



# INFORMATION BULLETIN



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U. S. D E P A R T M E N T O F J U S T I C E

## *2C-B (Nexus) Reappears on the Club Drug Scene*

### **Overview**

Distribution of the hallucinogen 2C-B (4-bromo-2,5-dimethoxyphenethylamine) has been sporadic since it became a Schedule I drug in 1995. Since 1999, however, seizures of this drug have increased. Law enforcement authorities in diverse locations across the country have recently reported

seizures of 2C-B. Retail distributors of MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxyamphetamine), typically Caucasian males, market 2C-B as MDMA, and some dealers are unaware that the drug they are selling is 2C-B. The map depicts locations of some 2C-B seizures since December 1999.



## United States

**Chicago, Illinois.** Members of the Chicago Police Department received information that a Caucasian male in his midtwenties was selling MDMA and cocaine from a residence in Chicago. Upon obtaining permission to search the residence, officers discovered two large, clear bags containing 8,200 white capsules. Upon analysis, the capsules were determined to be 2C-B. The man claimed that he was holding the drugs for another individual and believed that the capsules contained MDMA. Police suspect that the drugs were obtained in Las Vegas, Nevada.

**Olathe, Kansas.** Investigators for the Johnson County, Kansas, Sheriff's Office purchased over 100 pills purported to be MDMA in early 2001. Laboratory analysis determined that the pills were 2C-B. They were small, thick (or double-stacked), off-white pills stamped with a bullhead logo. They cost \$25 each. The dealer claimed that he was unaware the pills were 2C-B rather than MDMA. Officers arrested the dealer's source of supply, who also thought the pills were MDMA. Both of these individuals were Caucasian males.



Kansas City, Missouri, Police Department

**Kansas City, Missouri.** In September 2000, police officers arrested a 24-year-old Caucasian male resident of Johnson County, Kansas, near a Kansas City nightclub that is popular with users of MDMA and other club drugs. The man, sweating profusely and in need of medical attention, was found to be in possession of 74 white 2C-B tablets. The tablets were stamped with a bullhead logo. Authorities also seized several bottles and ampules of a liquid that subsequent laboratory analysis determined to be the anabolic steroid testosterone enanthate, a Schedule II controlled substance, and 1,4-butanediol, a precursor chemical for the production of GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyrate).

**Willow Grove, Pennsylvania.** The September 2000 edition of the Microgram, published by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), indicated that the National Medical Services Analytical Laboratory in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, recently identified 2C-B in tablets submitted for analysis. The 100 single-scored, round, off-white tablets with brown specks were the first samples of 2C-B the laboratory had encountered. Laboratory officials would not reveal the exact location of the 2C-B seizures.

**Houlton, Maine.** In June 2000, officials with the Maine Drug Enforcement Task Force in Houlton arrested a Caucasian male for a violation of his probation. The 20-year-old was in possession of three pink tablets, 5 millimeters in diameter, with no markings. Laboratory analysis determined them to be 2C-B. The subject refused to cooperate with authorities, who have not seen Nexus since that time.

**Sioux Falls, South Dakota.** The Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Police Department (SFPD) purchased 10 capsules of purported MDMA for \$30 each in May 2000. The department's forensics laboratory later identified the samples as 2C-B. Investigators purchased the capsules, which were clear and contained an off-white powder, from a female rave party promoter. She had purchased the 2C-B from a young Caucasian male who obtained the drugs in either Tucson or Phoenix, Arizona. SFPD officials stated that this was their first encounter with 2C-B.

**Las Vegas, Nevada.** Las Vegas, Nevada, Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD) officials reported that 2C-B became available in the area in April or May 2000. 2C-B was sold as MDMA, primarily in nightclubs, in clear, off-white or tan capsules and in very small (1.03 milligrams) beige-colored pills with raised centers. The distributors were Caucasian males in their midtwenties. Authorities served a search warrant at the residence of one of these individuals and seized over 300 pills and 55 capsules of 2C-B. The laboratory that analyzed the drugs had received five other samples of 2C-B during 1999.

As of May 2001, LVMPD reported that undercover officers purchased 1,900 tablets of 2C-B for \$16,000 (\$8.40 per pill). The dealer informed LVMPD that his source of supply resided in southern California. This supplier purchased powdered 2C-B in kilogram quantities from an unidentified source. LVMPD also reported that club goers specifically request 2C-B.

**Hampton County, Virginia.** The Virginia State Police stopped the driver of a Pennsylvania registered vehicle in Hampton County, Virginia, for littering in December 1999. The occupants were destined for Philadelphia. After a drug dog alerted on the car, the police searched the vehicle and passengers. Officers confiscated eight capsules containing off-white powder, later determined to be 2C-B, seven capsules of MDMA, and a marijuana pipe. The drugs were hidden inside a gumball machine. Police arrested a Caucasian female for possession of these drugs.

