



For further information:

Drugaid

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0870 numbers are more expensive from a mobile. 0870 numbers are cheaper from a landline.

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Ecstasy

Ecstasy

E, Pills, Mitsies, Doves, Mud, MDMA

What does it look like?



What is ecstasy?

Ecstasy is the popular name for MDMA or methylenedioxymethamphetamine. It is a chemical belonging to the amphetamine family. It is a cross between a stimulant and a psychedelic, sometimes categorised as an empathogen. Ecstasy comes in a wide variety of tablets and capsules and increasingly powder. It is usually taken by swallowing (tablets), bombing (wrapping powder in paper and swallowing) or snorting (powder).

What will it do to me?

Many people experience an initial rushing feeling followed by a combination of feeling energetic and yet calm. Empathy with other people and an enhanced sense of communication are commonly reported as well as a loss of anger. Being told how lovely you are, how much someone loves you and getting lots of hugs and smiles were common experiences at dance events where lots of people were using E. Some people also report being much more aware of colours, shapes, music and touch. The ability to feel good at dancing to some people is a revelation.

Negative effects can include teeth-grinding, high blood pressure, flickery vision, feeling anxious and panicky, experiencing confusion, unpleasant distortion of the senses and vomiting as strong rushes take over the body.

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The effects of taking a moderate dose start after 20-60 minutes (longer if on a full stomach) and can last for up to several hours. The pupils become dilated, the jaw tightens and there is often brief nausea, sweating, dry mouth and throat. The blood pressure and heart rate increases and loss of appetite is common.

When does it become a problem?

- There have been deaths when people have taken ecstasy. Most of the deaths are due to overheating.
- After taking ecstasy you may feel very tired and low and need a long period of sleep to recover. This may last up to three or four days, known as a comedown.
- Regular use may lead to sleep problems, lack of energy, dietary problems and feeling depressed or anxious.
- Increased susceptibility to colds, flu, sore throat etc may follow.
- Psychological dependence on the feelings of euphoria and calmness and the whole scene around ecstasy use can develop.
- There have been indications of liver damage in some ecstasy users. Research is also indicating there may be a link between long-term use of ecstasy and mental illness, particularly depression.

Staying safer

- If using ecstasy whilst out dancing take a break from dancing and cool down, ecstasy can cause over heating.
- You should drink up to a pint of non-alcoholic drink every hour if you are dancing to help replace fluid lost through sweating. If you are not dancing drinking too much water can be dangerous.
- Mixing ecstasy with alcohol will increase the risk of dehydration and can make you take more risks.
- Mixing ecstasy with any other drugs increases risk and can be very dangerous.
- You can never tell what is in the pill or powder you are sold so be careful and suss out what the effect is, waiting at least an hour before taking any more.
- If you suffer from any kind of heart condition you should avoid stimulant drugs like ecstasy
- If you use ecstasy it is safer to use small amounts on an occasional basis.

The Law

Under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 Ecstasy is a Class A drug.

Penalties

- Possession:** 7 years' imprisonment or a fine or both.
Supply: life imprisonment or a fine or both.
Production: life imprisonment or a fine or both.