



# ECSTASY

Brownies, dolphins, doves, E, eckies, Edward, fantasy, love doves, MDMA, MDMA powder, M and Ms, Mandy, Molly, New Yorkers, Rolexs, sweeties, Superman, tulips, X, XTC, 3,4, methylenedioxyamphetamine

DrugWise

Ecstasy (chemical name methylenedioxyamphetamine) usually comes as pills in a variety of colours and shapes, although it is occasionally found as MDMA powder or crystal. It is usually swallowed but may be snorted.

Ecstasy remains a popular drug, particularly among those into the clubbing/dance scene.

Ecstasy is a stimulant drug which has mild hallucinogenic effects. It has been described as being like a mix of amphetamine and a weak form of LSD.

Users report feeling energetic yet calm, with a loss of anger and increased empathy with others. There can also be an enhanced sense of surroundings and a greater appreciation of music.

The effects of taking a moderate dose start after 20-60 minutes (longer if on a full stomach) and can last for up to several hours.

Ecstasy increases heart rate, blood pressure and body temperature.



## The law

Ecstasy is controlled as a Class A drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act. It is illegal to be in possession of the drug or supply it. The maximum penalty for possession of ecstasy is 7 years imprisonment plus a fine and for supply and production the maximum sentence is life imprisonment plus a fine. It is rare, however, for maximum sentences to be applied.

## Prevalence

According to Home Office statistics the level of last year ecstasy use by adults aged 16 to 59 in the 2015/16 survey was 1.5%, or 492,000 people. The proportion of 16 to 24 year olds reporting ecstasy use in the last year was 4.5%, equating to around 279,000 young adults. 9.4% of adults said they had used ecstasy at some point in their lifetime. This makes ecstasy the third most commonly used illegal drug in England and Wales.



## Risks and harm reduction



Some users report bad experiences on ecstasy, including feeling anxious and confused. Coming down from ecstasy can take several days and make people tired and depressed. Some evidence links ecstasy use with memory problems, depression, heart, kidney and liver problems and those with high blood pressure, liver or psychiatric problems should avoid its use.

In England & Wales there have been over 670 deaths in which ecstasy has been implicated.

There is no way of knowing exactly what is in an ecstasy pill so it is always best to start low (with 1/4 of a tablet) go slow and if possible to get pills tested before use. Some music festivals now have drug testing facilities.

Taking ecstasy while dancing can cause dehydration and overheating, however it is important not to drink too much to try to counteract this. Rather, sip one pint of non-alcoholic liquid an hour and take time out to cool down and rest. Always get medical help if you are worried about a person who has taken ecstasy and is unwell.