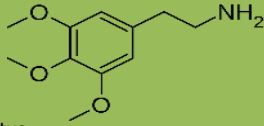


# San Pedro

## MESCALINE

Obtained from the *Trichocereus pachanoi* cactus



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The San Pedro cactus, with specific preparation, can produce powerful psychedelic experiences in those who choose to ingest it (1). Historically, this empathogen was used in the Andes Mountains of South America for ceremonial healing practices and its use is common still today in South America but also in other places all over the world where it has been newly adopted (1,2).

### APPROVED INDICATIONS

- Mescaline is a S9 drug in Australia.
- It can only be used for research with a permit.
- There is no approved use in Australia.
- Ornamental use is allowed but intent for criminal use would be determined by law enforcement/in court (3, 4).



### DRUG COMBINATIONS

- MAOIs
- Amphetamines



### COMMON EFFECTS

- Changes in perception of body and mind
- Mood enhancement and increased empathy
- Increased heart rate, vomiting, seizures
- Hallucinations and visual illusions
- Anxiety and agitation (1, 9).

### MECHANISM OF ACTION

Mescaline works on the brain similarly to other well-known psychedelics like LSD and it has structural similarities with dopamine and noradrenaline. How mescaline causes altered psychedelic states is not fully understood at this point in time (5).

### CONSERVATION OF MESCALINE-CONTAINING CACTI

- The San Pedro cactus is faster growing
- and more widespread than Peyote
- San Pedro may be a less harmful choice
- on the native users and the environment.



Many types of cacti contain sources of mescaline including *Lophophora Williamsii*, more commonly known as Peyote, *Trichocereus Peruvianis*, *Echinopsis zamnesia* and more. Peyote is a slow growing cacti that is listed as vulnerable on the IUCN red list. This popular western source of mescaline is becoming more threatened in its natural habitat and more scarce for the native users of this plant due to its increasing popularity. Other sources of mescaline like in the San Pedro cactus which is fast growing and more widespread could be better alternatives. Despite its fast growing nature, if over harvested, San Pedro could meet a similar fate. Knowing where you are sourcing your mescaline from and who is profiting from it is a way that you can reduce negative impacts on the plant, the local environment in which it grows and the local peoples who use it (6, 7).

Some people may choose to consume multiple different types of drugs together to produce different effects, increased effects or to decrease unwanted side effects. MAOIs (like anti-depressants) stop processes in your body from metabolizing mescaline and therefore dangerous levels of this substance can build up in the body and interact with other neurotransmitters leading to serotonin syndrome. Mescaline is also chemically related to amphetamine so using it with other amphetamines and stimulants can have dangerous effects on the body as these substances can both increase heart rate and blood pressure too much leading to problems with the heart (8).

### POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF PROLONGED USE

Studies have shown that prolonged use of any form of mescaline, including San Pedro, have very little potential for abuse. Although these studies are preliminary, as they were conducted within communities indigenous to San Pedro and were anecdotal (10).

Although San Pedro is widely considered a low-risk psychedelic within the scientific community, there are still risks for those with pre-existing conditions, including hypertension or heart disease as it accelerates heart rate among other effects. There are also some concerns about San Pedro's effect on the liver, although this is only supported by preliminary studies. At high doses these potential effects on the heart and liver are amplified, as well as a significant drop in blood sugar levels which can lead to loss of consciousness, seizures and death. For those with a history of mental health issues there may be an increased risk of psychosis (5,8).

## PHARMACEUTICAL and BIOCHEMICAL PROPERTIES

There is a wide range of dosages one can consume for the active component mescaline, around 150mg to 700 mg. To estimate how much mescaline you are consuming there are different suggestions made for the different forms of the cactus. The San Pedro cactus and other forms of mescaline can be found in dried or fresh whole cacti segments and in milled powders in capsules. Doses will vary in potency, concentration and volume as they are not regulated like over the counter drugs. These elements can affect duration, intensity and side effects of the trip. A trip can last from as little as 4 to as long as 12+ hours depending on the person's individual body chemistry and these previously mentioned factors (5, 11).

*\*San Pedro, as a mescaline-containing cacti, while often legal to grow are widely banned from human consumption. We do not encourage or condone the use of this plant where it is against the law. However, we accept that illegal drug use occurs and believe that offering responsible harm reduction information is imperative to keeping people safe.*

## DOSING\*

As San Pedro has no approved indications, there are also no approved dosing rubrics. There is however a thriving and historical ceremonial context which has its own dosing guidelines and procedures. Within ceremonial contexts, San Pedro is calculated based on 3.75mg/kg of weight and a standard dose is estimated to be 200-300mg, for a person that weighs 70kg the calculated dose is 262mg. Due to the inability to calculate the exact concentration from fresh or dried cacti some ceremonial spaces often recommend using a piece of cactus which roughly measures the length and width of your forearm and hand when balled into a fist. It is essential as well to be aware that there is no way to ascertain how much mescaline is present in a cactus, making dosing in this way difficult (11).

## CEREMONIAL USE

San Pedro is often used in shamanistic ceremonies for personal growth and to help the journeyer dissolve any negative preconceptions about life and build new perspectives around their reality. The plant has also been used anecdotally to strengthen interpersonal bonds, particularly familial ones. San Pedro is also commonly used by folk healers to treat common illnesses, this is often done with a boiled San Pedro tea (2, 10).

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