

## What is psilocybin?

Psilocybin is a hallucinogenic substance obtained from certain types of mushrooms that are indigenous to tropical and subtropical regions of South America, Mexico, and the United States. These mushrooms typically contain 0.2 to 0.4 percent psilocybin and a trace amount of psilocyn, another hallucinogenic substance. Both psilocybin and psilocyn can be produced synthetically, but law enforcement reporting currently does not indicate that this is occurring.

## What does psilocybin look like?

Mushrooms containing psilocybin are available fresh or dried and have long, slender stems topped by caps with dark gills on the underside. Fresh mushrooms have white or whitish-gray stems; the caps are dark brown around the edges and light brown or white in the center. Dried mushrooms are generally rusty brown with isolated areas of off-white.

## How is it abused?

Psilocybin mushrooms are ingested orally. They may be brewed as a tea or added to other foods to mask their bitter flavor. Some users coat the mushrooms with chocolate—this both masks the flavor and disguises the mushrooms as candy. Once the mushrooms are ingested, the body breaks down the psilocybin to produce psilocyn.

## Who abuses psilocybin?

Psilocybin mushrooms are popular at raves, clubs and, increasingly, on college campuses and generally are abused by teenagers and young adults. It is difficult to gauge the extent of psilocybin use in the United States because most data sources that quantify drug use exclude psilocybin. The Monitoring the Future Survey, conducted by the University of Michigan, does reveal that 9.2 percent of high school seniors in the United States used hallucinogens other than LSD—a category that includes psilocybin—at least once in their lifetime. Two percent of high school seniors used hallucinogens other than LSD in the past month.

## What are the risks?

Use of psilocybin is associated with negative physical and psychological consequences. The physical effects, which appear within 20 minutes of ingestion and last approximately 6 hours, include nausea, vomiting, muscle weakness, drowsiness, and lack of coordination. While there is no evidence that users may become physically dependent on psilocybin, tolerance for the drug does develop when it is ingested continuously over a short period of time.

The psychological consequences of psilocybin use include hallucinations and an inability to discern fantasy from reality. Panic reactions and psychosis also may occur, particularly if a user ingests a large dose.

In addition to the risks associated with ingestion of psilocybin, individuals who seek to abuse psilocybin mushrooms also risk poisoning if one of the many varieties of poisonous mushrooms is incorrectly identified as a psilocybin mushroom.

## What is psilocybin called?

The most common names for psilocybin are magic mushroom, mushroom, and shrooms. (Please see the Street Terms text box for additional names.)

### Street Terms for Psilocybin

Boomers  
Flower flipping  
(MDMA used with psilocybin)  
God's flesh  
Hippieflip  
(MDMA used with psilocybin)  
Hombrecitos  
Las mujercitas  
Little smoke  
Mexican mushrooms  
Musk  
Sacred mushroom  
Silly putty  
Simple simon



Nebraska State Patrol

### Other products of interest:

- *Huffing—The Abuse of Inhalants*
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### Is psilocybin illegal?

Yes, psilocybin is illegal. Psilocybin is a Schedule I substance under the Controlled Substances Act. Schedule I drugs, which include heroin and LSD, have a high potential for abuse and serve no legitimate medical purpose in the United States.

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## Questions and Answers



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