

# Hydromorphone

## WHAT IS HYDROMORPHONE?

Hydromorphone belongs to a class of drugs called “opioids,” which includes morphine. It has an analgesic potency of two to eight times that of morphine, but has a shorter duration of action and greater sedative properties.

## WHAT IS ITS ORIGIN?

Hydromorphone is legally manufactured and distributed in the United States. However, abusers can obtain hydromorphone from forged prescriptions, “doctor-shopping,” theft from pharmacies, and from friends and acquaintances.

### What are the street names?

Common street names include:

→ D, Dillies, Dust, Footballs, Juice, and Smack

### What does it look like?

Hydromorphone comes in:

→ Tablets, rectal suppositories, oral solutions, and injectable formulations

### How is it abused?

Users may abuse hydromorphone tablets by ingesting them. Injectable solutions, as well as tablets that have been crushed and dissolved in a solution may be injected as a substitute for heroin.

### What is its effect on the mind?

When used as a drug of abuse, and not under a doctor’s supervision, hydromorphone is taken to produce feelings of euphoria, relaxation, sedation, and reduced anxiety. It may also cause mental clouding, changes in mood, nervousness, and restlessness. It works centrally (in the brain) to reduce pain and suppress cough. Hydromorphone use is associated with both physiological and psychological dependence.

### What is its effect on the body?

Hydromorphone may cause:

→ Constipation, pupillary constriction, urinary retention, nausea, vomiting, respiratory depression, dizziness, impaired coordination, loss of appetite, rash, slow or rapid heartbeat, and changes in blood pressure

### What are its overdose effects?

Acute overdose of hydromorphone can produce:

→ Severe respiratory depression, drowsiness progressing to stupor or coma, lack of skeletal muscle tone, cold and clammy skin, constricted pupils, and reduction in blood pressure and heart rate

Severe overdose may result in death due to respiratory depression.

### Which drugs cause similar effects?

Drugs that have similar effects include:

→ Heroin, morphine, hydrocodone, fentanyl, and oxycodone

### What is its legal status in the United States?

Hydromorphone is a Schedule II drug under the Controlled Substances Act with an accepted medical use as a pain reliever. Hydromorphone has a high potential for abuse and use may lead to severe psychological or physical dependence.