



1,4-Butanediol

(Street Names: BD, BDO, Liquid Fantasy, Cleaner, One Comma Four, One Four Bee, One Four BDO)

June 2020

Introduction:

1,4-butanediol (BD) is an industrial chemical, and is illicitly used as a substitute to gamma-hydroxybutyric acid (GHB). BD and gamma-butyrolactone (GBL) are structurally similar to GHB and there is a large body of evidence to confirm that GBL and BD are converted to GHB after oral administration.

GHB is a Schedule I depressant. GHB abuse became popular among teens and young adults at dance clubs and "raves" in the 1990s, and gained notoriety as a date rape drug.

Licit Uses:

BD is a commonly used industrial chemical intermediate. Worldwide yearly production of BD is measured in the millions of metric tons.

Chemistry:

BD has the molecular formula C₄H₁₀O₂ and the molecular weight 90.12 g/mol. It is a colorless, viscous liquid.

Pharmacology:

BD has similar pharmacological effects to GHB in part because it is readily converted into GHB by the body's own natural process. GHB is present in the central nervous system in very small concentrations; it is a metabolite of the neurotransmitter gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA). Scientific data suggest that GHB can function as a neurotransmitter or neuromodulator in the brain. It produces dose-dependent depressant effects similar to those of the barbiturates and methaqualone. Low doses of BD/GHB produce drowsiness, nausea, and visual distortion.

At high doses, BD/GHB overdose can result in unconsciousness, seizures, slowed heart rate, severe respiratory depression, decreased body temperature, vomiting, nausea, coma, or death. Sustained use of BD/GHB can lead to addiction. Chronic abuse of BD/GHB produces a withdrawal syndrome characterized by insomnia, anxiety, tremors, marked autonomic activation (i.e., increased heart rate and blood pressure) and occasional psychotic thoughts. Currently, there is no antidote available for GHB overdose. Co-ingestion of alcohol with BD can increase the toxicity.

Illicit Uses:

BD is abused for its euphoric and sedative effects. BD is mainly self-ingested, with an average recreational oral dose ranging from 1-3 mL. The onset of action after oral ingestion is 5-20 minutes and the effects last 2-3 hours.

User Population:

BD is abused as a substitute for GHB due to its intoxicating effects. BD/GHB is abused by teens and young adults as an alcohol substitute, at all-night parties and "raves," and for

enhanced sexual experiences.

Illicit Distribution:

BD is an industrial chemical intermediate that is used to make other industrial chemicals. It has no household applications and is not available at retail to walk-in customers. It is typically diverted by being sold as a cleaner or paint-stripper.

BD is efficiently converted into GHB in the body. It is not typically used as a chemical precursor for clandestine manufacturing of GHB.

National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) data indicate that there were 290 laboratory report submissions identified as 1,4-butanediol by federal, state and local forensic laboratories in 2017 and 262 in 2018; that have remained fairly stable over the years.

Control Status:

BD is not a controlled or regulated substance under the Controlled Substances Act.

GHB is controlled in Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act. Gamma-Butyrolactone or GBL and 1,4-butanediol or BD are structurally similar to GHB and there is a large body of evidence to confirm that GBL and BD are converted to GHB after oral administration. GBL and BD have been sold and substituted for GHB in an effort to circumvent state and federal laws. If intended for human consumption, both GBL and BD may be treated as a "controlled substance analogue" under the CSA pursuant to 21 U.S.C §§802(32) (A) and 813.

Comments and additional information are welcomed by the Drug and Chemical Evaluation Section; Fax 571-362-4250, Telephone 571-362-3249, or Email DPE@usdoj.gov.
