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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION

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# Drugs of Abuse

2011 EDITION ○ A DEA RESOURCE GUIDE



# Drugs *of* Abuse



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# Contents



<b>I. Letter from Administrator</b> .....	<b>7</b>	<b>VII. Depressants</b> .....	<b>50</b>
<b>II. Controlled Substances Act</b> .....	<b>8</b>	Barbiturates .....	52
Drug Scheduling .....	15	Benzodiazepines .....	53
Schedule I .....	15	GHB .....	54
Schedule II .....	18	Rohyphol® .....	56
Schedule III .....	20	<b>VIII. Hallucinogens</b> .....	<b>58</b>
Schedule IV .....	23	Ecstasy/MDMA .....	60
Schedule V .....	25	K2/Spice .....	62
Federal Trafficking Penalties .....	26	Ketamine .....	63
Federal Trafficking Penalties – Marijuana .....	27	LSD .....	65
<b>III. U. S. Chemical Control</b> .....	<b>28</b>	Peyote & Mescaline .....	66
Listed Chemicals Chart .....	30	Psilocybin .....	67
<b>IV. Introduction to Drug Classes</b> .....	<b>32</b>	<b>IX. Marijuana/Cannabis</b> .....	<b>68</b>
<b>V. Narcotics</b> .....	<b>34</b>	<b>X. Steroids</b> .....	<b>70</b>
Heroin .....	36	<b>XI. Inhalants</b> .....	<b>72</b>
Hydromorphone .....	37	<b>XII. Drugs of Concern</b> .....	<b>74</b>
Methadone .....	38	Bath Salts or Designer Cathinones .....	74
Morphine .....	39	DXM .....	76
Opium .....	40	Salvia Divinorum .....	78
Oxycodone .....	41	<b>XIII. Resources</b> .....	<b>79</b>
<b>VI. Stimulants</b> .....	<b>42</b>		
Amphetamines .....	44		
Cocaine .....	45		
Khat .....	47		
Methamphetamine .....	48		

# Benzodiazepines

## WHAT ARE BENZODIAZEPINES?

Benzodiazepines are depressants that produce sedation, induce sleep, relieve anxiety and muscle spasms, and prevent seizures.

## WHAT IS THEIR ORIGIN?

Benzodiazepines are only legally available through prescription. Many abusers maintain their drug supply by getting prescriptions from several doctors, forging prescriptions, or buying them illicitly. **Alprazolam** and **diazepam** are the two most frequently encountered benzodiazepines on the illicit market.

## What are common street names?

Common street names include Benzos and Downers.

## What do they look like?

The most common benzodiazepines are the prescription drugs Valium®, **Xanax®**, **Halcion®**, **Ativan®**, and Klonopin®. Tolerance can develop, although at variable rates and to different degrees. Shorter-acting benzodiazepines used to manage insomnia include estazolam (ProSom®), flurazepam (Dalmane®), temazepam (Restoril®), and **triazolam (Halcion®)**. Midazolam (Versed®), a short-acting benzodiazepine, is utilized for sedation, anxiety, and amnesia in critical care settings and prior to anesthesia. It is available in the United States as an injectable preparation and as a syrup (primarily for pediatric patients).

Benzodiazepines with a longer duration of action are utilized to treat insomnia in patients with daytime anxiety. These benzodiazepines include **alprazolam (Xanax®)**, chlordiazepoxide (Librium®), clorazepate (Tranxene®), diazepam (Valium®), halazepam (Paxipam®), **lorzepam (Ativan®)**, oxazepam (Serax®), prazepam (Centrax®), and quazepam (Doral®). Clonazepam (Klonopin®), diazepam, and clorazepate are also used as anticonvulsants.

## How are they abused?

Abuse is frequently associated with adolescents and young adults who take the drug orally or crush it up and snort it to get high. Abuse is particularly high among heroin and cocaine abusers.

## What is their effect on the mind?

Benzodiazepines are associated with amnesia, **hostility**, **irritability**, and **vivid or disturbing dreams**.

逆説的反應

## What is their effect on the body?

Benzodiazepines slow down the central nervous system and may cause sleepiness.

## What are their overdose effects?

Effects of overdose include:

→ Shallow respiration, clammy skin, dilated pupils, weak and rapid pulse, coma, and possible death

## Which drugs cause similar effects?

Drugs that cause similar effects include:

→ Alcohol, barbiturates, sleeping pills, and GHB

## What is their legal status in the United States?

Benzodiazepines are controlled in Schedule IV of the Controlled Substance Act.

# Rohypnol®

### WHAT IS ROHYPNOL®?

Rohypnol® is a trade name for **flunitrazepam**, a central nervous system (CNS) depressant that belongs to a class of drugs known as benzodiazepines. **Flunitrazepam** is also marketed as generic preparations and other trade name products outside of the United States.

