Yopo, Cohoba and Vilca

Harm Reduction Information

Snuffs from the seeds of Anadenanthera trees:
yopo and cohoba (A. peregrina), vilca and cebil (A. colubrina)

Last updated 10/28/2026

Please Read First

This page is educational. It is not medical, legal or professional advice, and I am not a physician or an attorney. This information was gathered from published harm reduction organizations, medical and legal sources, and my own training and experience, and I may have made mistakes. You are responsible for confirming anything here before you act on it, with a qualified medical provider and, for questions of law, an attorney. Laws and knowledge about psychedelics change quickly, and some of what is written here may have changed since the date above. Nothing here encourages anyone to break the law. It exists to reduce harm for people who will make their own choices. I do my best to keep up with current law and research, but I cannot promise that anything here is current or complete.

It is advisable to meet with a psychedelic-informed physician for an assessment before using any psychedelic or related substance.

Where this information came from: The sources listed under References, and my own training and experience.

This document was drafted with the support of Claude, an AI assistant. I reviewed it, and AI and I can both be wrong, so check anything that matters to you before you act on it.

What Yopo, Cohoba and Vilca Are

Yopo, cohoba and vilca are hallucinogenic snuffs made from the seeds of trees in the genus Anadenanthera, thorny legumes native to the Caribbean and South America [1][2]. The human work on the main compound, bufotenine, comes from the 1950s and 1960s, and most of what has been written about the snuffs is Indigenous-context ethnography, community wiki pages and seed-seller marketing. I name which is which as we go.

Bufotenine (5-HO-DMT) is usually the main compound in the seeds, with DMT and 5-MeO-DMT minor, variable or absent in the material that has been analyzed [3][1]. Powders and plants are easily confused, and a name like yopo or vilca does not tell you what a given powder holds. The sections below explain why.

Where It Comes From

Anadenanthera peregrina is called yopo, jopo, niopo, cohoba, cojoba and parica, among other names. Its close relative Anadenanthera colubrina is called vilca, willka, huilca and

cebil [1][2]. Vilca has also been used for another plant, Acacia visco, which holds only traces and is probably not psychoactive [4]. The names overlap in books and on labels. Parica, for instance, is also used for preparations from a different genus, Virola [5]. Cohoba is both the name of the snuff and of the Taino ceremony in which it was taken [6].

Two things get confused with these seed snuffs. Epena, or yakoana, the snuff of the Yanomami in the writing of Davi Kopenawa, is made from the bark resin of Virola trees, a nutmeg relative with a different chemistry that centers on 5-MeO-DMT and related compounds [7][8]. Some Yanomami groups also make a seed snuff from Anadenanthera peregrina, which they call hisioma, so the same people can use both [8][9]. Hapé (rapé) is a tobacco snuff and has its own sheet. If you are looking for the chemicals that matter here, the DMT and 5-MeO-DMT sheets cover those two compounds, and the Ayahuasca sheet covers the MAO-blocking vine that some Piaroa healers add.

The trees themselves are worth a word. Anadenanthera peregrina is not native to much of the Orinoco region where yopo is used. Trees were carried there and traded, and Piaroa seed seekers are described as traveling long distances for good trees [10][11][8]. Anadenanthera colubrina is listed as Least Concern by the IUCN, though Brazil gives it high conservation priority because of logging [2]. Illegal mining and logging threaten Piaroa territory and the traditions tied to it [10].

On Hispaniola, a friar traveling with Columbus, Ramon Pane, recorded in 1496 that Taino healers inhaled a powder called cohoba through a cane tube, lost consciousness quickly, and spoke of visions; his account was published in 1511 [5][1]. Early writers confused the powder with tobacco, which the Taino also used, and the botanical link to Anadenanthera seeds was made by W. E. Safford in 1916 [5]. Starch grains consistent with this tree were found on a grinding tool from a precolonial site in eastern Puerto Rico dated to about 1150 to 1250 [6].

On the mainland, Humboldt reported yopo among the Maypure in 1801, and the botanist Richard Spruce wrote a detailed account among the Guahibo about fifty years later [5]. Archaeological finds include snuff trays and tubes in the Andes and on the Peruvian coast, with dates reported from about 1200 BC to about 1000 AD, and bone pipes holding DMT residue that radiocarbon dating placed far earlier; I read those dates in a tertiary source and did not check the original papers [2]. A roughly 1,200-year-old tomb at San Pedro de Atacama in northern Chile held snuff powders in which bufotenine, DMT and 5-MeO-DMT were reported [12]. A compilation of older assays warns that an archaeological analysis from 1991 did not involve verifiable plant material, so I treat the ancient chemistry as suggestive [3].

In Peru and Bolivia, vilca came from Anadenanthera colubrina, and its use by Inca shamans is reported from the sixteenth century. Ott writes that the Incas may also have used it as an enema, and he says it is unclear whether the aim was intoxication or purging [5]. At Wari sites in Peru, seeds were reportedly combined with a fermented drink [2]. Ethnographic sources also mention vilca as a purgative and in healing and luck rituals [4].

