GHB

- Medical Uses: GHB can be used as a general anesthetic, to treat conditions such as insomnia, treating clinical depression, narcolepsy, and alcohol withdrawal. It can also be used to improve physical and athletic performance.
  - Rarely used in this setting in the United States
  - Illicit Uses: euphoric, intoxicant/relaxer, date rape drug
    - At low doses: euphoric agent, increased libido, increased sociability, decreased inhibition, relaxation, drowsiness, dizziness.
    - At high doses: breathing problems, seizures, and coma
  - GHB is in the same category as other "designer" or "club" drugs like ecstasy and roofies (Rohypnol)
  - Usually mixed with alcohol to induce effects
    - GHB can come in an odorless, tasteless, and colorless liquid.
    - GHB also comes in a capsule form that can be emptied into a drink.

- General Effects of GHB
  - General effects are not dose dependant, meaning it can occur to anyone at any dose.
    - Nausea, vomiting, withdrawal/addiction effects, delirium, hallucinations, and anesthesia are common.
    - GHB’s effects are never predictable for any user or any amount taken.

- GHB Overdose
  - OD’s require an emergency room visit at least to avoid further complications.
  - Long term hospital admission may be required if effects do not wear off in a few hours.

- Drug Information
  Developed under the supervision of Drs. Doug and Dana Carroll, PharmD

GHB - Gamma Hydroxybutyrate

So how does it work?

- GHB (Gamma hydroxybutyrate) can be made into GABA (Gamma-aminobutyric acid), a chemical that slows brain activity.
  - It also works directly in the brain by stopping the nerves from working normally
  - GHB can also be used as an athletic performance enhancer. The specifics are unknown but it may stimulate the release of human growth hormone by continuously decreasing the amount of sugar in the blood.
    - Human growth hormone helps muscles get bigger and stronger

What happens when GHB is mixed with....

Alcohol?

- Alcohol increases the duration of effects of GHB.
- Increased nausea, drowsiness, and breathing difficulties.
- GHB is usually mixed with alcohol when used as a date-rape drug.
- Similar effects are seen with other "depressors" such as sedatives, sleep medications, and pain medications.

Marijuana?

- There may be additive effects when GHB is used with marijuana such as euphoria, relaxation, and short term amnesia. Both of these drugs of abuse are commonly used at the same time during raves and parties.
- The abuse of one can always lead to the abuse of the other.

What if you take GHB while you are pregnant?

- Like any other substances, GHB can be transferred to the baby causing unwanted and dangerous effects.
- Premature birth and low birth weight are two effects that may occur.

Is there a chance this substance could contain contaminants if it is obtained "on the street"? If so, what are the effects of these contaminants?

- There is always a chance that illicit drugs obtained from the street have some contaminants that can be dangerous and toxic.
  - Since GHB is illegal in the US, sources and production of GHB are not regulated by the government.
  - Many of the ingredients for street made GHB can be found in substances like paint stripper, drain cleaners, and pesticides.

Short term effects of taking GHB

Judgment

Most abusers use GHB as a euphoria inducing agent. Other effects are decreased inhibition and increased sociability. This is why it can be used as a date rape drug.

Memory

GHB can cause unconsciousness at any dose but commonly at higher doses. This results in amnesia over a period of minutes to hours.

Health

GHB can slow the heart rate and respiration rate which can lead to coma or death. These symptoms are usually experienced if the abuser is not already unconscious. Seizure like episodes can also develop.

Long term effects of taking GHB

Judgment

The long term judgment effects are similar to short term effects.

Memory

There are no long term memory effects except of those amnesia periods from short term use.

Health

Serious effects include respiratory depression, coma, and possibly death
  - Respiratory depression is seen by slowed breathing rate or difficulty breathing.

For more information contact the Student Health Center at 348.3878

References: