Ecstasy

What is ecstasy?

Please note that drugs sold as ecstasy may not contain any methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA); they can be a mix of amphetamine, paramethoxyamphetamine (PMA), ketamine, NBOMe, methylone or other substances.

Ecstasy is a stimulant drug, which means it speeds up the messages travelling between the brain and body. Ecstasy contains the drug MDMA (methylenedioxymethamphetamine). However, many pills sold as ecstasy only have a small amount of MDMA or none at all. Other drugs and 'fillers' like household cleaning products are often used instead. This makes it hard to know what reactions to expect after taking ecstasy or how bad the side effects will be.

Other names
Eckies, E, XTC, pills, pingers, bikkies, flippers, molly.

How is ecstasy used?
Ecstasy comes in a tablet form and is usually swallowed. The pills come in different colours and sizes and are often imprinted with a picture or symbol.

Effects of ecstasy

There is no safe level of drug use. Use of any drug always carries some risk. It’s important to be careful when taking any type of drug.

Ecstasy affects everyone differently, based on:
- Size, weight and health
- Whether the person is used to taking it
- Whether other drugs are taken around the same time
- The amount taken
- The strength of the drug (varies from batch to batch)

The effects of ecstasy are usually felt about 20 minutes to an hour after it’s taken and last for around 6 hours.

The following effects may be experienced:
- Feeling happy, energetic and confident
- Large pupils
- Jaw clenching and teeth grinding
- Heightened senses (sight, hearing and touch)
- Excessive sweating and skin tingles
- Muscle aches and pains
- Nausea and reduced appetite
- Fast heart beat
- Dehydration
- Heat stroke
- Drinking extreme amounts of water (can cause death)

Drugs sold as ecstasy may not contain any MDMA.
If a large amount or a strong batch of ecstasy is consumed the following may also be experienced:

- Floating sensations
- Hallucinations
- Out-of-character irrational behaviour
- Anxiety
- Irritability, paranoia and violence
- Vomiting
- High body temperature
- Racing heart beat
- Fitting

**Coming down**

In the days after ecstasy use, the following may be experienced:

- Restless sleep and exhaustion
- Anxiety, irritability and depression
- Difficulty concentrating

The use of depressant drugs such as alcohol, benzodiazepines or cannabis to help with these ‘come down’ effects, may result in dependence on both types of drugs.

**Long term effects**

Regular use of a lot of ecstasy may eventually cause:

- Colds or flu
- Depression
- Needing to use more to get the same effect
- Dependence on ecstasy
- Financial, work and social problems

**Mixing ecstasy with other drugs**

The effects of taking ecstasy with other drugs – including over-the-counter or prescribed medications – can be unpredictable and dangerous, and could cause:

**Ecstasy + ice or speed:** increased risk of anxiety and reduced brain functioning due to dopamine depletion. Enormous strain on the heart and other parts of the body, which can lead to stroke.

**Ecstasy + antidepressants:** Drowsiness, clumsiness, restlessness and feeling drunk and dizzy.

**Withdrawal**

Giving up ecstasy after using it for a long time is challenging because the body has to get used to functioning without it. Withdrawal symptoms should settle down after a week and will mostly disappear after a month. Symptoms include:

- Cravings for ecstasy
- Aches and pains
- Exhaustion
- Restless sleep
Combining ecstasy and ice may cause an increased risk of:

- Agitation
- Trouble concentrating
- Anxiety and depression

References for this fact sheet are available at: druginfo.adf.org.au.

Further Information
The Druginfo website has information on:
- Help & support services
- Drug facts
- Treatment
- Withdrawal

Go to druginfo.adf.org.au