

[www.drugfreepa.org](http://www.drugfreepa.org)

## PCP



### What is PCP?

PCP, or phencyclidine, is a dissociative anesthetic that was developed in the 1950s as a surgical anesthetic. Its sedative and anesthetic effects are trance-like, and patients experience a feeling of being "out of body" and detached from their environment. Use of PCP in humans was discontinued in 1965, because it was found that patients often became agitated, delusional, and irrational while recovering from its anesthetic effects.

### What are the street names/slang terms for PCP?

Angel Dust, Elephant Tranquilizer, Embalming Fluid, Killer Weed, Ozone, Peace Pill, Rocket Fuel, Supergrass.

### What does it look like?

PCP is a white crystalline powder that is readily soluble in water or alcohol. It has a distinctive bitter chemical taste.

### How is it used?

PCP turns up on the illicit drug market in a variety of tablets, capsules, and colored powders. It is normally used in one of three ways -- snorted, smoked, or eaten. When it is smoked, PCP is often applied to a leafy material such as mint, parsley, oregano, tobacco or marijuana.

### What are its short-term effects?

At low to moderate doses, PCP can cause distinct changes in body awareness, similar to those associated with alcohol intoxication. Other effects can include shallow breathing, flushing, profuse sweating, generalized numbness of the extremities and poor muscular coordination. Use of PCP among adolescents may interfere with hormones related to normal growth and development as well as with the learning process. At high doses, PCP can cause hallucinations as well as seizures, coma, and death (though death more often results from accidental injury or suicide during PCP intoxication). Other effects that can occur at high doses are nausea, vomiting, blurred vision, flicking up and down of the eyes, drooling, loss of balance, and dizziness. High doses can also cause effects similar to symptoms of schizophrenia, such as delusions, paranoia, disordered thinking, a sensation of distance from one's environment, and catatonia. Speech is often sparse and garbled. PCP has sedative effects, and interactions with other central nervous system depressants, such as alcohol and benzodiazepines, can lead to coma or accidental overdose. Many PCP users are brought to emergency rooms because of PCP's unpleasant psychological effects or because of overdoses. In a hospital or detention setting, they often become violent or suicidal, and are very dangerous to themselves and to others.

### What are its long-term effects?

PCP is addicting; that is, its use often leads to psychological dependence, craving, and compulsive PCP-seeking behavior. People who use PCP for long periods report memory loss, difficulties with speech and thinking, depression, and weight loss. These symptoms can persist up to a year after cessation of PCP use. Mood disorders also have been reported.

### What is its federal classification?

Schedule II

### Source

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), Community Epidemiology Work Group (CEWG), Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)