

FACTS ABOUT MDMA (ECSTASY)

WHAT IS MDMA?

Also known as E, pills, adam, ck, disco biscuit, caps, pingers, sweets, lollies, M&M, doopa, love drug, bikkies, XTC, X, flippers, molly, ecky or eccy.

Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) is an empathogen drug, which means it increases a person's feelings of empathy, kindness and social connectivity. It can also act as a stimulant and hallucinogen. It is commonly known as ecstasy and is a synthetic drug, which comes in the forms of tablets, capsules, powder or crystal. Pills may or may not contain MDMA, as they may be produced using other and potentially harmful substances, making it difficult to know its contents.

MDMA is usually swallowed but it can also be injected or snorted. It is often taken by some people at music festivals, dance parties and nightclubs. Because dancing is often involved in taking ecstasy, people are in danger of overheating. Drinking extreme amounts of water is risky and can lead to death.

EFFECTS OF MDMA

Effects depend on the person (age, weight, size, health and tolerance), as well as the strength, the amount used, and if it is used with other drugs, including alcohol. Effects can be felt within 20 to 60 minutes of taking it, and effects usually last for 4 to 6 hours. As it wears off, you may experience "comedown" effects, which can last 2 to 3 days.

Short-term effects, both desired and undesired, may include...

- euphoria, energetic, confident and affectionate
- heightened senses (colours, sounds, touch), floating sensations
- enlarged pupils and increased heart rate
- jaw clenching, teeth grinding
- excessive sweating, overheating, dehydration, heat stroke

- nausea or vomiting
- aching muscles, reduced appetite, difficulty sleeping
- anxiety, paranoia, irrational behaviour
- nosebleeds and nasal passage damage (from snorting)
- tetanus, infection, vein damage, Hepatitis B or C, HIV, AIDS (from injecting or sharing needles).

Long-term effects may include...

- paranoia, depression, anxiety, psychosis
- increased colds and flus
- memory loss
- liver, kidney and heart problems
- MDMA dependence.

OVERDOSE

Effects from overdosing: agitated, irrational, anxiety, aggression, confusion, convulsions (fits), vomiting, very high temperature.

If a person is experiencing an overdose or is unresponsive call 000 for an ambulance. If awake, keep them sitting, cool and have them sip some water (some people have died from drinking too much water after taking MDMA). If unconscious, put them in the recovery position. If not breathing, start CPR. Paramedics won't involve police unless the person is a danger to themselves or others.

How long does MDMA stay in your system?

Depends on use and person. Generally, it can be detected in saliva up to 2 days, urine 3 to 5 days, in blood up to 3 days and in hair up to 3 months

TIPS FOR REDUCING RISK

There is no safe way to use MDMA. There will always be a health risk. The only way to be safe is not to use. If you choose to use, the following will help reduce risk:

Before: take a friend and tell them what you plan on taking, plan how to get home (to avoid driving under the influence), use new or clean equipment. Injecting is not recommended, though if choosing to inject, get your own clean, sharp syringe and find a clean location.

During: go slow, start with a low dose then wait two hours to see effects before having a bit more, know and keep to your limits, take regular breaks from dancing to cool down and drink some water (not too much). Safely dispose of syringes.

Avoid: taking a high dose (can cause unpleasant, overwhelming experience in large doses), using MDMA with other drugs, including alcohol, using too often, needle or equipment sharing. While using don't be alone, don't drive or do risky activities or be responsible for the care of others.

IS MDMA USE BECOMING A PROBLEM?

It may be a problem if you agree with any of these statements:

- I struggle to limit or reduce the amount of MDMA I'm using
- I spend a lot of time using MDMA or affected by it
- I often feel strong urges to use MDMA
- I'm unable to perform tasks at work, school or home due to MDMA use
- I have developed a tolerance to MDMA, so I need to have more to feel effects
- I have withdrawal symptoms – extreme tiredness, difficulty sleeping, aches and pains, anxiety and depression.

TIPS FOR PROBLEMATIC MDMA USE

- seek support from a health professional, as well as from family and friends
- avoid people, places, objects, feelings or situations associated with taking inhalants
- start doing activities you enjoy that don't involve taking MDMA
- look after yourself – get enough sleep, follow a healthy diet, adopt a balanced lifestyle
- set some personal goals.

MDMA AND THE LAW

It is illegal to use, possess, make or sell MDMA in Australia. In Queensland, it is illegal to possess needles or syringes if they are not disposed of safely and therefore pose a risk to others.

FOR SUPPORT – CALL DRUG ARM

CALL DRUG ARM CENTRAL INTAKE ON 07 3620 8880 DURING BUSINESS HOURS TO ACCESS FREE SUPPORT OR EMAIL INTAKE@DRUGARM.COM.AU. FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES, CALL 1300 656 800 OR EMAIL INFO@DRUGARM.COM.AU.

FOR 24/7 SUPPORT CALL:

ALCOHOL & DRUG INFORMATION SERVICE:
1800 177 833 (QLD) AND 1800 250 015 (NATIONAL).