Cultural Respect and Sourcing

For the Piaroa (who call themselves Huottuja), yopo belongs to healers and to a long apprenticeship. ICEERS describes use for healing and spiritual connection, along with moral and emotional training, and stresses that yopo is not recreational [13]. DoubleBlind reports that Piaroa shamans use it for diagnosis and healing, and that its use is tied to a body of ancestral knowledge and apprenticeship [10]. A 2011 anthropological study found that Piaroa shamans consider yopo necessary, that many laypeople regard it as a relic, and that Piaroa stories hold that yopo can be a source of harm as well as help; for the Cuiva, using it is also a way of resisting persecution [14].

Among the Taino, cohoba was taken by the behique (spiritual leader) and the cacique (political leader) to speak with ancestors and deities and to read omens, and participants purged beforehand with carved vomiting spoons called kuisa. Many people in the Caribbean today identify as Taino and keep older practices alive [15]. A 2014 archaeobotanical paper concludes that cohoba was mainly a hallucinogenic aid for healers diagnosing illness [16].

The Huottuja Foundation, a Piaroa-led nonprofit, says its aim is to protect Piaroa culture, language, territory and the origin of its cultural products, and its pages say nothing about yopo use by outsiders [17]. I do not want to put words in anyone's mouth, and the sources I read hold no statement from Piaroa, Taino, Yanomami or Cuiva voices on non-Indigenous people taking yopo or cohoba. Material sold online as yopo is usually separated from the training, the ritual structure and the community that gave the snuff its meaning; ICEERS names ritual guidance as part of its safety advice [13]. If this tradition draws you, it is worth asking whose it is and who benefits from your interest.

About the Sources

The strongest sources I could reach are the 1985 Piaroa snuff analysis, the 1971 Yanomami study, Ott's chapters and self-experiments, and the 1994 forensic review. Several papers were read only as abstracts or through summaries, and the reference list says which. Wikipedia, a consumer health article, a seller's page and community wikis are weaker, and I name them when I lean on them. A magazine feature that describes its own claims as self-reported is also weak. Law-firm explainers carry some legal points, and I say where I could not check them against primary text.

What It Feels Like

No one can promise you what a session will be. The sources describe a short, physically hard-hitting snuff: a burn in the nose and head, nausea, often vomiting, and a visual phase that rises quickly and fades in waves. It is not ayahuasca, ketamine or MDMA. One range serves yopo, cohoba and vilca here because the descriptions rarely separate them. Almost all of it is about yopo; for cohoba the sources are historical and archaeological, and for vilca they are chemical and ethnographic. This section rests on ethnography and older observers

[13][10][18], one chemist's self-experiments with bufotenine [19], a magazine feature [10], community pages [20][21][22] and a seller's page [23]. About the Sources says where it is thin.

The Body

The nose and head speak first. Blowing the powder in is described as painful, and burning is the most common complaint [22][24][23]. PsychonautWiki lists tingling and numbness through the body and a raised heart rate, and says the nasal pain usually fades within minutes [20].

Nausea comes next for many people, and vomiting is common in Indigenous-context descriptions, where it is read as purifying [13][10]. The sources differ on how often it happens: a community article calls vomiting much less common than with ayahuasca [22].

ICEERS lists body vibration, geometric visions, changed perception of time and the body, and emotional detachment among the effects in the Huottuja tradition [13]. For bufotenine, PsychonautWiki says the body effects dominate and the visuals are comparatively mild [21]. Ott, a chemist who took isolated bufotenine himself, described a physically relaxing body effect with no flushing or discomfort when he snuffed it, which differs from the snuff accounts and is one person's report [19]. The heart is the most serious body question with bufotenine, and it is covered under Heart, Blood Pressure and Body Temperature.

How a Session Moves

Older ethnographic accounts describe stimulation and excitement, then hallucinations, then drowsiness that can deepen into unconsciousness [18]. Pane's 1496 account of cohoba, which I know only through secondary sources, says users lost consciousness quickly [5][1].

A Piaroa practitioner quoted in a magazine feature describes a dark, cinema-like screen of vivid images [10]. A community article describes a forceful start that settles into a calmer, more reflective state with a lingering afterglow, and sometimes a feeling of floating or flying [22]. PsychonautWiki gives the order as nasal pain, then body sensations, then visual effects that build quickly, then fading with nausea and discomfort [20]. The sources disagree on timing, and the figures are under How Long It Lasts.

Seeing and Hearing

Geometric visions are named in the Huottuja tradition [13], and a community article describes a vortex of vivid colors and intricate patterns [22]. PsychonautWiki lists enhanced colors and shapes that appear to morph [20]. Ott described, with isolated bufotenine snuffed in low light, a shimmering varnish over the world that seemed to breathe, and at the strongest level he tried, swirling colored arabesques [19].

Sound plays a part. Ott reported high-pitched ringing in the ears early on, then sharper hearing and a better sense of where sounds came from [19]. In the ceremonies described, the healer chants through the session [22]. Pane's account says people believed the room

turned upside down and men walked with their heads down; I did not read the original text [1].

Feelings

Euphoria is the main mood Ott reported, and he says some people may feel anxious or dysphoric [19]. ICEERS lists emotional detachment among the Huottuja-tradition effects [13]. A community article describes deep introspection, emotional release and a stronger sense of connection to nature, with anxiety among the less frequent complaints [22]. Fear and confusion are covered under Toxicity and the Mind.

Insight and Presences

Among the Piaroa, yopo belongs to healers, who use it for diagnosis and healing [10][13]; the Taino used cohoba to speak with ancestors and deities [15]. The tradition's own terms are under Cultural Respect and Sourcing.

