

It wasn't a normal trip ... it was really demonic almost,' says Gold Coast woman hospitalised after overdose

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A MAN was taken to hospital overnight following a suspected overdose of the hallucinogenic drug "flakka" which left 16 people hospitalised over the weekend.

A 38-year-old man was hospitalised after being picked up at a Mermaid Beach address by emergency services at 10.15pm last night.

He was understood to be acting violently and ambulance officers believe he was having a suspected overdose.

The man was transported to the Gold Coast University Hospital.

OVERNIGHT:

A SLIGHTLY built 18-year-old woman who thinks she accidentally took the zombie drug "flakka", showed superhuman strength, throwing a security guard and a policeman around, says a man who saw the incident.

And the teenager says hallucinations brought on by the drug were so "demonic" they "freaked" her out.

The young woman said that within seconds of snorting the drug in the bathroom of the Sin City nightclub in Surfers Paradise in the early hours of Sunday morning, she knew she had made a huge mistake.



'It wasn't a normal trip ... it was really demonic almost,' says a Gold Coast woman hospitalised after an overdose. Picture: file

She thought she had bought ecstasy. She and a friend took the drug together about 1.30am before breaking into fits of "demonic" hallucinations.

"I was sitting in the (toilet) cubicle and out of nowhere the cubicle just started moving and it was shrinking in on me," she said.

"I just started freaking out — I wasn't myself.

What Is Flakka and Why Is It So Addictive?

"I suddenly started screaming and stuff and I was banging on the walls trying to escape."

The young woman said the hallucinations were gory and scary.

"I was seeing my friend having a seizure and stuff. Obviously it was a hallucination but it was so vivid," she said.

"My jaw kept on locking and even last night I had trouble sleeping because I kept on thinking it was happening and I was coughing up blood and stuff — it was really gory.

"It wasn't a normal trip-out that made me really happy.

“You weren’t happy — it was really demonic, almost.”



A press conference was held on the weekend in Surfers Paradise on the dangers of the Zombie Drug known as Flakka or Gravel. Queensland Ambulance regional operations supervisor Stephen Burns is worried that a combination of high-rises, heavy traffic and hallucinogenic drugs is a recipe for disaster. Picture: Glenn Hampson

Sin City manager Charlie Embley said it was lucky the 18-year-old had the episode inside the club where staff could contain the situation.

At times, during the hour-long incident, she displayed superhuman strength.

“For her safety and that of other patrons we detained her in the bathroom,” Mr Embley said.

“It wasn’t safe to walk her through the venue.

“It was so scary.

“One minute she was flipping out, then the next she’d be saying, ‘I’m sorry, I’m sorry’.



The woman thought what she was buying was ecstasy.

“I had a police officer and a security guard and she was throwing them around.

“She would lift her arm up and the security guard was struggling to hold her.”

Mr Embley said it would be scary to think what the consequences might have been if the teen had taken the drug on the street or at a private unit without the club’s quick access to security, police and paramedics.

“Our staff did a fantastic job — we identified there was strange activity in the bathroom straightaway so we could control it before it got out of hand,” he said.

The Griffith University architecture student said in hindsight she should have recognised the drug was not MDMA.



A press

Conference was held in Surfers Paradise on the dangers of the Zombie Drug known as Flakka or Gravel over the weekend. Gold Coast Superintendent Michelle Stenner speaks to the media. Picture: Glenn Hampson

“MDMA is a bit of an off-white colour, whereas this was very white, very clear,” she said.

The woman said she was embarrassed about her experience and felt sorry for her mother, who was called by a nurse early on Sunday morning.

“I’ve done stuff before and I feel like a lot of people do but ... you don’t realise how much trust you’re putting into these people when they give you something,” she said. The teenager was taken to Robina Hospital and woke up at 5am before being released about an hour later.



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Two of her friends were taken to Gold Coast University Hospital.

One, a man who stopped breathing after taking the drug in the Sin City men's room, remains in hospital.

Mr Embley said it was the first time he had seen flakka effects first-hand and planned to brief his staff to be on the lookout.

"Now it's here, it's only going to get worse," he said.

The incident at Sin City was one of 16 at the weekend of people suspected to have been affected by flakka which has not been reported in Australia before.

Other suspected flakka episodes were reported at the Islander Hotel, Shooters nightclub, Melbas, the central Surfers Paradise Chillout Zone, a Mermaid Waters home and a Mantra hotel in Surfers.

Drug an unknown quantity for medics

A DRUG and alcohol organisation has questioned whether the "zombie drug" which landed 16 people in hospital and one fighting for life is in fact "flakka".

Queensland Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies chief executive Rebecca MacBean said while the symptoms appeared similar, she would be hesitant to point the finger.

“It’s like a ghost story that pops up every now and again to scare people,” she said.

“It’s never been found in Australia and it’s much more likely that this is a synthetic LSD or



Concerns are held for GC600 revellers. Picture: Richard Gosling
MDMA that’s just a more potent formula than people are used to taking.”

Ms MacBean said the issue with substances of this nature was that paramedics often were not sure how to treat it.

“With MDMA or LSD or cocaine we have a pretty good idea about what the dose-to-response ratio is and what the complications are going to be.

“If you land in any major hospital and you have had MDMA and are having an adverse reaction, then they know what you took.

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heavy traffic and hallucinogenic drugs is a recipe for disaster. Picture: Glenn Hampson

“The difference with these ones is emergency are flying blind and having to respond to symptoms without understanding what comes next and whether what they’re doing will help or hinder.”

While most of those taken to hospital in the early hours of Saturday and Sunday morning have now been discharged, a Victorian footballer believed to be aged in his early 20s is still in a critical condition.

Queensland Ambulance yesterday confirmed there had been no more incidences throughout Sunday night.

However, with the lead-up to schoolies, Queensland Ambulance senior operations manager Stephen Burns said they were urging anyone who needed help or assistance to call triple-zero.

“That is something we’ve been mindful of,” he said.

“Don’t be afraid to call triple-0 — we are not the police, we are ambulance officers that are there to look after your health and wellbeing.

“We’re not there to judge or do anything like that, so please ring an ambulance.”