

**Tri-County
Women'
Centre**

Youth Truth Matters

Ecstasy...MDMA

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matters**

Ecstasy is a psychoactive drug. It is a well known club drug and used mostly by young persons. It comes in tablet form, is a stimulant and a hallucinogenic.

ESCTASY

The chemical name for ecstasy is 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA). The chemical structure is similar to that of amphetamine (a stimulant) and mescaline (a hallucinogen). It is a street drug that is only made in illegal labs. It is usually sold as a tablet, capsule, or powder. The tablets vary in shape, size, colour, and in the amount of ecstasy they contain. They may be stamped with a logo. This does not guarantee how pure the tablet is. Tablets may not have any ecstasy in them at all. They may contain cornstarch, soaps and detergents, or contain other drugs, such as:

- Caffeine
- Ephedrine
- Methamphetamine
- LSD
- PCP
- Ketamine



Ecstasy combined with LSD is sometimes called "candy-flipping" or "X & L."

A product that is sold as "herbal ecstasy" does not contain MDMA. It usually has ephedrine in it. Ephedrine is a natural stimulant. Abuse of ephedrine-containing products has been associated with an increased risk of stroke, heart attack, and death.

AKA

XTC, X, E, Adam, Eve, clarity, hug, beans, love drug, lovers' speed, peace, uppers, Molly

ECSTASY...MDMA

Ecstasy

is one of the most dangerous drugs threatening young people today. Called MDMA (3-4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine) by scientists, it is a synthetic chemical that can be derived from an essential oil of the sassafras tree. MDMA is also one of the easiest illegal drugs to obtain. Its effects are similar to those of amphetamines and hallucinogens. Distributed almost anywhere, it has become very popular at social events like raves, parties, concerts, frequented by both adults and youth.

How Does It Affect You?

Ecstasy is similar (in nature) to other amphetamines and hallucinogens. It speeds up the nervous system and acts as a mood enhancer. Also referred to as “the love drug”, Ecstasy often makes the user feel good, happy and relaxed – at least at first. Contrary to rumours, Ecstasy is not an aphrodisiac and can actually inhibit sexual performance.

An Ecstasy high can last from six to 24 hours but usually averages three to four hours. Some reactions have been reported to persist from one to 14 days after use. Ecstasy produces problems similar to those found among amphetamine and cocaine users. This can include:

- Psychological problems
- Confusion
- Depression
- Sleep problems
- Drug craving
- Severe anxiety
- Paranoia
- Psychotic episodes



The physical side effects that can occur while taking it can last for weeks. Users often experience muscle tension, involuntary teeth clenching, nausea, blurred vision, rapid eye movement, faintness, and chills or sweating. MDMA is very dangerous for those individuals with circulatory or heart disease, because the drug increases the heart rate and blood pressure.

For those users who develop an acne like rash, an increase risk of liver damage and other side effects may result if they continue to use the drug.

Ecstasy is usually swallowed in pill form, but can also be crushed and snorted, injected, or used in suppository form.

Did You Know

Ecstasy can be detected up to four days in the urine.

Will Ecstasy always produce the same effects?

The effects of ecstasy are unpredictable. It is different for everyone. The way someone feels after taking ecstasy depends on many factors

- age and weight
- mood, expectations, and environment
- medical or psychiatric conditions
- the amount of ecstasy taken (dose)
- how often and for how long ecstasy has been used
- use of other drugs, including non-prescription, prescription, and street drugs

Short-Term Effects

Short-term use of ecstasy can produce many other effects:

- decreased appetite
- increased blood pressure and heart rate
- increase in body temperature
- teeth grinding and jaw pain
- nausea and vomiting
- distortion of perception
- paranoia
- Hallucinations



MDMA causes an increase in body temperature (hyperthermia). When you combine the increase in body temperature with physical activity such as dancing and a warm environment, the situation can become worse. This increase in body temperature as well as the increase in blood pressure and heart rate can lead to kidney or heart failure, strokes and seizures. Some people drink too much water to avoid dehydration. This can result in dangerously low salt levels in the blood, which can lead to confusion, convulsions and delirium and can progress quickly to coma and death from the swelling of the brain.

When the effects of ecstasy have worn off, a user may feel anxious, confused, depressed, and may have trouble sleeping. Memory problems, 'flashbacks' and paranoia may also occur.

A person may not know that they are more likely to suffer from the dangerous effects of ecstasy. People with diabetes, epilepsy, heart and liver problems, or mental disorders are most at risk.

Ecstasy should not be combined with other drugs. Toxic reactions can occur if it is taken with drugs used to treat depression or HIV.

Long-Term Effects

Ecstasy has a rep for being a party drug. But side effects like tremors, teeth clenching and nausea, not to mention anxiety, depression and possible brain damage, will suck all the life out of any party, fast.

People who use ecstasy often may lose weight and develop chronic exhaustion, fatigue, and muscle aches. They often have trouble sleeping and may be anxious and depressed.

Some people develop flashbacks, delusions, hallucinations, and psychotic symptoms that last after the effects of ecstasy have worn off.

Studies in animals have shown that ecstasy can damage certain brain cells and that these effects can be long-lasting. It is possible that this occurs in humans as well, however more research is needed.

Taking too much Ecstasy can result in:

Extremely high body temperatures

High blood pressure

Hallucinations

Fast Heartbeat

Breathings problems

Death

Death often results from harmful overheating (hyperthermia), or from drinking too much at one time (hyponatremia). Hyponatremia is a condition where excess fluid intake swells the brain resulting in coma. A third cause of death is stimulation. Over stimulation of the nervous system can result in heart attack or brain haemorrhage.

Warning Signs of Overdose

Feeling hot or unwell

Becoming confused

Not able to talk properly

Headache

Vomiting

Not Sweating

Racing heart or pulse when resting

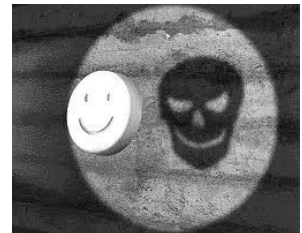
Fainting or collapsing

Loss of control over body movements

Tremors

Problems Urinating

OVERDOSE



Did You Know

Dehydration and overheating are dangerous but so is over-rehydrating. If you are dancing, sip a total of around 500 ml an hour; if inactive sip up to 250 ml an hour.