ICEERS says that in the Huottuja tradition the visions are not meant to bring up personal memories, and that educational and emotional effects continue past the session [13]. A community article says many people report seeing the spirits of plants, animals and insects, and that more intense use can bring out-of-body visions [22]. Pane's account says people spoke incoherently while believing they were talking with spirits [1][18]. Ott quotes Pagés Larraya (1959) on depersonalization and a sense of some mystery surpassing known limits [19]. PsychonautWiki lists ego dissolution, time distortion and memory suppression among the reported cognitive effects of bufotenine [21]. Meaning, clearing and healing are traditional or personal belief, and no trial has tested them.

When It Is Hard

The hard part comes first and is mostly physical: the burn in the nose and head, nausea and vomiting [22][13][23]. A community article adds anxiety [22], and ICEERS lists confusion, disorientation, involuntary movements and overwhelming sensations without ritual guidance [13]; Toxicity and the Mind covers those. Nobody can tell you the strength of a given powder from its label (see How It Works in the Body), so how hard a session hits cannot be predicted. Adding a MAO-blocking vine makes it stronger and more nauseating (see Other Substances and Combinations). The heart question is under Heart, Blood Pressure and Body Temperature.

What Shapes the Experience

The preparation matters: unprocessed ground seeds give a weaker effect and stronger physical symptoms than prepared snuff [1][20], and the proportion of ash affects strength [13]. The route matters: swallowing destroys much of the effect [4], and blowing by another person is said to be more effective and less irritating than self-snuffing [20][23]. What is added matters, above all a MAO-blocking vine, which Piaroa healers sometimes add [25]. Context shapes the meaning: in the Huottuja tradition yopo is taken with a trained healer for healing and spiritual connection [13].

The Days After

The after-effects the sources name are nausea and general bodily discomfort as the peak fades [20], a lingering afterglow [22], and educational and emotional effects that ICEERS says continue beyond the session [13]. Ott reported no crash after snuffing isolated bufotenine and felt stronger and healthier afterward, which is one person's account [19]. Soreness or damage in the nose is covered under Nose, Sinuses and Lungs, and longer-term effects under Toxicity and the Mind.

How It Is Taken

Yopo is traditionally blown or snuffed through the nose. Each route carries its own risks, and the sheet says where the sources are thin.

Blown or Snuffed Through the Nose

This is the traditional route. In the Huottuja practice, another person blows the powder through a long tube, or the person uses a Y-shaped tube to inhale it themselves [13]. Bamboo and bird-bone tubes are described, and the Taino inhaled through a forked tube from a concave plate [1][10][6]. PsychonautWiki and a seed seller both say blowing is more effective and less irritating than self-snuffing [20][23]. The risks of this route are under Nose, Sinuses and Lungs and Toxicity and the Mind.

Forms You May Meet

How the snuff is made. The accounts differ, which is a reason to be careful about anyone who says there is one right way. In the Huottuja method described by ICEERS, green pods are harvested before they ripen, the seeds are crushed into a paste with other natural ingredients and alkaline plant ash, and the dough is dried over very low embers and stored as stones, then ground to a fine powder just before use. The proportion of ash affects strength [13]. De Smet and Rivier report that seeds are roasted and powdered with vegetable ash or shell lime, in one account ash from the bark of a Lecythidaceae tree [18]. For the Taino, the ash was judged by its fineness and whiteness, mixed with ground seed into a dough, flattened and cooked over a fire; seeds were harvested from October to February [6]. Chamakura, summarizing others, describes fermenting pods and shaping the softened seeds into cakes with cassava meal and lime or ashes [12]. Humboldt credited freshly burned lime for the snuff's power, which Ott treats as a mistake [5]. Piaroa shamans may add cuttings of Banisteriopsis caapi [25].

Ash and lime are alkaline. PsychonautWiki warns that calcium hydroxide, sometimes mixed in to help absorption, can permanently damage skin on contact [20]. Alkalinity may be part of why the nose burns, which is my reasoning.

What is sold. The product most easily found online is dried seed, usually described as Anadenanthera peregrina, plus ground powder. Seeds sold in markets in Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina are used as amulets and offerings as well as for snuff [11]. Seed sellers describe the seeds as Peruvian and claim they are true yopo rather than cebil, and

I found no way to confirm species from a photo or a listing [23]. Chemistry varies by species, region, age and storage, as described above, so what a vendor says about strength is not evidence.

Other Routes

Smoked. Unprocessed ground seeds can be snuffed or smoked, with a weaker effect and stronger physical symptoms than the prepared snuff [1][20]. Some groups smoked the seeds in the past [3]. The effect on the lungs of burning the seeds is not known. Bufotenine in hashish-like cubes is under Testing and Purity.

By mouth. Swallowing reduces the effect of the tryptamines [4]. Taken by mouth, moderate amounts cause nausea and vomiting, and PsychonautWiki says many tribes consider oral use dangerous and do not take large oral amounts [1][20]. Small amounts are described mixed into maize beer, and Wari elites reportedly used seeds in a fermented corn drink [20][2]. Enema use is reported for vilca among the Inca and for yopo-type seeds among the Mura and Omagua, and Ott is cautious about both [5].

Enema. Enema use is reported for vilca among the Inca (see Where It Comes From) and for yopo-type seeds among the Mura and Omagua, and Ott is cautious about both [5].