Also in December 1999, a special agent from the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, working in conjunction with the Hampton Police Department, purchased four capsules of methamphetamine from a Caucasian male during a rock concert at the Hampton Coliseum. Police officers arrested the individual and during a search of his person, seized a plastic bag containing one capsule filled with an off-white powder and several broken capsules. Laboratory analysis later determined that these capsules contained 2C-B. The suspect was also in possession of MDMA, cocaine, and marijuana.

## **International**

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The drug 2C-B has appeared in Europe and Asia as well as in the United States.

In August 2000, members of the Kent Police in Dover, England, arrested a man in possession of 66 white tablets (15.5 grams) of 2C-B that had a Mickey Mouse logo stamped on them. Since the man had no history of foreign travel or contact with foreigners, officials speculated that the man purchased the drug

from a crew member of a ship. Authorities have not encountered 2C-B since this seizure. (Source: Her Majesty's Customs & Excise.)

In February 1999, Japanese police arrested a Japanese immigration official assigned to the New Tokyo International Airport for possession of over 7 grams of 2C-B and MDMA. Authorities believe the man purchased the drugs over the Internet. (Source: *Asahi Evening News*, "Drug Bust Nets Three," 13 February 1999.)

## **Production**

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Groups responsible for producing and distributing 2C-B are largely unknown to law enforcement. Though research for this Information Bulletin did not identify any recent instances of 2C-B production in the United States, law enforcement authorities in both the United Kingdom and Canada have arrested individuals for manufacturing this drug.

British authorities arrested a 23-year-old college student for attempting to manufacture Class A drugs. The man set up an elaborate laboratory in a bedroom of his parents' home and obtained enough chemicals to manufacture approximately 7,500 tablets of 2C-B. Source: *The (UK) Times*, "Student Turned Bedroom Into Class A Drugs Factory," 2 February 1999.

In September 1996, Canadian authorities raided a drug laboratory outside Vancouver and arrested an individual wanted by U.S. law enforcement authorities for drug-related offenses for over 20 years. The fugitive was producing LSD, 2C-B and MDMA. Source: *Reuters*, "San Francisco 'LSD Guru' Faces 20 Years in Jail," 22 January 1999.

## **What is 2C-B?**

2C-B is an illicit, synthetic, Schedule I hallucinogen.

**What are other names for 4-bromo-2,5-dimethoxyphenethylamine?**

Nexus	2C-B
Bromo	Toonies
Performax	2's
Spectrum	Synergy
Venus	Eve*
Erox	Zenith
Cloud Nine	Utopia
Cee-Beetje	Afterburner Bromo
BDMPEA	MTF

\*MDA is also referred to as "Eve."

**How much does 2C-B cost?**

A single dosage unit of 2C-B, usually a 10 milligram capsule or tablet, typically sells for \$10 to \$30. Larger retail purchases cost between \$200 and \$500 per gram. Wholesale purchases of 2C-B can lower the price to a range of \$100 to \$300 per gram.

**How is 2C-B used?**

The drug 2C-B can be ingested orally in its pill and capsule forms or "snorted" in its powder form. Users report that 2C-B's effects are more intense when it is snorted. Some users consume 2C-B in combination with other illicit drugs including MDMA (called a "party pack") and LSD (referred to as a "banana split").

**What are 2C-B's typical doses and effects?**

The drug 2C-B is capable of producing a number of effects based on dose. A small increase in dose may produce radically different, unpredictable, and potentially violent effects. Since this drug is clandestinely produced, users cannot know the exact dose they are ingesting.

According to the DEA, 2C-B is a psychoactive substance that produces euphoria and increased visual, auditory, olfactory, and tactile sensations. Doses as low as 4 milligrams make users become passive and relaxed and the effects are similar to those of MDMA. Orally ingesting 8 to 10 milligrams increases 2C-B's stimulating effects and produces a

completely intoxicated state. Mild hallucinations are also possible. Doses of 20 to 30 milligrams result in very overt hallucinations. Even higher doses will produce extremely frightful, LSD-type hallucinations and morbid delusions.

Proponents of its use describe the effects of orally ingesting 2C-B in different terms. They consider the drug to be both a psychedelic and an "entactogen" ("touching within"). At low doses, users report feeling "in touch with themselves and their emotions" and often report erotic sensations. At higher doses, users indicate that moving objects seem to leave "trails" behind them. Surfaces sometimes appear covered with geometric patterns and seem to move or "breathe." Listening to music in conjunction with taking 2C-B reportedly causes patterns, colors, and movements to be distorted.

The average duration of the euphoric effects from orally ingested 2C-B ranges between 4 and 8 hours. The table represents estimates from various users of the inception and duration of the stages of the drug's effects.

**Effects of 2C-B**

Stage	Time
Onset	20 - 90 minutes
Coming up	15 - 30 minutes
Plateau	2 - 3 hours
Coming down	2 hours
Aftereffects	2 - 4 hours

Snorting 2C-B produces significantly more rapid and intense effects than orally ingesting it. Users typically snort one-third to one-half the oral dose.

