

CHEMICAL HEALTH TREND CORNER:

6 Psychedelic Trips From Legal Drugs You Probably Didn't Know About

By [Rula Al-Nasrawi](#) / [AlterNet](#)

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Where there's a law, there's always someone finding a way around it. For people who like to experiment with drugs, that law is probably the Controlled Substance Act, which keeps most drugs that can get you high strictly illegal, black-market items. Because of the U.S. war on drugs, getting caught with a prohibited substance like weed, LSD or magic mushrooms can lead to more than a minute in jail. But people who like to experiment with drugs—whether to expand their minds or just escape—know they don't always have to go to a disheveled pot dealer on a skateboard or a 45-year-old coke dealer in a tinted-window vehicle for a recreational drug experience. Some of these drug explorers have sifted through various items that are legally available in drug stores, your kitchen or your own backyard, played with the dosages and combinations, and written down their experiences for the Internet to see.

For those who don't spend time Googling drug stories, they almost always appear on Erowid.org. Erowid is an online resource dedicated to drugs, both legal and illegal. It is self-described as "an online library containing tens of thousands of pages of information about psychoactive drugs, plants, and chemicals." In addition to clinical information about every drug you can (and can't) imagine, the site's "Experience Vaults" contain stories from drug explorers, ranging from a first-time shroom voyage to a horrendous meth comedown.

Here are 6 mind-altering funky legal drugs
*[Editor's Note: **Please note that some or all of the substances listed below can be dangerous or toxic. AlterNet does not endorse their use.]***

1. [Nutmeg Euphoria](#)

When it comes to surprising legal highs, nutmeg definitely threw me in for a loop. Turns out it's proven that around 4 to 8 tablespoons of the household spice will give you mild hallucinations.

2. [Cough Syrup](#)

Whether you're sick or just trying to get messed up, cough syrup is another way to use legal meds to alter your mind. While 'misuse or abuse' is still technically against the law, it's pretty unlikely this popular over-the-counter item will land you in jail. Dextromethorphan or DXM, is one of many active ingredients in some cough syrups, acting as a dissociative hallucinogen.

3. [Kava and Damiana](#)



If cannabis and psilocybin have taught us anything, it's that plants can produce some serious feelings of euphoria—and then some. This security guard Erowid user took a combination of Kava root and the shrub Damiana (a plant only prohibited in Louisiana because of increased synthetic cannabis overdoses that sometimes contained Damiana).

4. [The Fly Algaric Mushroom](#)

When it comes to mushrooms, most seasoned drug users would immediately think of Psilocybin mushrooms. However, Amanita Muscaria also known as the fly algaric, is another legal alternative for some. The mushroom itself resembles a typical cartoon toadstool, red with white spots, but the high that comes with ingesting it is what makes it the most interesting. This Erowid user consumed a few caps and found themselves high but nauseous throughout their trip.

5. [Morning Glory](#)

While this substance is not completely legal in the U.S. it does have its loopholes. Morning Glory itself is a legal, popular flower in the United States, but its active ingredient, LSA, is illegal in some areas. Morning Glory seeds have been used as a hallucinogen for centuries.

6. [Salvia](#)

While its legality in the United States is questionable at this time, Salvia divinorum is one of the most mind-altering drugs out there. Even a tiny hit of the psychoactive plant from the mint family can send a seasoned tripper to another

dimension or time period. This particular tripper took a couple of hits of 35x extract Salvia divinorum in the woods only to be transported to a reality where the end of the universe was now.

Chemical Health Trend: Smokeless Tobacco

There are two forms of smokeless tobacco: chewing tobacco and snuff.

Chewing tobacco is usually sold as leaf tobacco (packaged in a pouch) or plug tobacco (in brick form) that is put between the cheek and gum. Users keep chewing tobacco in their mouths for several hours to get a continuous buzz from the nicotine in the tobacco. Snuff is a powdered tobacco (usually sold in cans) that is put between the lower lip and gum. Just a pinch is all that is needed to release the nicotine, which is then swiftly absorbed into the bloodstream, resulting in a quick high. Sounds harmless, right? Keep reading . . .

What is in smokeless tobacco? Chemicals. Keep in mind that the smokeless tobacco you or your friends are using contains many chemicals that can be harmful to your health.

Here are a few of the ingredients found in smokeless tobacco:

- Nicotine (addictive drug)
- Polonium 210 (nuclear waste)
- Cadmium (used in car

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batteries) • N-Nitrosamines (cancer-causing) • Lead (poison) • Formaldehyde (embalming fluid) The nicotine contained in smokeless tobacco is what gives the user a buzz. It also makes it very hard to quit. Why? Because every time you use smokeless tobacco your body gets used to the nicotine; it actually starts to crave it. Craving is one of the signs of addiction, or dependence. Your body also adjusts to the amount of tobacco you need to chew to get a buzz. Pretty soon you will need a little more tobacco to get the same feeling. This process is called tolerance, which is another sign of addiction.

