

# Fact Sheet

# ECTASY

## What is Ecstasy?

Ecstasy is a slang name for 3, 4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine, or MDMA, which is a synthetic drug made in a laboratory. Ecstasy is sometimes called E, X, euphoria, XTC, or Adam. At one time, ecstasy was most often seen at raves or all-night dances and parties. Now, ecstasy is being used in other places such as house parties, school dances, or where friends are just “hanging out.” Ecstasy usually comes in tablets or capsules. They can be any colour and often have a design like a dove, butterfly, clover, or a hammer and sickle stamped on them. Ecstasy can also come in a powder, which is snorted or dissolved and injected.

Ecstasy is a combination of chemicals produced illegally in labs. Often other drugs are sold as ecstasy, so it's impossible to know what you're really getting. Some examples of other drugs found in tablets sold as ecstasy are methamphetamine, caffeine, ephedrine, ketamine, PCP, and even cocaine and heroin. These drugs have their own unpredictable and dangerous side effects, and many of them can cause serious damage to your heart and nervous system.

## What Does Ecstasy Do to the Body?

The effects of ecstasy are similar to amphetamine which is a stimulant and to mescaline which is a hallucinogen. Ecstasy affects the chemistry of the brain, in particular by releasing a high level of serotonin. Serotonin is a chemical in the brain that plays an important role in the regulation of mood, aggression, energy level, sleep, sensitivity to pain, among other things.

The effects of ecstasy usually begin within an hour of taking the drug, and may last four to six hours. The duration of the after effects are unpredictable, but may last for days or weeks.

## Short-Term Effects

- Grinding of teeth and jaw pain
- Sweating
- Increased blood pressure and heart rate
- Anxiety or panic attacks
- Blurred vision
- Nausea, vomiting and convulsions
- Death from severe dehydration and heat exhaustion, abnormal heart rate and liver failure

After the initial effects have worn off, users may experience after-effects:

- Depression, cranky, unable to concentrate, forgetful, exhausted, and feeling like everyone is out to get you.

# ECTASY

## Long-Term Effects

- May damage the brain cells that release serotonin which can mean your mood and sleep are disturbed for a long time after use.
- Long-lasting, maybe permanent damage to the brain's ability to think and store memories
- Flashbacks or psychosis
- Liver damage

## What Are The Risks?

- Because ecstasy is made from illegal labs, you never know what you are getting or how it will affect you
- Combining ecstasy with other drugs, illicit or prescription, may cause a toxic interaction
- Like any drug, driving or operating machinery while under the influence of ecstasy increases the risk of injury to the user and to others
- People with high blood pressure, heart or liver problems, diabetes, epilepsy, or any mental disorder are the most vulnerable to the potential dangers of ecstasy
- Trouble with the law as ecstasy is an illegal drug
- Ecstasy can kill you the first time you use
- The labs where ecstasy is made are extremely dangerous. The chemicals used can be very toxic and explosions occur often

## Addiction

Right now, there is no conclusive evidence that Ecstasy is physically addictive. However, studies show that it is possible to become psychologically dependent on Ecstasy. This means you may find yourself putting Ecstasy use above friends, family school, work, and other things in your life that are important to you.