

# Ecstasy

## Where did it come from?

MDMA more commonly known as "Ecstasy" is a synthetic drug with both psychedelic and stimulant effects. In the past, some therapists in the United States used the drug to facilitate psychotherapy. In 1988, MDMA became a Schedule 1 substance under the Controlled Substances Act.

Today's MDMA production takes place in makeshift chemical labs in homes or shoddy production houses. The DEA has formulated a watch-list of precursor chemicals used to create the drug. Users are also at risk for being given a substitute drug. For example, PMA (paramethoxyamphetamine) is an illicit, synthetic hallucinogen that has stimulant effects similar to MDMA. However, when users take PMA believing that it's MDMA, they often think they have taken weak ecstasy because PMA(s) effects take longer to appear. They then ingest more of the substance to attain a better high, which can result in death by overdose.

## Where is it used?

Currently, MDMA is predominantly a "club drug" and is commonly used at all-night dance parties known as "raves." However, recent research indicates that the use of MDMA is moving to settings other than nightclubs, such as private homes, high schools, college dorms, and shopping malls.

Raves are characterized by high entrance fees, extensive drug use, and overcrowded dance floors. Club owners often seem to promote the use of MDMA at their clubs. They sell overpriced bottled water and sports drinks to try to manage the hyperthermia and dehydration effects of MDMA use: pacifiers to prevent involuntary teeth clenching; and menthol nasal inhalers and neon glow sticks to enhance some of the other effects of MDMA. Raves are often promoted as alcohol-free events, which gives parents a false sense of security that their children will be safe attending. In reality, raves may be havens for the illicit sale and abuse of club drugs.

## How does it affect the body?

MDMA is a stimulant whose psychedelic effects can last between 4 and 6 hours and it is usually taken orally in pill form. The psychological effects of MDMA include confusion, depression, anxiety, sleeplessness, drug craving, and paranoia. Adverse physical affects include muscle tension, involuntary teeth clenching, nausea, blurred vision, feeling faint, tremors, rapid eye movement, and sweating or chills. Because of MDMA(s) ability to increase heart rate and blood pressure, an extra risk is involved with MDMA ingestion for people with circulatory problems or heart disease. MDMA can raise the body temperature above 104 degrees Fahrenheit causing brain damage and ultimately death.

## Not my child!

The number of new MDMA users has risen since 1993, when there were 168,000 initiates. By 2001, the number of MDMA initiates reached 1.8 Million. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that 15.1% of 18- to 25- year-olds surveyed in 2002 had used MDMA at least once in their lifetime.

Most Emergency Room visits involving club drugs also involve other drugs such as: LSD, GHB, heroin, antidepressants, cough syrup, and Viagra.

In conclusion, the synthetic drug MDMA or commonly known as "Ecstasy" is found at almost any setting frequented by youth and young adults. The damaging effects of the drug can be long lasting and are possible after only a small number of uses. The trafficking of MDMA is increasing at an alarming rate, and multiple agencies have reported large seizures of the drug.

## Street Terms for Ecstasy

Adam ❖ B-bombs ❖ Bens

Clarity ❖ Cristal ❖ Decadence

Dex ❖ Disco biscuit ❖ E

Essence ❖ Eve ❖ Go

Hug drug ❖ Iboga ❖ X

Scooby snacks



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