Some people say smokeless tobacco is okay because there is no smoke like a cigarette has. Do not believe them. It is not a safe alternative to smoking. You just move health problems from your lungs to your mouth. Physical and mental effects of smokeless tobacco If you use smokeless tobacco, here is what you might have to look forward to:

- Cancer. Cancer of the mouth (including the lip, tongue, and cheek) and throat. Cancers usually occur at the spot in the mouth where the tobacco is held. The surgery for cancer of the mouth could lead to removal of parts of your face, tongue, cheek, or lip.
- Leukoplakia. When you hold tobacco in one place in your mouth, your mouth becomes irritated by the tobacco juice. This causes a white, leathery-like patch to form, and this is called leukoplakia. These patches can be different in size, shape,

and appearance. They are also considered precancerous: If you find one in your mouth, see your doctor immediately.

- Heart Disease. The constant flow of nicotine into your body causes many side effects including increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, and sometimes irregular heartbeats. Nicotine in the body also causes constricted blood vessels that can slow down reaction time and cause dizziness—not a good move if you play sports.
- Gum and Tooth Disease. Smokeless tobacco permanently discolors teeth. Chewing tobacco causes halitosis (BAD BREATH). Its direct and repeated contact with the gums cause them to recede, which can cause your teeth to become loose. Smokeless tobacco contains a lot of sugar which, when mixed with the plaque on your teeth, forms acid that eats away at tooth enamel and causes cavities and chronic painful sores.
- Social Effects. Having really bad breath, discolored teeth, and gunk stuck in your teeth and constant spitting can have a very negative effect on your social life

Check for early warning signs of oral cancer Check your mouth often, looking closely at the places where you hold the tobacco. See your doctor right away if you have any of the following:

- a sore that bleeds easily and does not heal

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- a lump or thickening anywhere in your mouth or neck
- soreness or swelling that does not go away
- a red or white patch that does not go away
- trouble chewing, swallowing, or moving your tongue or jaw.

Even if you do not find a problem today, if you are still using smokeless tobacco be sure to have your mouth checked at every routine doctor or dentist visit

How Teenagers use 'Finstal' Accounts to Hide on Social Media. What's a Finsta? And does your teen have one?

You may be wondering, what the heck is a "finsta"? No, it's not the latest new app. Finsta refers to a fake Instagram account. Just add "F" to "Instagram" for "Finstagram" and shorten that to "Finsta".

A finsta is a second Instagram account used for sharing with a smaller circle of followers. A finsta is usually a private Instagram account. While a teen's primary account might also be private, a finsta is for close friends only.

WHY ARE KIDS CREATING FINSTAS?

Instagram is likely a teen's primary social media account and it is not uncommon to have over 100 followers, sometimes many, many more. The longer you've been using Instagram, the more followers you have. Teens – particularly girls – are feeling the pressure to create a beautifully curated Instagram account. They don't just snap a photo and upload (that's for [Snapchat](#)); on Instagram they will edit the photo within another app (perhaps [VSCO](#)), create and refine the perfect caption, then publish and hope for the likes to roll in.

Having a second Instagram account or finsta gives them a place to share their silly pictures, inside jokes and rants, or anything not meant for public consumption. It's a place to share with their closest friends, not every single person they've met since middle school. It's a place where they can put their guard down and not worry about how many "likes" they will receive.

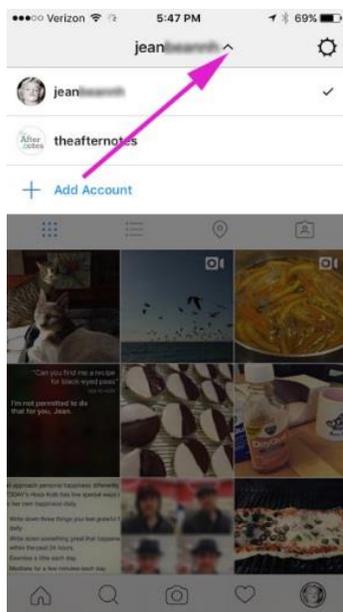
(Another reason for creating a finsta might be to hide social media activity from parents – sorry kids, I just outed you.)

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD HAS A FINSTA?

There are a few ways you can determine if your child has a second Instagram account:

1. Ask them.
2. Instagram recently introduced the ability to switch back and forth between

accounts without logging out of one and logging into another. Take a look at the app on their phone. Click on their profile (icon in the lower right) and then look next to their username at the top. If you see an arrow next to it, click the arrow. If there are any other accounts in use, they will show up here. And, this is where someone can add a new account (which will require a different e-mail address than used on the primary account).



