

FACT SHEET

Ecstasy

Ecstasy is a synthetic and psychoactive drug that can cause an increase in energy and/or hallucinations. The scientific name for ecstasy is 3,4-methylenedioxy-methamphetamine, or MDMA. Common names for ecstasy include: E, XTC, X, Adam, love drug, hug, beans, clarity, lover's speed and Euphoria. Ecstasy is made in illicit labs with chemicals and processes that vary from lab to lab. What's sold as ecstasy

often contains unknown drugs or other fillers.

Ecstasy is usually taken by swallowing a pill, tablet or capsule. These come in a variety of shapes, sizes and colours. They often display a stamp or logo. Ecstasy can also be snorted (by crushing tablets into a powder form), smoked or injected intravenously.

The effects of a single hit of ecstasy can last from 3 to 6

hours. Users feel the effects within one hour. Unless the user takes more of the drug, a process called "bumping", he/she will then experience a low. After-effects may last for days or weeks.

The purity and strength of ecstasy can never be accurately gauged. When you take ecstasy, you don't know what you're taking, or how it will affect you.

Effects of Short-Term Use

When initially taken, ecstasy causes:

- minor stress
- higher blood pressure and heart rate
- tightened jaw muscles
- moist skin and dry mouth
- happiness and relaxation
- higher self-confidence and energy
- lower inhibitions
- feelings of pleasure

Once the pleasant phase is over, users feel tired, sad, depressed and cranky. Panic attacks and nightmares may occur.

Effects of Long-Term Use

Frequent users of ecstasy may start experiencing a number of problems that include:

- feeling dehydrated
- feeling weak, moody and mean
- use can damage the brain cells that release serotonin

Ecstasy and Dependency

Tolerance to ecstasy develops quickly, which means more of the substance is needed to get the same effect. Some users may become psychologically dependent on ecstasy, which means they are

preoccupied with the need to take more. While there is little evidence to indicate that ecstasy can produce physical dependence or withdrawal symptoms, it's not uncommon for the drug to take on an exaggerated importance in people's lives.

Sources:

- Health Canada
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)