

GHB, GBL & 1,4-B

31 AUGUST

INTERNATIONAL
OVERDOSE
AWARENESS DAY

WHAT IS GHB, GBL, OR 1,4-B?

GHB is a colourless, odourless, slightly oily liquid, often coloured with food dye. It slows the central nervous system down to produce calming and slightly euphoric effects. GBL and 1,4-B are chemically similar to GHB, and quickly convert into GHB in the body.

Their effects come on quickly and tend to wear off quickly. This can increase the urge to 're-dose'. Frequent use can rapidly build tolerance (i.e. needing more of the substance to experience the same effect) and physical dependence.

EFFECTS AND SIGNS OF OVERDOSE

Effects vary greatly according to the amount used (dose). A very small increase can cause a "blowout" (a coma-like sleep that can last for hours) and overdose.

GHB builds up in the body. Even after it feels like the effects are wearing off, successive or back-to-back doses can build up with stronger effects, leading to overdose.

The risk of overdose is much higher when GHB is taken with other depressants that slow breathing, like alcohol, opioids, or benzodiazepines.

- extreme drowsiness, dizziness, confusion, or memory loss
- loss of coordination and muscle control - involuntary and sudden twitching, jerking movements, or tremors
- nausea, vomiting, or overactive bowels
- irritational behaviour, severe agitation, or profuse sweating
- irregular, shallow, or slowed breathing
- partial or total loss of consciousness
- seizures or convulsions

Note: A person may be more likely to display unusual or bizarre behaviour if GHB is mixed with stimulants like cocaine or methamphetamine. They may appear agitated or irrational and switch between alert and unconscious states.

OVERDOSE RESPONSE

A GHB overdose can be confronting and challenging to manage, especially if a person is behaving or moving erratically.

Before you act, check for dangers and be wary of sudden, uncontrolled movements that could accidentally strike you.

Check for vital signs:

A Alert: Not responding to voice, touch, or pain

B Breathing: Noisy? Shallow? Slow? Stopped? Strange snoring or gurgling?

C Colour: Blue or pale lips or fingertips (lighter skin) or grey / ashy colour (darker skin)

If you see any of these signs - act immediately.

Try to get a response from the person by calling their name and/or rubbing your knuckles firmly across their sternum.

If the person is out of it but responding:

- Encourage them to sit down supported to avoid injury from falling.
- Try to keep them awake.
- Assess how well they are responding.

If no response:

- Put them in the recovery position making sure their airways remain open. Vomiting can lead to choking, which can be fatal or cause damage to their lungs.
- Monitor vital signs (e.g. breathing).

Call an ambulance immediately if the person is unresponsive or if you are concerned they might have a head injury from falling.

WHAT NOT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF A SUSPECTED OVERDOSE

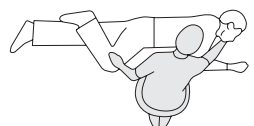
- Do **NOT** leave the person alone – even if conscious, they are at higher risk of injury or sexual assault.
- Do **NOT** give the person any medicine or drugs – this can increase toxicity and lead to further poisoning.
- Do **NOT** give them anything to eat or drink – this can cause vomiting.
- Do **NOT** try to induce vomiting – they could choke.

The Recovery Position

Support face Place the arm nearest to you at right angles to the body. Place their other hand against their cheek.



Lift leg Get hold of the far leg just above the knee and pull it up, keeping the foot flat on the ground.



Roll over Keep their hand pressed against their cheek and pull on the upper leg to roll them towards you and onto their side.



TIME TO
REMEMBER.
TIME TO
ACT.

X International Overdose
Awareness Day

A Pennington Institute Initiative

For more information visit
overdoseday.com