How Long It Lasts

The sources do not agree, and most timing figures are user reports. ICEERS gives the acute experience in the Huottuja tradition as about 30 minutes to an hour, with emotional and educational effects continuing beyond it [13]. Greatist says 45 to 60 minutes with a peak 20 to 30 minutes in, without a source [24]. An old ethnographic account of one Cuiva dose put the length between about a quarter of an hour and two hours [18]. Ott's self-experiments with insufflated bufotenine had effects within minutes, peaking around 35 to 40 minutes and lasting up to 90 [26]. PsychonautWiki gives 15 to 90 minutes for smoked bufotenine with 10 to 60 minutes of after-effects [21]. Taken by mouth, PsychonautWiki says effects run 2 to 3 hours, and it notes nausea and discomfort after the peak of snuffed yopo [20].

A MAO-blocking vine added to the snuff is said to lengthen the experience [10][25] (see Other Substances and Combinations). The range across sources is wide enough that no one can tell you how long a given session will run, [20].

About Yopo, Cohoba and Vilca and Their Effects on the Body

How It Works in the Body

Bufotenine is chemically N,N-dimethylserotonin, a close cousin of serotonin, and it acts on serotonin receptors in the body and brain [26]. It dissolves poorly in fat, which may limit how much reaches the brain. Nichols and Glennon suggested that the hallucinations reported in the 1950s injection studies might have come from its effects outside the brain, and McBride likewise describes strong peripheral serotonin effects at high doses that

could mask central ones [27][28]. Ott argued the opposite, that bufotenine is the compound behind the visionary effects of Anadenanthera snuffs, and he criticized earlier papers that dismissed it as inactive [19].

The evidence on snuffing it conflicts. In a 1985 study cited by McBride, intranasal bufotenine produced no effects, while Ott reported visionary effects within minutes from insufflated bufotenine and found vapor the strongest route he tried [28][19]. De Smet and Rivier called the nasal activity of bufotenine questionable and noted that the alkaline ash mixed into snuff may help alkaloids cross the nasal membrane [18]. Nobody has settled how much of a snuff's effect comes from bufotenine, how much from the small amounts of DMT and 5-MeO-DMT, and how much from the ash and any added plants. Swallowed bufotenine is largely broken down by the enzyme MAO, and after an injection most of it leaves the body as 5-HIAA, a serotonin breakdown product [26]. That MAO point matters under Contraindications.

What is in the seeds. The chemistry varies a great deal. In a compilation of older assays, A. peregrina seeds ranged from about 0.6 percent bufotenine (Rio Negro, Brazil) to about 7.5 percent (southern Venezuela). A Puerto Rican sample from 1948 held only about 0.009 percent DMT, and young seeds from Puerto Rico held mostly DMT with small amounts of 5-MeO-DMT and bufotenine [3]. One unspecified Brazilian sample was about 85 percent 5-MeO-DMT [3]. A. colubrina seeds from a shaman's garden in Argentina held about 12.4 percent bufotenine by dry weight, against 3.5 to 4.4 percent in two other Argentine samples, with little or no DMT in all three [3]. Yanomami hisioma seeds measured about 7.4 percent bufotenine and nothing else [8].

Other things shift the picture. Seeds changed in composition during storage in some of the old studies, and the pods, bark, leaves and seedlings carry different alkaloids from the seeds [3][1]. Bufotenine is more stable over time than DMT or 5-MeO-DMT [1]. Related compounds such as bufotenine N-oxide, DMT N-oxide, methyltryptamine and tryptolines are reported in various parts [1][2]. Prepared snuffs are a further step removed: two Piaroa snuffs analyzed in 1985 held about 10 mg per gram of bufotenine in one and only a trace in the other, both strongly alkaline, and one held a trace of harmine, which comes from a different plant, the vine Banisteriopsis caapi [18]. A 1967 analysis of a parica snuff found bufotenine, DMT, 5-MeO-DMT and harmine together [29]. I cannot tell you the strength of any powder, and neither can a vendor looking at a label.

Nose, Sinuses and Lungs

The nose takes a beating. People describe painful burning when the snuff goes in [24] [23]. PsychonautWiki says snuffing can cause nasal pain and damage, including bleeding, and that long-term repeated use may cause lasting damage [20]. Sharing tubes or notes carries an infection risk, covered under Conditions in Contraindications.

Heart, Blood Pressure and Body Temperature

The heart is where the science is most worrying and least settled. In 1956, Fabing and Hawkins gave bufotenine by vein to prison inmates in Ohio. Subjects reported flushing, a purplish face, chest heaviness, tingling, faster breathing, nausea, vomiting and retching, and some described visual changes at higher doses [26][28]. De Smet and Rivier report that Isbell, in later human studies, saw cardiac arrhythmias at higher injected doses and called them frightening enough that he stopped the experiments [18]. Ott, who considers the old studies of prisoners and psychiatric patients unethical and of limited relevance, writes that in them subjects had circulatory crises and facial discoloration, and at least one went into cardiac arrest and needed resuscitation [19]. A 1994 forensic review lists cardiovascular effects of bufotenine that include hypertension, arrhythmia, cyanosis (a bluish color of the skin) and others [12]. Wikipedia's snuff article cites a 1967 discussion saying the dose could not be pushed safely in people [30].

