



Drug Fact Sheet

Ecstasy/MDMA

WHAT IS ECSTASY/MDMA?

3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) acts as both a stimulant and hallucinogen, producing an energizing effect, distortions in time and perception, and enhanced enjoyment of tactile experiences.

Adolescents and young adults use it to reduce inhibitions and to promote:

- Euphoria, feelings of closeness, empathy, and sexuality

Although MDMA is known among users as ecstasy, researchers have determined that many tablets sold as ecstasy may not contain any MDMA, or may contain MDMA in combination to other harmful drugs, such as:

- Methamphetamine, ketamine, cocaine, cathinones, and caffeine

In addition, other drugs similar to MDMA, such as 3,4-methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDA) or paramethoxyamphetamine (PMA), are often sold as ecstasy, which can lead to overdose and death when the user takes additional doses to obtain the desired effect.

WHAT IS ITS ORIGIN?

MDMA is a synthetically produced drug. Western Europe is the primary source for MDMA seized in the United States. Some MDMA coming in from Canada is also seized, but with significantly fewer incidents than from Europe.

What are common street names?

Common street names include:

- Adam, Beans, Clarity, Disco Biscuit, E, Ecstasy, Eve, Go, Hug Drug, Lover's Speed, MDMA, Peace, STP, X, and XTC

What does it look like?

MDMA is mainly distributed and sold in tablet form often with logos, creating brand names for users to seek out. The colorful pills are often hidden among colorful candies. MDMA is also distributed in capsules, powder, and liquid forms.

How is it used?

MDMA use mainly involves swallowing tablets (50-150 mg), which are sometimes crushed and snorted, occasionally smoked, but rarely injected. MDMA is also available as a powder.

Users may take MDMA by "stacking" (taking three or more tablets at once) or by "piggy-backing" (taking a series of tablets over a short period of time). One trend among young adults is referred to as "candy flipping," which is the co-use of MDMA and LSD.

MDMA is considered a "party drug" or "club drug." As with many other drugs, MDMA is rarely used alone. It is common for people to mix MDMA with other substances, such as alcohol and marijuana.

What is its effect on the mind?

MDMA mainly affects brain cells that use the chemical serotonin to communicate with each other. Serotonin helps to regulate mood, aggression, libido, sleep, and sensitivity to pain. Clinical studies suggest that MDMA may increase the risk of long-term, perhaps permanent, problems with memory and learning.

MDMA causes changes in perception, including euphoria and increased sensitivity to touch, energy, sensual and sexual arousal, need to be touched, and need for stimulation.

Some unwanted psychological effects include:

- Confusion, anxiety, depression, paranoia, sleep problems, and drug craving



MDMA/Ecstasy pills

The onset of these effects usually occur within 30 to 45 minutes after administration and usually last 4 to 6 hours, but they may last weeks.

What is its effect on the body?

Users of MDMA experience many of the same effects and face many of the same risks as users of other stimulants such as cocaine and amphetamines. These include increased motor activity, alertness, heart rate, and blood pressure. Some unwanted physical effects include:

- Muscle tension, tremors, involuntary teeth clenching, muscle cramps, nausea, faintness, chills, sweating, and blurred vision

Severe dehydration can result from the combination of the drug's effects and the crowded and hot conditions in which the drug is often taken.

Studies suggest chronic use of MDMA can produce damage to the serotonin system.

What are its overdose effects?

In high doses, MDMA can interfere with the body's ability to regulate temperature. On occasions, this can lead to a sharp increase in body temperature (hyperthermia), resulting in liver, kidney, or cardiovascular system failure, swelling of the brain, and even death. Furthermore, repeated use

of MDMA over a short period of time may lead to potentially harmful concentrations of MDMA within the body due to the complex metabolism of MDMA.

Which drugs cause similar effects?

MDMA produces both amphetamine-like stimulation and mild mescaline-like hallucinations.

What is its legal status in the United States?

MDMA is a Schedule I drug under the Controlled Substances Act, meaning it has a high potential for abuse, no currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States, and a lack of accepted safety for use under medical supervision.