

DrugFacts: Salvia Revised December 2012

Salvia (*Salvia divinorum*) is an herb common to southern Mexico and Central and South America. The main active ingredient in Salvia, salvinorin A, is a potent activator of kappa opioid receptors in the brain.[1,2](#) These receptors differ from those activated by the more commonly known opioids, such as heroin and morphine.

Traditionally, *S. divinorum* has been ingested by chewing fresh leaves or by drinking their extracted juices. The dried leaves of *S. divinorum* can also be smoked as a joint, consumed in water pipes, or vaporized and inhaled. Although Salvia currently is not a drug regulated by the Controlled Substances Act, several States and countries have passed legislation to regulate its use.[3](#) The Drug Enforcement Agency has listed Salvia as a drug of concern and is considering classifying it as a Schedule I drug, like LSD or marijuana.

Health/Behavioral Effects

People who abuse salvia generally experience hallucinations or “psychotomimetic” episodes (a transient experience that mimics a psychosis).[4,5](#)

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