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## Rohypnol | Rohypnol Addiction | Rohypnol Physical Effects

**Rohypnol**, also known as **Flunitrazepam**, is a **benzodiazepine** that is used in the short-term treatment of insomnia and as a sedative hypnotic and pre-anesthetic medication. It has physiological effects similar to

### **diazepam**

(commonly known by its trade name, Valium), although

### **Rohypnol**

is approximately 10 times more potent.

### **Rohypnol**

neither is manufactured nor sold legally in the United States. It is produced and sold legally by prescription in Europe and Latin America and sold in South Africa. The drug usually is smuggled into and transported within the United States through the mail or delivery services.

Flunitrazepam is available in 1- and 2-milligram tablets by Hoffman-La Roche Inc., a large pharmaceutical manufacturer. However, the drug neither is manufactured nor approved for medical use in the United States. Rohypnol is typically sold in its original bubble packing, conveying a sense of legality and security in its use. The perceived safety of the drug along with the trend of use in combination with other substances creates the possibility of **Rohypnol** becoming a gateway to harder drugs. Rohypnol is ingested orally, frequently in conjunction with alcohol or other drugs, including heroin.

### **Rohypnol addiction**

The use of Rohypnol itself is dangerous, leading to physical and psychological dependence, which increases with dose and duration of use. It can result in insomnia or the inability to sleep

without it.

## **Rohypnol abuse**

In the United States, Rohypnol is used widely in Texas where it is popular among high school students. Rohypnol is reported to be readily available in the Miami area, and epidemiologists from that area have stated that it is South Florida's fastest growing drug problem. Additional reports from Miami indicate that the largest and fastest growing groups of Rohypnol users are high school students who take the drug with alcohol or use it after cocaine ingestion.

Two common misconceptions about Rohypnol may explain the drug's popularity among young people: first, many erroneously believe that the drug is unadulterated - and therefore "safe" - because it comes in pre sealed bubble packs; second, many mistakenly think its use cannot be detected by urinalysis testing. Illicit use of Rohypnol originated in Europe in the 1970s and has increased worldwide since then.

However, the substance did not appear in the United States until the early 1990s. In 1992, a South Florida hotline began receiving calls reporting occasional to chronic abuse of the drug. Around the same time, the drug appeared in Texas as well. Today, use of Rohypnol is one of the fastest growing drug problems in both areas. In addition, the drug appears to be spreading across the United States. As of April 1995, the Drug Enforcement Administration had documented over 1,000 cases of Rohypnol possession across 13 states. Rohypnol use by youths of all socio economic status has been reported.

The inexpensive cost of the pill, attracts young users. High school students report use of the drug as a cheap drunk and as a cure for alcohol hangovers. Typically, however, Rohypnol is used along with alcohol and other drugs. College students using Rohypnol report mixing it with beer to enhance the feeling of drunkenness. It has also been reported to be used in combination with marijuana and cocaine, as well as heroin.

Rohypnol use appears to be spreading in the United States among high school and college youth. In South Africa, it is available on the black market from drug dealers. In some areas, it is associated with gangs, and it is becoming known as a club drug. It is well known in South Africa as the "date rape" drug. When mixed with alcohol, it produces a very intoxicating effect rendering the user ineffective at perceiving reality properly and unable to defend themselves. The result is a "blackout" effect or amnesia where the user cannot remember the events after it was taken.

Often, rape may have taken place especially in the case of women. Because of this, Roche have changed the colour of the pill. Previously, when crushed, it was undetectable as it was colourless, flavourless and odorless. Roche have added a blue dye to the pill as well as a frothing agent. Clear drinks will now turn blue but all drinks will now form a froth on top of the liquid alerting the party goer to that fact that something has been added to their drink.

## **Signs of Rohypnol addiction and abuse**

## **Common signs and side effects of Rohypnol use**

### **Adverse effects associated with the use of Rohypnol include:**

- decreased blood pressure
- memory impairment
- drowsiness
- visual disturbances
- dizziness and confusion
- gastrointestinal disturbances
- urinary retention

Paradoxically, although the drug is classified as a depressant, Rohypnol can induce excitability or aggressive behaviour in some users.

### **Rohypnol overdose potential**

Lethal overdose is unlikely but possible. However, continued use will result in physical dependence.

### **Rohypnol addiction treatment programs**

Rohypnol is a highly addictive prescription drug. Recovery and rehabilitation from Rohypnol addiction may require a treatment program ranging from certified addiction counselling to treatment at a residential alcohol and drug rehab centre, depending on the extent of the addiction and a number of other factors.