**What does 2C-B look like?**

Law enforcement agencies most often encounter 2C-B capsules and pills having the following characteristics:

- ◆ Off-white pills with brown specks

- ◆ Pink, red, or purple pills
- ◆ Small, off-white, thick pills with a bullhead logo stamp
- ◆ Clear, yellow, or gray and blue capsules



Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Police Department

### What are potential side effects of 2C-B use?

Because 2C-B is clandestinely produced, users are unaware of the dose they are ingesting and may be surprised by the drug's effects. Users who ingest relatively low doses of 2C-B and expect MDMA-like effects may actually experience frightening, LSD-like hallucinations. Individuals who snort 2C-B report extreme pain in their nasal passages and sinuses for up to 30 minutes after ingestion. Other side effects include nausea, muscle clenching, anxiety, and claustrophobia. Oral ingestion often results in gastrointestinal distress and increased mucus production that may result in coughing.

The September 1998 *Journal of Analytical Toxicology* reported that very little data exist about the pharmacological properties, metabolism, and toxicity of 2C-B. The relationship between its use and disease and death are unknown.

### Who uses 2C-B?

Retail dealers sell 2C-B to MDMA and LSD users at raves and dance clubs. Little is known about the wholesale distribution of 2C-B.

### Can law enforcement identify 2C-B through field tests?

The Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Police Department recently discovered that the Marquis Reagent Field Test–902, a presumptive test for MDMA (ecstasy), amphetamine-type compounds (amphetamines and methamphetamine), and opium alkaloids (heroin and morphine)



ODV, Inc.

could be used to identify the presence of 2C-B. After receiving confirmation from the department's forensics laboratory that an exhibit submitted was 2C-B, investigators retested it using the field test described above. Detectives indicated that a **bright green color** resulted.

The manufacturer of the Marquis Reagent Field Test, ODV Inc., confirmed this to be true. Although testing for 2C-B is not advertised on the packaging, it is the only drug known to produce a **bright green color** when using this test. The manufacturer originally designed the test to turn “orange to purple” for heroin or morphine, “black” for MDMA and “orange to brown” for amphetamine or methamphetamine.

### Will urine screens detect the presence of 2C-B?

No. Currently, NIDA-5—the most commonly used urinalysis test for cocaine, amphetamines, cannabinoids (THC), opiates, and phencyclidine (PCP)—is not capable of identifying 2C-B specifically. Normal urine screens for hallucinogens also do not detect 2C-B. Of the substances commonly tested for, 2C-B is most closely related to amphetamines. However, it is unknown what, if any, dose of 2C-B would trigger a positive amphetamine result in a standard drug test.

**What is the history of 2C-B?**

In the 1980s and early 1990s, several foreign companies legitimately manufactured 2C-B under the brand names Nexus, Erox, and Performax and advertised that it would alleviate impotence, frigidity, and diminished libido. It was sold at adult book and video stores, “head” shops, and some nightclubs. Although it has no formally recognized medical uses, some mental health clients took 2C-B in conjunction with traditional therapy.

The DEA first encountered 2C-B in 1979, before it was a scheduled substance. Federal and state laboratories in Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Texas began receiving exhibits of 2C-B for analysis in the late 1980s or early 1990s. Law enforcement authorities seized 2C-B laboratories in California in 1986, in Arizona in 1992, and again in California in 1994.

According to the DEA, 2C-B was available in the Miami, Florida, area in 1993, as a sexual enhancement drug. Packaged in yellow, unmarked capsules, 2C-B sold for \$17 to \$25 per capsule. Users could also purchase 10 capsules in a matchbook-like package complete with instructions for using the drug. The drug was sold at adult bookstores, bars and dance clubs.

On June 2, 1995, the DEA placed 2C-B on Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act. This synthetic drug is structurally similar to other Schedule I hallucinogens. It has a high potential for abuse and has no accepted medical use in the United States.

Some other countries have either controlled or outlawed 2C-B:

1977	United Kingdom	1997	Netherlands
1998	France	1998	Germany
1998	Japan	1998	South Africa
1998	Canada	1999	Sweden
2001	Internationally controlled by the Psychotropic Convention		

**Outlook**

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Law enforcement agencies concerned with club drug distribution and abuse should consider 2C-B a potential drug threat. Due to the broad range of dose-dependent effects, law enforcement personnel may encounter users exhibiting a variety of behaviors, from sedation to paranoia.

Encounters with 2C-B are likely to increase due to its marketing as MDMA and the rapidly increasing appetite for synthetic club drugs at raves and dance clubs. The recent reappearance of 2C-B in geographically diverse locations throughout the United States suggests that it is being sold through existing MDMA distribution networks.

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**Sources**

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        Domestic Strategic Unit  
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