Like other benzodiazepines, Rohypnol® produces sedative-hypnotic, anti-anxiety, and muscle relaxant effects. **This drug has never been approved for medical use in the United States by the Food and Drug Administration.** Outside the United States, Rohypnol® is commonly prescribed to treat insomnia. Rohypnol® is also referred to as a “date rape” drug.

### WHAT IS ITS ORIGIN?

Rohypnol® is smuggled into the United States from other countries, such as Mexico.

### What are common street names?

Common street names include:

→ Circles, Forget Pill, Forget-Me-Pill, La Rocha, Lunch Money Drug, Mexican Valium, Pingus, R2, Reynolds, Roach, Roach 2, Roaches, Roachies, Roopies, Robutal, Rochas Dos, Rohypnol, Roofies, Rophies, Ropies, Roples, Row-Shay, Ruffies, and Wolfies

### What does it look like?

Prior to 1997, Rohypnol® was manufactured as a white tablet (0.5-2 milligrams per tablet), and when mixed in drinks, was colorless, tasteless, and odorless. In 1997, the manufacturer responded to concerns about the drug’s role in sexual assaults by reformulating the drug.

Rohypnol® is now manufactured as an oblong olive green tablet with a speckled blue core that when dissolved in light-colored drinks will dye the liquid blue. However, generic versions of the drug may not contain the blue dye.

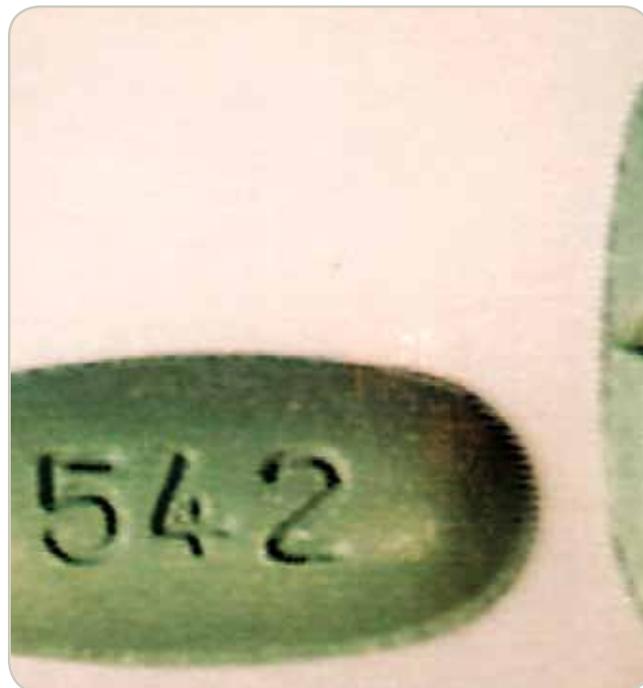
### How is it abused?

The tablet can be swallowed whole, crushed and snorted, or dissolved in liquid. Adolescents may abuse Rohypnol® to produce a euphoric effect often described as a “high.” While high, they experience reduced inhibitions and impaired judgment.

Rohypnol® is also abused in combination with alcohol to produce an exaggerated intoxication.

In addition, abuse of Rohypnol® may be associated with multiple-substance abuse. For example, cocaine addicts may use benzodiazepines such as Rohypnol® to relieve the side effects (e.g., irritability and agitation) associated with cocaine binges.

Rohypnol® is also misused to physically and psychologically incapacitate women targeted for sexual assault. The drug is usually placed in the alcoholic drink of an unsuspecting victim to incapacitate them and prevent resistance to sexual assault. The drug leaves the victim unaware of what has happened to them.



*Rohypnol® tablets*

### What is its effect on the mind?

Like other benzodiazepines, Rohypnol® slows down the functioning of the CNS producing:

- Drowsiness (sedation), sleep (pharmacological hypnosis), decreased anxiety, and amnesia (no memory of events while under the influence of the substance)

Rohypnol® can also cause:

- Increased or decreased reaction time, impaired mental functioning and judgment, confusion, aggression, and excitability

### What is its effect on the body?

Rohypnol® causes muscle relaxation. Adverse physical effects include:

- Slurred speech, loss of motor coordination, weakness, headache, and respiratory depression

Rohypnol also can produce physical dependence when taken regularly over a period of time.

### What are its overdose effects?

High doses of Rohypnol®, particularly when combined with CNS depressant drugs such as alcohol and heroin, can cause severe sedation, unconsciousness, slow heart rate, and suppression of respiration that may be sufficient to result in death.

### Which drugs cause similar effects?

Drugs that cause similar effects include GHB (gamma hydroxybutyrate) and other benzodiazepines such as alprazolam (e.g., Xanax®), clonazepam (e.g., Klonopin®), and diazepam (e.g., Valium®).

### What is its legal status in the United States?

Rohypnol® is a Schedule IV substance under the Controlled Substance Act. Rohypnol® is not approved for manufacture, sale, use or importation to the United States. It is legally manufactured and marketed in many countries. Penalties for possession, trafficking, and distribution involving one gram or more are the same as those of a Schedule I drug.



*Blister pack of Rohypnol® tablets*