Other reports point the other way. McBride notes that Fabing's report included no blood pressure changes, and that a 1985 intravenous study found no cardiovascular, stomach or breathing problems and no flushing [28]. So the studies disagree with each other, they are old and small, they used injection, and they involved doses and routes that are not the same as a snuff. Nobody has measured blood pressure, heart rate or temperature in people taking yopo or vilca. What exists is lighter: a seller's page and PsychonautWiki say a faster heartbeat is common, and PsychonautWiki lists vasoconstriction and suppressed temperature regulation among user-reported effects [23][20][21]. ICEERS advises against use for people with mental or cardiovascular vulnerability [13]. Given that the alarming findings are about the heart, I treat it as a real, unquantified risk.

Vomiting, Fluids and Salt Balance

Vomiting. Vomiting is expected in the traditions (see The Body). The practical risks are choking or breathing in vomit when someone is lying down or heavily affected, and dehydration, and those are my reasoning, not findings.

Toxicity and the Mind

Overdose and deaths. I found no report of a death from Anadenanthera seeds or snuff in the sources I could reach. That is no evidence of safety: these snuffs are not tracked, nobody tests for bufotenine routinely, and I could not search the medical literature databases. The measured numbers are from animals: the lethal dose in rodents is about 200 to 300 mg per kg, with death from respiratory arrest, and Wikipedia says some human intravenous subjects showed peripheral toxicity at low doses [26][1]. Deaths linked to bufotenine in the literature I saw involved toads eaten by mistake, which carry heart-poisoning compounds called cardiac glycosides that the seeds do not [26]. The seeds and fallen leaves are reported to poison cattle, and the beans have been part of a purge medicine [1].

Seizures. I found no seizure reports from yopo or vilca. The signal that exists is indirect: lithium plus classic psychedelics, mostly LSD, in self-reports (see Contraindications), and PsychonautWiki's note that tramadol lowers the seizure threshold [31][21].

Fear, confusion and losing control. ICEERS lists anxiety, confusion, disorientation, involuntary movements with accident risk, and overwhelming sensations without ritual guidance as risks [13]. The reported mental effects are under What It Feels Like. The danger is structural: a person who cannot protect themselves for a stretch of time needs a sober person nearby.

Psychosis. I found no case reports of psychosis from yopo or vilca. There is an old line of research that found bufotenine in the urine of people with schizophrenia in the late 1960s, which later work did not confirm until a 2010 study found higher levels in people with autism spectrum disorder and schizophrenia; a 2025 systematic review found bufotenine more often in people with psychiatric diagnoses but judged the evidence insufficient as a biomarker [26]. That does not show the snuff causes psychosis, and it does not clear it either. Greatist advises people with long-term mental health conditions to avoid yopo, and ICEERS advises against use with mental vulnerability [24][13].

Lingering effects. I found no data on lasting perceptual changes or other effects from the snuffs. Chagnon and colleagues note that adult men in the Yanomamo villages they studied took relatively large amounts of these alkaloids daily, and that the researchers were investigating possible chromosome effects; the article reports no results [8]. So the long-term picture for frequent use is unknown.

Misidentified plants. The Taino word cojobana may have covered other psychoactive plants, including toxic ones related to Datura [6]. Datura-type plants are dangerous in a different way and have their own sheet (Deliriant Plants). If a seed or powder is not clearly what it is said to be, do not assume it behaves like yopo.

Legal Status

Last checked 10/28/2026.

Federal

Bufotenine is a Schedule I controlled substance, 21 CFR 1308.11(d)(17), DEA code 7433. DMT is listed at (d)(19), code 7435, and 5-MeO-DMT at (d)(15), code 7431. The paragraph covers any material, compound, mixture or preparation that contains any quantity of the listed substances [32]. In the text I read, peyote is the plant that has an explicit all-parts-of-the-plant clause; I found no similar clause naming Anadenanthera, though I did not read the final portion of that regulation [32]. Mind Medicine Law, reviewed 10/12/2026, says its record shows no separate federal rule on the tree or its seeds, and adds that the absence of a rule does not show the seeds are legal [33]. An older community summary lists the genus as not federally controlled with an ambiguous status, says the plants and seeds are sold and grown, says extracting the controlled compounds

yields something illegal to possess, and says it knows of no prosecutions for simply growing the tree [34]. That page carries no date.

My plain reading, which is not legal advice: the seeds hold scheduled substances, a prepared snuff is a preparation that contains them, and I would treat a snuff as controlled. Whether raw seeds or a living tree fall inside the schedule is less clear, and I could not find a court decision or agency statement that settles it. Unsettled does not mean safe. Importing seeds or snuff can also draw customs attention [34].

Recent developments as of 10/28/2026: on 9/23/2026 the DEA published a proposal (Federal Register document 2026-19400; the public inspection copy leaves the comment date as a placeholder, and other reporting gives 10/23/2026) to place five other tryptamines in Schedule I: 4-OH-DiPT, DiPT, 5-MeO-AMT, 5-MeO-MiPT and 5-MeO-DET [35][36]. The five do not include bufotenine, or the better-known DMT and 5-MeO-DMT.

Colorado

Colorado's controlled substances statute lists bufotenine in Schedule I at 18-18-203(2)(c)(IX) and DMT at (2)(c)(XI), per a site that says it is current through fall 2025. It names peyote as the one plant and does not mention Anadenanthera [37]. The Natural Medicine Health Act (Proposition 122, passed 11/2022) is the exception, and it names dimethyltryptamine, ibogaine, mescaline (excluding peyote), psilocybin and psilocin in any form. Bufotenine and 5-MeO-DMT are not named in it, and neither law-firm explainer I read says anything about them [38][39]. For adults 21 and older it removes state penalties for possessing, using, buying, giving away without payment and, at a private home secured from anyone under 21, growing or processing plants or fungi that can produce natural medicine [38].

