Ecstasy

Ecstasy is the most common street name for the designer drug 3,4 methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDMA). Other street names for Ecstasy include Adam, XTC, Clarity, Lover's Speed, Stacy, Live, Essence, and the Hug Drug.

Ecstasy is a synthetic psychostimulant possessing stimulant and hallucinogenic properties. It's usually produced in tablet form. Tablets sold as MDMA have been known to contain other substances such as caffeine, pseudoephedrine, DMX (Dextromethorphan), the stimulant MDA (methylenedioxymethamphetamine), PCP, or mescaline.

Use of Ecstasy is on the rise in America. According to recent national studies, 8 percent of high school seniors said they have used the drug in the past year, up from 5.6 percent in 1999 and doubling since 1995.

The History of Ecstasy

Developed as an appetite suppressant in 1914, MDMA was virtually ignored until the first scientific article about its effects on people was published in 1978. By the late 1980's and early 1990's the drug found its way to the club scene. At present, Ecstasy is classified as a Schedule-1 drug, which means it has no accepted medical use and is likely to have potential for abuse.

Most of the Ecstasy tablets found in the United States today are made in Europe, specifically in the Netherlands and Belgium. These two countries produce approximately 80 percent of the world's total, according to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency.

How is Ecstasy Used?

Ecstasy is consumed orally as a tablet, capsule, or powder. The drug can also be injected, snorted, or used via anal suppository. After a tablet is swallowed, it usually takes 20 minutes to one hour to take affect. The high from Ecstasy commonly lasts between three to six hours, but can go on as long as 24 hours. Getting "high" from Ecstasy is often referred to as "rolling."

Enhanced perception of sensory stimuli is a possible psychological effect of Ecstasy. At parties or dances, users sometimes can be found engaging in certain behaviors to take advantage of this heightened sensory state. For example, some users wear surgical masks smeared on the inside with mentholatum cream, such as Vick's VaporRub®. The sensations caused by inhaling the vapors are intensified in the user. Waving glow sticks in front of their faces gives users a show of vivid, streaking colors. Lollipops and pacifiers are sometimes used to help alleviate jaw clenching, an undesirable physical effect of the drug. Ecstasy is sometimes used in combination with other drugs such as methadone, LSD, opiates, or Ketamine.

Psychological Effects

Ecstasy can cause euphoria, empathy, heightened energy, feelings of well-being, the perception of enhanced mental clarity and emotional warmth, as well as anxiety and paranoia. Heavy doses of Ecstasy can cause hallucinations, sensations of lightness and floating, depression, paranoia, and violent or irrational behavior. Other psychological difficulties include confusion, sleep problems, and drug craving. These effects can sometimes persist for weeks after taking Ecstasy.

People on Ecstasy often become affectionate to others, including complete strangers. By allowing themselves to get sexually intimate with strangers, Ecstasy users put themselves at increased risk for acquiring STD's and other harmful diseases.

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Who Uses Ecstasy?
The typical Ecstasy user is between 16 and 24 years old and comes from a middle to upper-middle class background. Ecstasy is used most commonly at nightclubs, bars, and all-night rave parties.

Physical Effects of Ecstasy can include:

- Dehydration
- Nausea
- Heat stroke
- Loss of appetite
- Increased heart rate
- Seizures
- Increased blood pressure
- Blurred vision
- Bruxism (involuntary teeth clenching)
- Muscle tension
- High body temperature
- Faintness
- Chills
- Tremors
- Insomnia
- Rapid eye movement

Ecstasy can produce long-lasting, perhaps permanent, damage to the neurons in the brain!

Long-Term Effects
Current animal research shows Ecstasy destroys serotonin-producing neurons in the brain, causing long-lasting depletion of brain serotonin levels. These neurons regulate aggression, mood, appetite, memory, sexual activity, and sensitivity to pain. Ecstasy has also been proven to damage thought and memory areas of the brain, damage that may last for years or even be permanent for the user. Studies indicate that Ecstasy users have significant problems with visual recognition tasks. The drug may also alter motor skills, giving the user the appearance of someone who suffers from Parkinson’s disease. In addition, people who continue using Ecstasy after they have developed an acne-like rash increase their risk of severe liver damage.

Is Herbal X a Safe Alternative?
Not! Herbal Ecstasy has a combination of ephedrine or pseudoephedrine and caffeine, both are stimulants which simulate the effects of Ecstasy. Herbal X is available in tablet form and is known on the street as Cloud 9, Herbal Bliss, Ritual Spirit, Herbal X, GW4, Rave Energy, Ultimate Xphoria, and X. There is no quality control over the manufacture of these products and over 800 reports to federal authorities document adverse reactions such as high blood pressure, seizures, heart attacks, strokes, and death.

CAMPUS RESOURCES
Counseling Services
Lafene Health Center - 2nd Floor
(Bluestem Room) Phone: 332-6027

Alcohol & Other Drug Education Service
Director Bill Arick
214 Lafene Health Center
Phone: 332-6027

Alcoholics Anonymous
Open Noon Meeting (Mon.-Fri.)
Economical Campus Ministry
1021 Lincoln
Phone: 537-5092
776-8765

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