GHB

Drug Classification: Depressant
Drug Schedule: I
Addiction Potential: High

Modes of Administration
Oral (powder, pill, liquid)

Onset of Drug Effect(s)
Initial effects occur in 10 to 20 minutes, depending on when and how much someone has consumed. Acute effects last 1-½ hours with lesser effects for another four hours. GHB is out of the body within 24 hours.

Drug Action(s)
The active chemical, gammahydroxybutyrate, naturally occurs in the body. Synthesized, it is odorless, colorless, and only slightly salty, making it practically undetectable in a drink – the normal route of ingestion.

GHB inhibits dopamine release in the brain, creating a stockpile which is later released. This provides a sense of well-being after GHB is out of the system.

Acute effects on the mind and body include:
• Relaxation, disinhibition, tranquility
• Drowsiness, grogginess
• Decreased motor skills
• Increased pituitary growth hormone
• Increased protein synthesis
• Deeper, slower respiration
• Decreased heart rate
• Decreased body temperature

Because the range of safe dosage is extremely narrow, the potential for overdose is VERY high. Overdose symptoms include:
• Extreme grogginess with periods of unarousable sleep
• Dizziness, nausea
• Disorientation
• Unconsciousness and vomiting, which may occur simultaneously
• Gag reflex suppressed
• Depressed breathing, convulsions, coma
• Amnesia

While alcohol is the number one predatory drug, GHB is usually accompanied by alcohol which creates greater risk for overdose with the subsequent synergistic depressant effects of both drugs.

It is also important to note that many people choose to consume GHB recreationally and also fall prey to predatory behavior, including sexual violence.

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A Word about Sexual Violence
Because GHB can be added to beverages without detection or the consent or knowledge of an unsuspecting person, it is often implicated in incidents of sexual violence. GHB can render a person incapable of resisting or remembering an assault.