The question that matters here is open: the seeds are mostly bufotenine, which the Act does not name, with DMT as a minor and sometimes absent component, which it does name. I found no court decision, agency guidance or law-firm analysis on whether the Act reaches Anadenanthera trees, seeds or snuff. The text as filed defines natural medicine in part by cross-reference to the state controlled-substances law, and I do not know how that reading plays out here [38]. Please do not treat Proposition 122 as protecting yopo or vilca.

The regulated program covers psilocybin and psilocin only. After 6/1/2026 the state may add DMT, ibogaine and mescaline (not peyote) if the Natural Medicine Advisory Board recommends it [38]. As of 10/28/2026 I found no decision adding DMT; the state's pages list advisory board minutes for 6/11/2026 and 7/9/2026 that I could not open, so I cannot rule out a discussion [39][40][41]. A law-firm explainer reports that HB 26-1325, signed 6/4/2026 and effective 8/12/2026, bars advertising of natural medicine, limits retail sales and starts an ibogaine pilot, and says none of this creates a legal market for DMT [39]. Selling yopo or vilca remains outside any Colorado protection I could find.

Contraindications

Contraindications are the medicines and conditions that make a substance riskier for you, sometimes dangerous. Evidence key: CT means controlled trial data, CASE means case reports, REPORTS means self-reports or community experience, and THEORY means expected from the pharmacology with no direct report found. For yopo and vilca there are no controlled trials and no case reports that I found, so almost everything below is REPORTS or THEORY, and I say so. Never stop a prescribed medicine on your own; talk to the prescriber first, since stopping can carry its own risk.

Medications

MAO inhibitors (phenelzine, tranylcypromine, moclobemide, selegiline) and natural ones (harmine, harmaline, Syrian rue, Banisteriopsis caapi). Bufotenine taken by mouth is broken down by MAO, and harmine or harmaline roughly doubled its potency in Ott's self-experiments [26][19]. Piaroa healers add caapi to yopo, and PsychonautWiki says this about doubles the potency and can increase nausea [25][20]. ICEERS says unguided yopo with Syrian rue is not recommended at all [13]. PsychonautWiki lists MAOIs among interactions that can cause dangerous toxicity with bufotenine [21]. A review of psychedelic serotonin toxicity treats MAO inhibitors combined with serotonin-raising drugs as the main danger and records serotonin toxicity case reports for 5-MeO-DMT with harmala alkaloids [42]. REPORTS and THEORY.

SSRIs and SNRIs (sertraline, fluoxetine, escitalopram, paroxetine, venlafaxine, duloxetine). No bufotenine-specific data. The psychedelic serotonin toxicity review predicts low risk of severe toxicity from standard doses of these drugs with a psychedelic that is not combined with an MAOI, along with blunted effects, and high risk once an MAOI is also present [42]. PsychonautWiki lists SSRIs among interactions for bufotenine, so I would not treat it as safe [21]. THEORY.

Tricyclics, mirtazapine, trazodone and buspirone. Same serotonin reasoning as above. THEORY.

Lithium. In an analysis of 62 online reports, 46.8 percent described a seizure with lithium plus a classic psychedelic; most involved LSD (27 of 55 reports) and psilocybin (2 of 6), and the one DMT report had no seizure. The authors call it a signal, not proof, and suggest treating lithium as a contraindication to classic psychedelics beyond microdosing [31]. PsychonautWiki discourages lithium with bufotenine strongly, citing psychosis and seizure anecdotes [21]. REPORTS.

Tramadol. It lowers the seizure threshold and is also serotonin-active [21]. THEORY and REPORTS.

Stimulants (amphetamine, methylphenidate, cocaine, pseudoephedrine). PsychonautWiki links stimulants with bufotenine to anxiety, paranoia, panic, thought loops, and risk of mania or psychosis [21]. Because bufotenine's own reported hazard is

cardiovascular, adding drugs that raise heart rate and blood pressure is a concern I reason from the old injection data, not from a yopo report [18][12]. REPORTS and THEORY.

Blood pressure and heart rhythm medicines (beta blockers, calcium channel blockers, ACE inhibitors, diuretics, antiarrhythmics) and QT-prolonging drugs. The old bufotenine studies raise rhythm and blood pressure concerns [18][12], and these medicines mean a heart or blood pressure condition is likely present, so this is a doctor conversation. Do not stop any of them yourself. THEORY.

Antipsychotics (risperidone, olanzapine, quetiapine, aripiprazole, haloperidol). Drugs that block serotonin 2A receptors may blunt or end psychedelic effects, and I reason from that general pharmacology only. THEORY.

Opioids, benzodiazepines and bupropion. Benzodiazepines are used in medical care for agitation in serotonin toxicity [42], and bupropion lowers the seizure threshold, which is my inference. THEORY.

Other serotonin-active products (triptans, St. John's wort, 5-HTP, dextromethorphan) and MAO-blocking drugs such as linezolid and methylene blue. They share the serotonin-toxicity concern in principle, and the last two block MAO, which is my reasoning. THEORY.

