

## History

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- All-arounders, also known as “psychedelics” and “hallucinogens,” have been around since the origin of man.
- Virtually all of the early psychedelics were derived from plants including fungi.
- Recently the most popular psychedelics besides marijuana (e.g., LSD, MDMA) have been synthesized.

## Classification

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- The most commonly used psychedelics are marijuana, LSD, PCP, peyote, psilocybin (“magic mushrooms”), and MDMA (or other variations of the amphetamine molecule).

## General Effects

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- A major physical effect of psychedelics, other than marijuana, PCP, or anticholinergics, is stimulation.
- The effects of all-arounders are particularly dependent on the size of the dose, the emotional makeup of the user, the mood at the time of use, and the user’s surroundings.
- The most frequent mental effects of psychedelics are intensified sensations (particularly visual, illusions and delusions), mixed up sensations (synesthesia), suppressed memory centers, and impaired judgment and reasoning.

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# All-Arounders

*Employee Assistance Program  
Educational Series*

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## LSD, Psilocybin Mushrooms & Other Indole Psychedelics

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- LSD is extremely potent. Doses as low as 25 micrograms (25-millionths of a gram) can cause some psychedelic effects.
- Like many other psychedelics, LSD overloads the brainstem, the sensory switchboard for the mind, and creates illusions and delusions.
- Psilocybin is the active ingredient in “magic mushrooms.”
- After initial nausea or vomiting, visual illusions and a certain altered state of consciousness are the most common effects of mushrooms.
- Mushrooms and peyote buttons have been used in religious ceremonies by many Native American and Mexican Indian tribes.

## Peyote, MDMA, & Other Phenylalkylamine Psychedelics

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- Mescaline is the active ingredient of the peyote cactus.
- Eating peyote buttons or drinking them in a prepared tea causes color-filled visions and vivid hallucinations after an initial nausea and physical stimulation.
- Club drugs abused at “raves,” include MDMA, LSD, 2CB, GHB, and ketamine.

## Belladonna & Other Anticholinergic Psychedelics

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- Belladonna and other nightshade plants contain scopolamine and atropine.
- In low doses these substances cause a mild stupor but as the dose increases, delirium, hallucinations, and a separation from reality are common.

## Ketamine, PCP, & Other Psychedelics

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- PCP (“angel dust”) is an anesthetic, now illegal, that besides deadening sensation, disassociates users from their surroundings and senses.
- Effects of the drug PCP include amnesia, extremely high blood pressure, and combativeness. Higher doses can produce tremors, seizures, catatonia, coma, and even kidney failure.
- Ketamine, another anesthetic, has become a popular drug in the “rave” club scene

## Marijuana & Other Cannabinoids

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- Historically the Cannabis plant has been grown to produce fibers for rope and cloth, seeds for food, various chemicals for medicinal effects, and a psychoactive resin for psychedelic effects.
- Marijuana is the most widely used illicit psychoactive drug.
- Discoveries in the 1990s of a marijuana receptor site, a neurotransmitter (anandamide) that fits into that receptor site, and a marijuana antagonist, all have accelerated research into the effects of marijuana.
- The two most widely used marijuana species are Cannabis sativa and Cannabis indica. Cannabis sativa can be used for hemp or psychedelic effects. Cannabis indica is only used for its psychedelic effects.
- The sinsemilla technique of growing Cannabis sativa or Cannabis indica greatly increases the concentration of -9-THC, the main psychoactive ingredient in marijuana.
- Street marijuana that is readily available in the 2000s is 5–14 times stronger than the marijuana of the 1960s and 70s. Much growing is done indoors to avoid detection.
- Short-term effects of smoking marijuana include a dreamlike effect, sedation,

and a mild hypnosis, making users more likely to exaggerate their mood and react to the surroundings.

- Some of the negative effects of short-term marijuana use are lowered testosterone levels, a decrease in the ability to do complicated tasks, a temporary disruption of short-term memory, decreased tracking ability (an impairment of eye-hand coordination), a trailing phenomenon, and a loss of the sense of time.
- Large amounts of marijuana or prolonged use can cause anxiety reactions, paranoia, and some illusions.
- Respiratory effects include a decrease in the cilia lining the mucous membranes in the breathing passages that makes the smoker more susceptible to coughs, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, and cancer.
- Chronic marijuana use can make some smokers less likely to do anything they don’t want to do, leading to a tendency to neglect life’s problems or to think about problems rather than do something about them.
- Tolerance develops fairly rapidly with chronic marijuana use.
- When stopping chronic marijuana use, a person can suffer delayed withdrawal symptoms that include headache, anxiety, depression, irritability, aggression, restlessness, tremors, sleep disturbances, and continued craving for the drug.
- Medical use of marijuana is the controversial new battleground. Although marijuana has been employed as a medicine for more than 5,000 years, it is very sparingly used today. Proponents say it should be available as a medicine whereas opponents say there are better medicines that are more reliable and don’t have all the other chemicals with unresearched side effects. Several states have passed laws allowing the medical use of marijuana.