

# Magic mushrooms (Psilocybin)

“Magic” mushrooms, also known as ‘shrooms or mushrooms, are species of mushrooms that contain the drugs psilocybin or psilocin. They belong to a family of drugs known as hallucinogens. Psilocybin is chemically related to both LSD and DMT.

Mushrooms containing psilocybin can be eaten in fresh or dried form. The mushrooms may be steeped into a tea, added to cooked foods or, in powder form, added to fruit juice. Psilocybin powder is also sold in capsules. However, when analyzed, these capsules usually turn out to be ordinary mushrooms laced with LSD or PCP.

Some poisonous mushrooms look like psilocybin mushrooms. A risk in using magic mushrooms is eating the wrong type of mushroom and being poisoned. Poisonous mushrooms can cause death or permanent liver damage.

Possessing, producing and trafficking in psilocybin mushrooms can result in fines, prison sentences, and criminal records.

## Short-term effects

The effects of psilocybin can be felt in about 30 minutes, and usually last between three and six hours.

The psilocybin in magic mushrooms changes the way you see, smell, hear, taste and touch (you might, for example, think you can “see” music, or “hear” colours). Your body may feel very heavy or very light. Some users feel as though they are having a magical or religious experience.

Other effects can include: increased blood pressure and heartbeat, dizziness, lightheadedness, upset stomach, numbness of the tongue and mouth, nausea, anxiety, and shivering.

As is the case with other drugs, magic mushrooms affect each user differently. In addition to the size of the dose, effects are influenced by the setting, the user’s expectations, past drug experience, and personality.

Sometimes the effects can be overwhelming and frightening. This is known as a “bad trip.” If someone is having a “bad trip,” you can help by calmly reassuring them.

## Long-term effects

There are no known deaths directly caused by overdose. For people with psychological problems, magic mushroom use can cause psychosis.

## Tolerance and dependence

After daily use for as little as three or four days, users build up tolerance. This means that no amount of the drug will produce the desired psychedelic effects. To feel them again, users must abstain for a few days.

Mushrooms containing psilocybin do not appear to cause physical dependence, even after long term use. Regular users may become mentally dependent on the way magic mushrooms make them feel.

People who use drugs often can develop serious personal problems. Using drugs can become more important than family and friends. They may continue using even when their job or schoolwork is suffering, or when they run into financial, spiritual, or legal problems.

Little is known about the effects of magic mushrooms on pregnant women. What is sold as magic mushrooms or psilocybin can be a mix of other drugs and additives that can be harmful to a developing baby. It’s safest not to use magic mushrooms at all when pregnant.

For more information and to find an addiction services office near you, please call the 24-hour Helpline at 1-866-332-2322.