Blood thinners (warfarin, apixaban, rivaroxaban, daily aspirin). Snuff injures the nose and can make it bleed [20]. Whether thinners make that worse is my inference. THEORY.

Conditions

Heart disease and rhythm problems, and high blood pressure. The strongest signal in the whole literature concerns bufotenine and the heart, from old injection studies, and ICEERS advises against use with cardiovascular vulnerability [18][12][19][13]. Not studied in snuff.

Psychosis, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or a family history of them. No case reports found. ICEERS and Greatist advise against use with mental vulnerability or long-term conditions, and PsychonautWiki flags psychosis and mania risk with other drugs [13][24][21]. THEORY and REPORTS.

Seizure disorders. Seizure risk is the issue with lithium and tramadol [31][21]. THEORY.

Nose and sinus problems (chronic sinusitis, a deviated septum, frequent nosebleeds, recent nasal surgery, nasal polyps). Nasal pain and damage, including bleeding, are reported with snuffing, so any existing damage is a reason to think twice [20]. THEORY.

Asthma, COPD and other lung conditions. The reasons I list this are powder irritation and the faster breathing seen in injection studies [26]. THEORY.

Dehydration, an eating disorder, low blood sugar, or any condition where vomiting is dangerous. Vomiting is expected in the traditional use [13]. That is my reasoning, not a finding. THEORY.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding. Safe use is unknown. The chromosome research mentioned by Chagnon and colleagues is under Lingering effects in Toxicity and the Mind [8].

Liver and kidney disease. Most of an injected dose of bufotenine is cleared after breakdown by MAO and appears as 5-HIAA in urine [26], which makes me cautious about kidney and liver illness, but that is inference. THEORY.

Blood-borne infection risk. Shared snuff tubes and notes can pass on hepatitis C and HIV [20].

PTSD, dissociation, acute grief or recent trauma. The experience can be overwhelming, and I would want a clinician who knows you involved. THEORY.

Other Substances and Combinations

Combinations of medicines get their own document with a large warning at the top; this is the short version for yopo and vilca. Almost nothing here is controlled data.

Banisteriopsis caapi, Syrian rue and other MAO inhibitors. Used traditionally by some Piaroa healers, said to roughly double yopo, to lengthen and intensify the experience and to add nausea, and flagged by ICEERS as a dangerous mix when done without a trained guide [25][20][13]. See Contraindications and the Ayahuasca sheet.

Other plants taken alongside. ICEERS mentions Dada (Malouetia) as a Huottuja medicine that may be taken before yopo, [13].

Cannabis. PsychonautWiki says cannabis with bufotenine has unpredictable synergy and raises the risk of anxiety, paranoia, panic and psychosis, and suggests starting with a fraction of the usual cannabis amount [21].

Tobacco. The cojiba version mixed in tobacco [6]. Nicotine raises heart rate, which is my reasoning,. THEORY.

DMT, 5-MeO-DMT and other psychedelics. The seeds carry small amounts of DMT and 5-MeO-DMT, and the DMT and 5-MeO-DMT sheets describe their own cautions.

Hapé (rapé) and other snuffs. Both go into the nose, so irritation and nasal injury would plausibly add up, which is my inference. The Hapé sheet covers the tobacco snuff.

Addiction and Misuse

Physical dependence has not been shown, but the evidence is mostly an absence of reports. Chagnon and colleagues wrote that none of the Yanomamo hallucinogens were habit-forming, and that users could go for weeks without complaint, unlike with tobacco [8].

PsychonautWiki calls bufotenine not habit-forming, says the urge to use may drop with use, and reports no cross-tolerance with other psychedelics [21].

Tolerance is reported as fast. PsychonautWiki says it builds almost immediately, falls by half within about an hour, and returns to baseline in about two hours; this is from user reports and I found no measurement [21]. A practical meaning: a second go soon after the first would likely do less, which can lead people to take more, and with a substance that burns the nose and can strain the heart that is a poor trade.

Tobacco matters in this family of snuffs. The Taino also made a tobacco-laced version called cojiba [6], and nicotine is a drug people do become dependent on. Daily use in some Yanomamo men was a cultural pattern within a community and is a different thing from compulsive use [8].

Addiction means loss of control, craving and use that continues despite harm, often with withdrawal. Misuse means use that raises risk or causes harm: using alone, mixing with serotonin-active medicines, using to avoid feeling something, repeated use that damages the nose, or taking it outside any structure that could hold you. Yopo and vilca do not look strongly addictive in the little data there is, which does not exempt anyone from misuse. That is my clinical lens.

Testing and Purity

What Is Really in the Product

Several problems stack up. The first is identity: yopo and cebil (A. peregrina and A. colubrina) are close relatives with different typical chemistry, and sellers' claims about which one a seed is cannot be checked by looking [23][3]. The second is variation: even within one species, bufotenine content differs widely between samples and changes with storage (see How It Works in the Body) [3]. The third is the prepared powder, whose ash and added plants are rarely known and which may carry Virola or harmine [18]. The fourth is the alkaline additive itself, which can burn skin [20]. Names also travel: parica and cohoba have been used for more than one plant [5][6].

The one documented case of an unexpected product is the New York hashish: a forensic lab identified bufotenine in 42 samples sold as hashish between 1992 and 1994, as hard reddish-brown cubes with added fats; the author believed the source was Anadenanthera seeds but could not confirm it [12]. It was often smoked with cannabis, and the effect of smoking bufotenine is unknown [12]. That shows that a product's label and its contents can differ.

