

MAGIC MUSHROOMS

Street Names

Magic Mushrooms, Shrooms, Mushies, Liberty Caps, Fly-agaric.

Description

A raw fungus, as a drink or part of a cooked dish (omelette, soup, etc.).

Routes of Use

Ingestion.

History

Shamans, Medicine Men or Witch Doctors have used mushrooms throughout history as a means of gaining access to the spirit world. Its hallucinations were thought to be predictions of future events or messages from beyond this world. The active ingredients are Psilocybin, Psilocin or Muscimole depending on the variety picked. The most commonly abused fungi are Psilocybe semilanceata (Liberty Cap) and Amanita muscaria (Fly Agaric). The resemblance of magic mushrooms to several of their poisonous cousins makes picking them a required skill. Mushroom use is usually associated with fringe groups such as hippies and new age travellers.

Effects People Seek

The effects of mushrooms are similar to those of LSD and depend largely on the users environment and mood to determine the good/bad nature of the trip. Physical effects are not as prominent as the psychological effects and include signs of arousal such as increased heart rate and blood pressure and also dilated pupils. Effects are felt within about half an hour and can last for up to nine hours depending on the amount taken. Low doses (2-4 mushrooms) produce feelings of being stoned such as relaxation and euphoria. At higher doses (up to 20+ mushrooms) hallucinations are experienced and distortions of colour and sound.

Other Effects

Bad effects include those associated with unpleasant trips including anxiety, fear and paranoia. The greatest dangers are having accidents whilst stoned or by eating one of the poisonous varieties of mushroom by mistake. It would take a very large amount of liberty caps or fly agaric to overdose.

Dependence & Tolerance

Tolerance to the effects of magic mushrooms develops quickly and may need several days of abstinence to restore back to normal levels. There is no physical dependence or withdrawal symptoms however some people experience so psychological dependence.

The Law

The new Drugs Act 2005 has changed the law so that now both fresh and prepared (e.g. dried or stewed) magic mushrooms that contain psilocin or psilocybin are classified as Class A drugs. Possession can get you up to seven years in jail and/or an unlimited fine. Supplying someone else, including your friends, with magic mushrooms can get you life imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine.