectic group of names.



PCP is among a group of drugs called hallucinogens. Most hallucinogens are chemicals illegally manufactured. Hallucinogens are substances that distort the perception of objective reality. Under the influence of hallucinogens, the sense of direction, distance and time become disoriented. They also produce unpredictable, erratic and violent behavior that can lead to serious injury or death. The effects of most hallucinogens can last up to 12 hours or longer. Other hallucinogens include LSD (Lysergic acid diethylamide), commonly known as acid; MDMA that is an amphetamine known as ecstasy; mescaline and peyote; and psilocybin or "magic" mushrooms.

PCP is available in a variety of forms. In its purest form it is a white crystal-like powder. PCP shows up on the illicit drug market as tablets, capsules or dyed powder. PCP can be ingested orally, inhaled through the nasal passage, or injected intravenously.

PCP is often applied to a leafy substance such as mint, parsley, oregano or marijuana and smoked. "Killer joints" and "crystal supergrass" are among the names used when PCP is combined with marijuana.

Physical and Physiological Effects

Use of PCP often leads to psychological dependency, craving and compulsive PCP-seeking behavior. Despite PCP's reputation as a drug that could cause bad reactions, many people cite feelings of strength, power, invulnerability, a numbing effect on the mind and the addicting properties of PCP for their consistent and regular use of the drug.

The physical and physiological effects of PCP use vary with the amount of each "hit" or dosage, longevity of use and combining with other drugs or alcohol.

Slang Terms

- Angel
- Angel dust
- Boat
- Dummy dust
- Love boat
- Peace
- Supergrass
- zombie

Physical Effects

- Shallow, rapid breathing
- Dangerous changes in blood pressure, heart rate and respiration
- Decreased awareness of pain
- Muscle contractions
- Convulsions
- Coma
- Hyperthermia
- Death

At low doses, physical effects include shallow, rapid breathing, increased blood pressure and heart rate, and elevated temperatures. Higher doses

cause dangerous changes in blood pressure, heart rate, and respiration, often accompanied by nausea, blurred vision, dizziness, and decreased awareness of pain. Muscle contractions may cause uncoordinated movements and bizarre postures. When severe, the muscle contractions can result in bone fractures or kidney damage or damage as a consequence of muscle cells breaking down. Very high doses of PCP can cause convulsions, coma, hyperthermia and death

PCP's effects are unpredictable. Typically, they are felt within minutes of ingestion and last for several hours. Some users feel the drug's effects for days. One drug-taking episode may produce feelings of detachment from reality, including distortions of time, space and body image; another may produce hallucinations, panic, and fear. Some users have feelings of invulnerability and exaggerated strength. PCP users may become severely disoriented, violent or suicidal.

<i>Physiological Effects</i>
➤ Detachment from reality
➤ Hallucinations
➤ Panic and fear
➤ Feelings of invulnerability
➤ Disoriented
➤ Violent
➤ Suicidal

There are many indications of possible misuse and symptoms of

overdose. These signs of misuse include extreme changes in behavior and mood; the user may sit or recline in a trance-like state or appear fearful; they may have chills, irregular breathing, profuse sweating and trembling hands; there will be changes in their sense of light, hearing, touch, smell and time;

their blood pressure, heart rate and blood sugar will increase. The symptoms of overdose include longer, more intense "trip" episodes, psychosis, coma, and death.

Withdrawal

While some effects of addiction such as memory loss, moodiness and difficulty with speech and thinking will persist for up to one year after cessation of PCP use, there is no known withdrawal syndrome.