GHB (GAMMA-HYDROXYBUTYRATE)

Classification: Anesthetic and central nervous system depressant

Background: GHB is a low potency central nervous system depressant that has been popularized as a date-rape drug and a recreational intoxicant. It was first introduced in 1960 as an anesthetic. It was also marketed at gymnasiums and health food stores as an alternative to steroids for weight control. 1,4-butanediol (BDL) and gamma-butyrolactone (GBL) are efficiently converted in the body to GHB and therefore have the same effect as GHB. Only GHB is eliminated in the urine. In April 2000, GHB was placed on the Schedule I list of federally controlled substances, but BDL and GBL remain legal in most parts of the country.

Legally Obtained With Prescription: Schedule I. Illegal in the U.S.

Legally Obtained: GBL is available as an alternative solvent or industrial cleaner.

Street Names: G; Liquid X; Liquid XTC; Scoop; Georgia Home Boy; Easy Lay; Ever Clear

Mode of Use: Taken orally

Appearance: Colorless powder or liquid

Metabolism and Detection in Urine: 1,4-butanediol (BDL) and gamma-butyrolactone (GBL) are efficiently converted in the body to GHB. Only GHB is eliminated in the urine. Typically, the detection time following the last dose is less than 12 hours.

Physiological Effects: Decreased heart rate, visual disturbance, hypothermia and unconsciousness. Prolonged use can lead to physical dependence.

Psychological Effects: GHB is a relatively fast-acting depressant causing euphoria and loss of inhibition. It is reported to be a less expensive alternative to MDMA (ecstasy).

Screen Test: Performed by liquid chromatography tandem mass spectrometry (LS-MS/MS)..

Confirmation Test: Performed by liquid chromatography tandem mass spectrometry (LS-MS/MS).

Cutoff Levels:

Screen Test: 20 ug/mL Confirmation Test: 5 ug/mL

