

Drug Facts: Ecstasy/MDMA



What is Ecstasy/MDMA?

Ecstasy/MDMA is a synthetic (lab-made) drug which causes psychological and physiological effects on the brain and body. This substance acts as both a stimulant and hallucinogen. Together, Ecstasy/MDMA cause an increase in alertness, reduced inhibitions and sensitivity to sound and light.

What Does It Look Like?

Ecstasy/MDMA looks like small tablets of various sizes. These tablets are often colorful and stamped with different logos and other designs. These designs are used to brand the tablet, allowing people to request them by name. The tablets can also be crushed into powder or distributed in liquid form. When in crystalline form, it is usually referred to as Molly.

What Are Some Common Street Names?

Ecstasy/MDMA is an abbreviation for 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine. Ecstasy and MDMA are both names to describe the same substance. Other street names include:

Adam	Beans	Disco Biscuit
E or Eve	Go	Hug Drug
Lover's Speed	Molly	Peace
STP	X	XTC

- Ecstasy/MDMA speeds up the body like a stimulant but also distorts perception like a hallucinogen, which is why users can feel both energized and detached.
- Ecstasy/MDMA can be mixed with other drugs such as ketamine, or fentanyl, making its effects unpredictable and dangerous.
- Molly—slang for “molecular”—refers to the crystalline powder form of Ecstasy/MDMA, usually sold as powder or in capsules.

Is it legal in the United States?

No, Ecstasy/MDMA is currently identified as a **schedule 1** drug under the Controlled Substances Act (CSA). This act is used to regulate substances that are highly likely to be misused or may lead users to establish a dependence. Schedule 1 drugs, such as Ecstasy/MDMA are not known to have medical use and instead pose a risk to public health and safety.

How Is It Used?

This substance can be misused by swallowing tablets, crushing tablets and snorting the powder, or by “stacking” tablets. Stacking refers to when someone takes multiple tablets or takes a series of tablets in a short period of time. It can also be mixed with other substances like alcohol or cannabis. Tablets may also contain substances such as ketamine, bath salts, or fentanyl. Because even a small amount of opioids in the body can lead to overdose, carrying naloxone can be used to reverse life-threatening effects.



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Who Uses Ecstasy/MDMA ?

Ecstasy/MDMA is often referred to as a “party drug”. It is sought after by adolescents and young adults in this scene.

What are the effects on the brain?

Ecstasy/MDMA primarily acts on three chemical messengers in the brain: serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine, causing changes in perception, self-awareness and empathy. It also increases sensitivity to light, sound, and touch while producing mild hallucinations.

Negative psychological effects of taking Ecstasy/MDMA include:

- Confusion
- Anxiety
- Paranoia
- Depression

Studies have shown long-term use of Ecstasy/MDMA can cause problems with memory and learning. Since adolescent brains are still developing, any damage done during this time can be permanent.

What are the effects on the body?

Some physical effects of taking Ecstasy/MDMA include:

- Nausea
- Tremors
- Liver or Kidney Damage
- Sweating
- Involuntary Teeth Clenching
- Death
- Chills
- Muscle Cramps
- Faintness
- Blurred Vision

Ecstasy/MDMA increases movement, alertness, heart rate, and blood pressure. In high doses, it can make it difficult for the body to regulate temperature, leading to dangerous overheating (hyperthermia) and, in severe cases, heart failure. Since ecstasy/MDMA is a stimulant, it raises arousal and disrupts sleep by affecting the brain cells that control our internal clock. Over time, repeated use can cause strong cravings and increase the risk of developing a substance use disorder.

Can Ecstasy/MDMA be used as Treatment for Mental Health Disorders?

In recent years, researchers have shown growing interest in the potential use of Ecstasy/MDMA to treat mental health disorders. Ecstasy/MDMA is being studied for its possible therapeutic effects on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Under current federal law, Schedule I substances like Ecstasy/MDMA cannot be prescribed or used in standard clinical care; however, they may be administered in approved clinical research settings. Ongoing studies typically combine controlled doses of Ecstasy/MDMA with psychotherapy, but the drug has not yet been approved by the FDA for general medical use due to its potential for addiction.

Connecticut Resources

CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

www.ct.gov/DMHAS

24/7 Access Line

1.800.563.4086

Change The Script

www.drugfreect.org

National Resources

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

www.samhsa.gov

National Institute on Drug Abuse

www.drugabuse.gov