Test Kits and Labs

Reagent kits can flag that something is off, but a color change cannot confirm what is present or how much, and indole compounds often react alike. Bufotenine is an isomer of psilocin with nearly identical mass spectra, and a lab needs gas chromatography retention

times to tell them apart [12]. The Testing and Purity section of the DMT sheet lists mail-in services you could ask whether they accept plant material.

Preparation and Integration

No dosing or timing numbers are given here. The sources I could reach do not support safe numbers, and that is a conversation for a medical provider.

Before

Read Contraindications first, especially the heart, blood pressure and rhythm questions, any serotonin-active or MAO-blocking medicine, lithium, tramadol, and a history of psychosis or bipolar disorder. A psychedelic-informed physician can help you decide whether a heart check makes sense; that suggestion is my reasoning, not a published protocol. Do not stop a medicine yourself.

Think about whose tradition you are stepping into and what it requires. Know what the material really is, and treat any claim about its strength as unproven. Plan for vomiting: the Taino purged beforehand with spoons made for the purpose, and today people describe nausea as expected [15][13]. A bucket, a clear floor, no stairs and no driving are sensible.

Choosing a Facilitator

ICEERS recommends an experienced guide who knows the ritual protocols, in a calm and safe place [13]. In the Piaroa telling, misuse brings harm, and the maker's skill and self-control matter as much as the chemistry [10][14].

Have a sober person present who stays, knows what was taken, and can get help. Sit or recline with your head up, away from hard edges and water. Keep tubes and tools clean and your own [20]. Do not redose while the first effects are unclear. Expect that you may not be able to talk or walk well for a while, and that nausea can come on quickly even if it passes. These points are practical advice, and the evidence behind them is thin.

After

Nausea and discomfort can follow the peak (see The Days After). Rinsing the nose gently with saline after the peak has passed is community advice [20]. Drink water, eat lightly, sleep, and stay away from other substances for a while. Integration may not look like therapy: in the Huottuja tradition the visions are not meant to bring up personal memories (see Insight and Presences) [13]. If fear, confusion or low mood lingers, talk with a trusted person or a clinician, or call Fireside Project [43].

If You Need Help Now

In a medical emergency, call 911. If you are in emotional crisis, you can call or text 988. Fireside Project has trained volunteers who talk with you by phone or text during and after a psychedelic experience, and DanceSafe sells kits for testing what you hold.

Warning Signs

Call 911 for chest pain, severe palpitations or a very fast or irregular heartbeat, fainting, trouble breathing, or a blue or purple color in the face or lips. The evidence for these signs is under Heart, Blood Pressure and Body Temperature. If someone is unresponsive, place them on their side, check breathing, and follow the dispatcher, including CPR if breathing stops.

Call 911 for any seizure. Move hard objects away, put nothing in the mouth, and note the time. Call 911 as well for confusion, agitation, heavy sweating, high temperature, muscle rigidity or jerking, which can signal serotonin toxicity, especially after an MAO inhibitor or an antidepressant [42]. Tell responders exactly what was taken.

Vomiting that will not stop, an inability to keep fluids down, or choking needs medical help; a person who vomits while heavily affected should be on their side. A nosebleed that does not stop with firm pressure, or severe pain in the nose or eyes, also needs care. If lime or ash gets in the eyes or on skin, rinse with plenty of water right away and call Poison Help [20][44]. If a child or pet has eaten seeds or powder, call Poison Help. These are standard first aid steps.

Get medical help for psychotic symptoms, confusion or paranoia that do not pass after the effects should have worn off. For suicidal thoughts, call or text 988 at any hour [45]. Poison Help at 1-800-222-1222 is free and confidential [44]. Fireside Project at 62-FIRESIDE (623-473-7433) is open daily from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Pacific time, which is noon to midnight Mountain time. Its volunteers are trained peers rather than clinicians, and it is not a medical service or a suicide line [43].

Where to Find More Information and Support

Amounts, timing and combinations are best checked against these sources and with a medical provider, because they are updated more often than this sheet. Erowid, TripSit and PsychonautWiki include user reports and community writing, so read them as experience as well as research.

Erowid: https://erowid.org

DanceSafe: https://dancesafe.org

TripSit: https://tripsit.me

PsychonautWiki: https://psychonautwiki.org

Zendo Project: https://zendoproject.org

Fireside Project: https://firesideproject.org

MAPS: https://maps.org

Poison Help: 1-800-222-1222

For Yopo, Cohoba and Vilca Questions

ICEERS, a nonprofit, on yopo and the Huottuja method: https://www.iceers.org/yopo-basic-info/

Huottuja Foundation, a Piaroa-led organization (its pages do not address yopo use by outsiders): https://www.huottuja.org/

PsychonautWiki, community page on yopo; timing figures are user reports: https://psychonautwiki.org/wiki/Yopo

Chacruna Institute, on plant medicines and psychedelic justice: https://chacruna.net

Colorado Division of Natural Medicine: https://nmd.colorado.gov/

Mailing Lists

Erowid Monthly, a free email list: https://www.erowid.org/about/about_announcements.shtml

Erowid Extracts, the members' newsletter: https://erowid.org/membership/

MAPS email newsletter: sign up at https://maps.org

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