

ECSTASY

Street Names

E, XTC, Pills, MDMA, Disco Burgers, Dennis The Menace, Diamonds, Fantasy, Doves, New Yorkers, Adam, Rhubarb & Custard.

Description

Ecstasy is available as tablets (white, brown, pink or yellow) or coloured capsules.

Routes of Use

Ingestion.

History

Ecstasy (Methylenedioxymethamphetamine) is a derivative of amphetamine and was first synthesised in 1914, but without any medical or commercial use. Its combination of amphetamine and LSD like effects made it popular on the dance scene of the late 1980's. The drug's popularity amongst the young has grown since then and has received much publicity after the deaths of several young people.

Effects People Seek

Ecstasy has been called an energy drug; users lose inhibitions, become excited and euphoric, and have a rush of energy to help them dance for hours on end. Ecstasy makes people feel 'loved up' so they feel empathy towards those they are with. Many ecstasy tablets contain other drugs such as amphetamine or LSD so any effects experienced may be due to them. Like LSD there is a heightened perception of the world.

Other Effects

Ecstasy use is accompanied by dilation of the pupils, dry mouth and throat, a rise in heart rate and blood pressure, tightening of the jaw, increased sweating, loss of appetite, decrease in urination and an increase in body temperature. It is the last effect that is potentially the most life threatening. The hot and humid atmosphere of the night club, the energetic dancing and the consumption of alcohol all combine with the increase in body temperature due to the drug to dehydrate the body to dangerous levels. There have been many cases of death by heat stroke attributed to these factors. The best way to avoid this is to drink about a pint of non-alcoholic fluid every hour. Excessive fluid intake can cause the brain to swell resulting in coma or death. Feelings of anxiety, panic, confusion, insomnia, users have experienced auditory and visual hallucinations. Long-term ecstasy use may affect the immune system particularly in women and cause damage to the liver. It is unclear whether there is any long-term brain damage in human users.

Dependence & Tolerance

There is no physical dependence to ecstasy.

The Law

Ecstasy is a class A drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971). It is illegal to possess, supply or produce the drug. The maximum sentences that can be imposed by a Crown Court are: Possession, 7 years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine. Supply, Life imprisonment and/or unlimited fine. It is an offence to be in charge of a motor vehicle whilst 'unfit through drugs', sentences include a period of disqualification, fines and, especially after previous convictions, imprisonment