

fast facts

acid/lsd

■ **Overview:** LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) is a drug that triggers massive changes in thought and perception. Discovered in 1943, its effects were so distinctive that a new word, *psychedelic* (“mind-manifesting”), was coined by researchers to classify them.



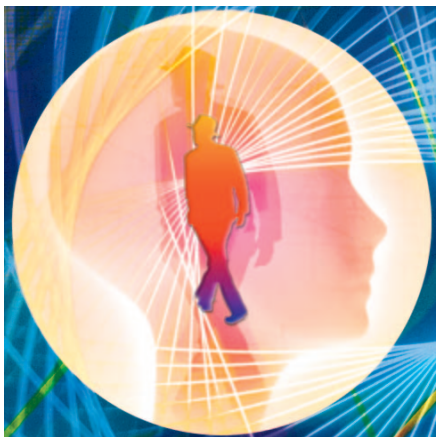
Widely used in the '60s,

LSD has made a comeback in recent years, helped along by lighter dosage and new-look packaging. Still, it can cause the same old problems for the unprepared or uninformed, and sometimes even for veteran users.

■ **Nicknames:** acid, blotter, dose, windowpane.

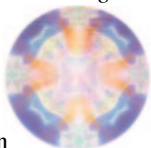
■ **Appearance:** LSD is an odorless, colorless liquid and individual doses are often dripped onto sheets of blotter paper preprinted with mystical or alternative-culture icons, like Beavis and Butt-head (shown above).

■ **Actions/Effects:** LSD alters the action of the neurotransmitters *serotonin*, *norepinephrine*, and *dopamine*, triggering massive changes in brain function. Physical effects include increased body temperature, heart rate, and blood pressure. Psychological effects include perceptual and thought distortions, hallucinations, delusions, and rapid mood swings.



■ **Medical Uses:** None. Although LSD has been tried as a treatment for various forms of mental illness, the only currently-approved research involving the drug is aimed at testing its potential value as a treatment for drug dependence.

■ **Risks/Side Effects:** The main risk linked to LSD is anxiety—effects are so disorienting and so unavoidable that users sometimes panic. The drug may also “unmask” psychological problems, since it involves such a stark confrontation with the self that hidden conflicts can be exposed and potential problems activated.



■ **Trends:** LSD use has been on the rise for several years, as dosage strength has decreased. Lighter dosage has also meant a set of less intense, more easily-managed effects, resulting in fewer adverse reactions than were common during LSD’s first trip around the recreational drug circuit a generation ago.

■ **Demographics:** LSD has always been something of a young person’s drug, and today, it’s a *younger* young person’s drug than ever before. In a nationwide survey of the high-school class of 2001, 10.9 percent admitted using it, 6.6 percent during the previous year. Lifetime use by 10th-graders stood at 6.3 percent, with 4.1 percent reporting use during the previous year.



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