

# ecstasy



mdma

## WHAT IS ECSTASY?

- Ecstasy is MDMA, or 3,4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine. It belongs to a family of drugs called "entactogens," which literally means "touching within." Other drugs in this category include MDA, MDE and MDOB.
- Before it was made illegal in 1985, MDMA was used by psychiatrists as a therapeutic tool. Studies are currently underway in Spain and Israel assessing MDMA's effectiveness in the treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

## WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

- MDMA is a "mood elevator" that produces a relaxed, euphoric state. It does not produce hallucinations.
- MDMA takes effect 20 to 40 minutes after taking a tablet, with little rushes of exhilaration which can be accompanied by nausea. 60 to 90 minutes after taking the drug, the user feels the peak effects.
- Sensations are enhanced and the user experiences heightened feelings of empathy, emotional warmth, and self-acceptance.
- The effects of 'real' ecstasy subside after about 3-5 hours.
- Users report that the experience is very pleasant and highly controllable. Even at the peak of the effect, people can usually deal with important matters.
- The effect that makes MDMA different from other drugs is empathy, the sensation of understanding and accepting others.

## WHAT IS THE DOSAGE?

- E is almost always swallowed as a tablet or capsule. A normal dose is around 100-125 mg.
- Black market "ecstasy" tablets vary widely in strength, and often contain other drugs.

## IS ECSTASY ADDICTIVE?

- Ecstasy is not physically addictive. However, the drug can often take on great importance in people's lives, and some people become rather compulsive in their use. Taken too frequently, however, MDMA loses its special effect.
- MDMA releases the brain chemical serotonin, elevating mood and acting as a short-term antidepressant. Compulsive users may be unconsciously trying to self-medicate for depression. Effective treatments for depression are available with the proper diagnosis by a qualified physician.

## BE CAREFUL

- Ecstasy is illegal and a conviction for possession can carry long prison sentences.
- Frequent or high doses have been linked to neurotoxic damage in laboratory animals. It is still unknown whether such damage occurs in humans or, if it does, whether this has any long-term, negative consequences.
- Some people experience depression after taking MDMA. This is caused by MDMA's action on certain brain chemicals.
- There have been some deaths associated with MDMA. Usually these have been a result of heat stroke from dancing for long periods of time in hot clubs without replenishing lost body fluids.
- Much of what is sold as "ecstasy" on the black market actually contains other drugs, some of which can be more dangerous than MDMA, like PMA, speed, DXM and PCP.
- Mixing ecstasy with alcohol or other drugs increases the risk of adverse reactions.

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