3. Take a look at their list of followers and who they are following. Your teen may be following his or her own finsta and then you'd see it here, although likely using a fake name. Oftentimes kids will collaborate on a finsta; it could be a joint venture, and they may have more than one finsta.

SHOULD PARENTS BE WORRIED ABOUT FINSTAS?

In one sense, parents could look at fake Instagram accounts as a good thing. It means your child has given some thought to what they want to share with a wider audience vs. smaller group of friends. An area of concern in general, as noted in the NY Times article "[On Fake Instagram, a Chance to Be Real](#)", is the very notion of a finsta account in the first place. If a teen's Instagram profile and photos were a true reflection of their lives, a fake account may not even be necessary. As a commenter on that article put it "So, the real Instagram accounts are their fake selves, and the fake accounts are their real selves".

And there might actually be some pressure to have a Finsta (as noted in this [article about Finstagram from a teen's perspective](#)). So not only are teens feeling like they're left out if they're not on social media, they may feel it is not enough to even have just one account.

Lastly, just as with anything posted online, any photo or video posted to a finsta account is out of your control the moment you post it. While the finsta account is shared only with those you trust, that could be a fluid group especially in adolescence. A so called friend could always take a screenshot and share outside your inside circle. Always a good reminder when discussing with your kids. So talk to your teen – they may be impressed that you've heard of Finstas! Find out if and how they're using a fake Instagram account.

[Read full article here](#)

The Teenage Years and the Warning Signs Parents Need to Respond to.

Teenage years of growth can be thought of as; a potent mix of hormonal changes, growing independence, and still-developing brain structures. All of these are difficult enough but now add our fast paced world of technology make the teenage years particularly difficult.

Many adults look back on their teen years as a particularly challenging rite of passage, and today's teens face even more pressures than their parents' generation. With the advent of social media and cyberbullying, teens are exposed to more negative influences and peer pressure than ever. Adding experimentation with drugs and alcohol can have a strong impact on mood that sometimes results in suicide.

According to the article; Teen Alcohol & Drug Use- How it Impacts Suicide Rates.
Author: Destination-Premier Teen Treatment Program Sustainable Wellbeing

The Link between Substance Use and Suicide

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among American teenagers, causing widespread pain throughout families and communities. Alcohol or drug abuse is one of the key risk factors for suicide in

adolescents. These substances enter the brain and affect its reward pathway, leading to the "high" feeling that teenagers often seek. Over time, however, use of drugs and alcohol can dramatically change the chemistry of the brain. These brain changes place a person at greater risk of feeling intense sadness or depression.

Another link between substance abuse and suicide is physical dependency. Chronic drug or alcohol use — even with marijuana, which teenagers often believe is lower risk — can cause the body to physically crave the drug. This dependency frequently leads to feelings of helplessness or hopelessness. As the body comes down from a high, individuals often report feeling intense depression, irritability, or anxiety. All of these effects increase risk of suicide.

Additionally, access to drugs may provide a means for teenagers to commit suicide. [According to](#) the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, nearly 10% of drug-related trips to the emergency room made by adolescents involved attempted suicide. In many of these cases, ready access to prescription drugs was a contributing factor.

Recognizing the Warning Signs for Teen Suicide

Although many parents worry about their teens, few have been educated about the warning signs for drug use and suicide. For obvious reasons, adolescents are often secretive about drug and alcohol use, and



many parents remain oblivious. Other parents assume that "it's just a phase" or that experimentation with substances is a normal part of adolescence. Unfortunately, this sometimes causes teenagers at greatest risk of substance abuse and suicide to slip through the cracks.

Not all teenagers exhibit the same warning signs when struggling with drug abuse, but many show:

- A sudden increase in secretiveness, particularly if the person was previously very forthcoming about details of her life
- Pulling away from friends and family
- Joining a new crowd of friends, particularly if these friends are known to engage in risky behaviors
- Declining grades in school
- Changes in attention to hygiene and physical appearance
- Dropping out of or losing interest in previously enjoyed extracurricular activities

Of course, some of these warning signs are also exhibited by teenagers who are being bullied at school, have changing interests, or simply are figuring out what they want out of their lives. A more serious cause for concern is co-occurring symptoms of depression, including:

- Persistent feelings of sadness or anxiety
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Dropping grades in school
- Feeling hopeless or desperate
- Feelings of guilt or shame
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Changes in appetite
- Difficulty making decisions
- Irritability or persistent anger
- Engaging in self-harm (e.g., cutting, burning the skin)
- Thoughts of suicide

Because teenagers' brains are still developing, they often do not have the coping resources to deal effectively with pain and depression. Suicide may seem like an attractive option, and drug use may exacerbate the problem.

[It's essential for adolescents in this situation to receive prompt, compassionate care in a professional treatment setting.](#)