

## What is Ecstasy?

Ecstasy is one of the most dangerous drugs threatening young people today. Called MDMA (3-4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine) by scientists, it is a synthetic chemical that can be derived from an essential oil of the sassafras tree. MDMA is also one of the easiest illegal drugs to obtain. Its effects are similar to those of amphetamines and hallucinogens. Distributed almost anywhere, it has become very popular at social events like raves, hip hop parties, concerts, etc. frequented by both adults and youth. While not all “event” attendees use Ecstasy, the drug often makes the circuit of these parties and can set up dangerous circumstances that can affect everyone there.

· Street Names: E, Adam, Roll, Bean, X and XTC · Clarity, Essence, Stacy, Lover’s Speed, Eve

- Form: Pills - usually white, yellow or brown
- Size, shape and design vary
- Pills are often branded with designer symbols



One of the toughest things about Ecstasy for parents is that often there are no clear symptoms to tell them their children are using the drug. However, there are some general warning signs you can watch for.

Signs your child could be using drugs include: changes in his peer group; changes in her sleeping pattern; declining grades; a loss of interest in his hobbies or favorite activities; a lack of motivation; a hostile, uncooperative attitude; and the unexplained disappearance of household money.

Signs your child could be using Ecstasy include: dehydration; clenching of the jaw and/or grinding of teeth; a sore jaw; unusual displays of affection; pronounced mood swings; a loss of inhibitions; transfixion on sights and sounds; chills or sweating; muscle tension; nausea; confusion; difficulty concentrating; tremors; sleep problems; severe anxiety and/or panic attacks and depression.

In addition to the physical signs, you can watch for the presence of paraphernalia associated with Ecstasy use. Items that may be linked to Ecstasy use by your child include:

- Pacifiers
- Lollipops
- Candy necklaces
- Glow sticks and/or glowing jewelry
- A child-like backpack
- Mentholated rub
- Surgical-type masks

While they look innocent, each of the items emerged around Ecstasy use for a reason: pacifiers and lollipops are often used to help Ecstasy users guard against the teeth grinding that comes from involuntary jaw clenching. Candy necklaces are sometimes used to hide Ecstasy pills (bags of small candies also are good for this purpose) and the glow sticks, mentholated rub and surgical masks often are used by those on Ecstasy to overstimulate their senses.

## How is it Used?

Ecstasy is usually taken in pill form and swallowed and it can also be injected. Some users have been known to crush and snort the resulting powder.

## How Does It Affect You?

Ecstasy is similar (in nature) to other amphetamines and hallucinogens. It speeds up the nervous system and acts as a mood enhancer. Also referred to as “the love drug”, Ecstasy often makes the user feel good, happy and relaxed - at least at first. Contrary to rumors, Ecstasy is not an aphrodisiac and can actually inhibit sexual performance.

The taking of any drug affects people differently. Depending on size, weight, health, dosage and other drugs being used, the reaction can be mild or very severe. Anyone suffering from hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, epilepsy, mental illness or panic should avoid taking Ecstasy.

## Common Side Effects

The following effects start within 20 minutes of taking E and can last for 4 - 6 hours or longer:

- Increased heart rate
- Increased body temperature
- Increased blood pressure
- Increased confidence
- Nausea
- Anxiety
- Feelings of well-being (happiness, love)
- Sweating
- Loss of appetite

## Overdose

Taking too much Ecstasy can result in:

- Extremely high body temperatures
- High blood pressure
- Hallucinations
- Fast Heartbeat
- Breathing problems
- Death

Death often results from harmful overheating (**hyperthermia**), or from drinking too much at one time (**hyponatremia**). Hyponatremia is a condition where excess fluid intake swells the brain resulting in coma. A third cause of death is **stimulation**. Over stimulation of the nervous system can result in heart attack or brain hemorrhage.

## Warning Signs of Overdose

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| · Feeling hot or unwell                        | · Not Sweating                       |
| · Becoming confused, not able to talk properly | · Headache                           |
| · Vomiting                                     | · Racing heart or pulse when resting |
| · Fainting or collapsing                       | · Tremors                            |
| · Loss of control over body movements          | · Problems Urinating                 |

## Duration of Effects

An Ecstasy high can last from six to 24 hours but usually averages three to four hours. Some reactions have been reported to persist from one to 14 days after use.

## Short Term Effects

Short-term effects include psychological difficulties (confusion, depression, sleep problems, craving, severe anxiety, and paranoia). These effects occur during use and can continue even weeks after use. Physical problems that can occur are muscle tension, involuntary teeth clenching, nausea, blurred vision, rapid eye movement, fever, chills or sweating.