

Staying safe

ECSTASY

Related terms: E, XTC, Superman, Rolexes, Pills, Mitsubishi's MDMA, MD, Cowies, Dizz, Mandy,

What is it?

Ecstasy (also known by its chemical name, MDMA) is often seen as the original designer drug because of its high profile links to dance music culture in the late '80s and early '90s. Clubbers took ecstasy to feel energised, happy, to stay awake and to dance for hours. The effects take about half an hour to kick in and tend to last between three to six hours, followed by a gradual comedown.

The effects

Ecstasy makes people feel in tune with their surroundings, and can make music and colours more intense.

Users often have temporary feelings of love and affection for the people they're with and for the strangers around them.

Short-term effects of use can include anxiety, panic attacks, confused episodes, paranoia and even psychosis.

Lots of people feel really chatty on E (although these chats don't always make sense to people who aren't on an E!).

Physical side effects can include dilated pupils, a tingling feeling, tightening of the jaw muscles, raised body temperature and the heart beating faster.

The risks

Taking ecstasy involves some risks. Here's what it could do to you.

There's no way of telling what's in ecstasy until you've swallowed it. There may be negative side effects from other drugs and ingredients added to the E.

The comedown from ecstasy can make people feel lethargic and depressed.

Evidence suggests long-term users can suffer memory problems and may develop depression and anxiety.

Using Ecstasy has been linked to liver, kidney and heart problems. Some users report getting colds and sore throats more often.

Anyone with a heart condition, blood pressure problems, epilepsy or asthma can have a very dangerous reaction to the drug.

There have been many deaths involving Ecstasy. Between 1996 and 2014 in England and Wales there were 670 deaths in which ecstasy/MDMA was recorded on the death certificate.

Ecstasy affects the body's temperature control. Dancing for long periods in a hot atmosphere, like a club, increases the chances of overheating and dehydration. Users should take regular breaks from the dance floor to cool down and watch out for any mates who are on it – they mightn't realise they're in danger of overheating or getting dehydrated. However, drinking too much can also be dangerous. Ecstasy can cause the body to release a hormone which stops it making urine. Drink too quickly and it affects your body's salt balance, which can be as deadly as not drinking enough water. Users should sip no more than a pint of water or non-alcoholic drink every hour.

The Law

Ecstasy is a Class A drug and is illegal to have, give away or sell.

Possession can get you up to seven years in jail. Supplying someone else, including your friends, can get you life and an unlimited fine.

Help and Support

Talk to Frank: 0300 123 600

FRANK helps you find out everything you might want to know about drugs (and some stuff you don't). Friendly, confidential advice service.

<http://www.talktofrank.com/get-help>

http://dan247.org.uk/Drug_Ecstasy.asp

Young People Substance Misuse Service:

020 8547 6920

The Young People's Substance Misuse Service is for children and young people under 18 years where substance use had been identified as a factor. We also provide educative sessions within a school or other young people setting.

smsreferrals@achievingforchildren.org.uk

SPA

Kingston & Richmond : 020 8547 5008

020 8770 5000 after 6pm.

In an emergency call 999 and give details of any drugs taken.