

# Ecstasy (MDMA)

This report was prepared for parents by Southwest Prevention & Education Services as a quick reference guide to Ecstasy/MDMA. For additional information please view the other downloads on our website: [www.southwestprevention.com](http://www.southwestprevention.com).

## Facts:

**Ecstasy, or MDMA Methylenedioxyamphetamine:** Is a synthetic “designer” drug, derived from methamphetamine, which is usually concocted with ingredients such as ephedrine (a decongestant) and sodium hydroxide (lye).

## Appearance:

- Tablets are colorful and made to look like candy.



- May be stamped with popular logos or brand names.



Ecstasy and caffeine are a bad combination.  
Photo: DEA Multimedia Library



- Kandi Kids:** wear outrageous, flamboyant, colorful clothing and jewelry.



Exchanging colored bracelets is a socialization practice within the rave culture.



Emergency room visits involving MDMA increased nearly 2,000 percent between 1994 and 2002 (253 to 4,023).

Partnership Attitude Tracking Study, 2003 (Partnership for a Drug-Free America)

41 percent of parents reported that they have never talked with their kids about Ecstasy.

Partnership for a Drug-Free America

More than half of parents (52 percent) say they need additional information on the dangers of Ecstasy.

Partnership Attitude Tracking Study, 2003 (Partnership for a Drug-Free America)

## How Ecstasy is Used/Abused:

Ecstasy comes in pill form and is most commonly administered orally, but some users snort it, inject it or use it as a rectal suppository.

## The Affects of Ecstasy:

### The Brain

- Ecstasy stimulates the release of serotonin, a neurochemical responsible for regulating a number of mental processes including memory, mood, thought and pleasure. Ecstasy targets neurons in the brain that use the chemical serotonin to communicate.
- Long-term or heavy ecstasy use can damage these neurons and cause depression, anxiety, confusion and interfere with sleep and memory.
- The Brain on the right shows healthy serotonin levels. Bright orange and yellow areas indicate serotonin. The image on the right was taken three weeks after the last dose of ecstasy. Serotonin levels are nearly depleted.

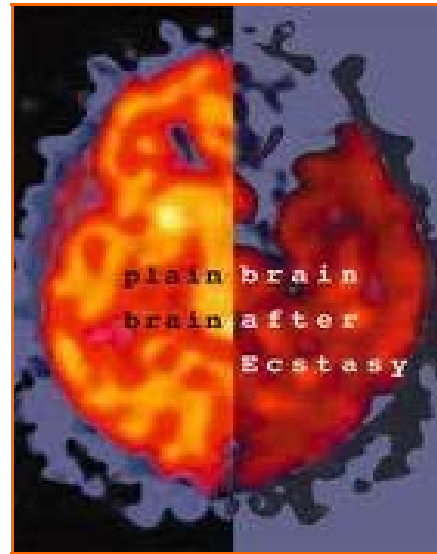
### Ecstasy intoxication can cause:

#### Short Term:

- Severe dehydration
- Hyperthermia
- Bruxism (teeth grinding)
- Anxiety
- Paranoia
- Nausea
- Blurred vision
- Faintness
- Chills

#### Long Term:

- Sleep disorders
- Hypertension
- Seizures
- Heart failure
- Kidney failure
- Depression
- Impaired memory function



Brain scan photo: National Institute of Drug Abuse

### Increases High Risk Sexual Activity:

- Ecstasy heightens tactile sensitivity which promotes physical/sexual activity among users.
- Lowers inhibitions.
- Increased risk of sexually transmitted diseases.
- Increased risk of sexual assault.

### Other Risks:

The increase in serotonin provides energy, allowing individuals to dance or engage in activities for long periods of time. Many deaths associated with this drug are a result of dehydration and heatstroke after long sessions of dancing. In addition, many ecstasy pills are made with other drugs, and can cause overdose and other adverse affects. Combining alcohol with MDMA is also dangerous and increases the risk of adverse reactions and overdose.

Use of the recreational drug Ecstasy causes a severe reduction in the amount of serotonin in the brain.

Science Daily

July 28, 2000

The female brain is more susceptible to damage as a result of Ecstasy use.

Associated Press

Researchers have discovered that even a small amount of MDMA (Ecstasy) can be harmful to the brain, according to the first study to look at the neurotoxic effects of low doses in new users.

## Increased Risk for Teens:

- Low perception of risk. Teens perceive that ecstasy is not dangerous because it does not have to be injected, smoked or snorted as do the so called “dirty drugs.”
- The rave culture promotes acceptance. For teens that are struggling to “fit in” it may seem like an attractive way to fill this need. The acronym “PLUR” which stands for Peace, Love, Unity and Respect is the motto of the rave culture.

## Signs & Symptoms of Use:

- Episodes of acute euphoria while using, followed by severe bouts of depression
- Withdrawal from family
- Sudden changes in friends
- Keeping odd hours
- Dress or appearance depicting Ecstasy culture
- Symbols representing Ecstasy culture
- Paraphernalia

## Common Slang/Street Terms:

- X
- XTC
- E
- Hug Drug
- Love Drug
- Disco Biscuits
- Adam
- Essence Morning Shot
- Pollutants
- Scooby Snacks
- Speed for Lovers
- Sweeties
- Party Drug
- B-bombs
- Clarity
- Wheels
- Wonder Drug
- Eve
- Go
- Decadence

## Paraphernalia:



**Pacifiers, Suckers/Hard Candy** are used to relieve grinding of teeth; a side effect of Ecstasy.



**Water** is provided to counteract the effects of dehydration and hyperthermia; side effects of Ecstasy use.



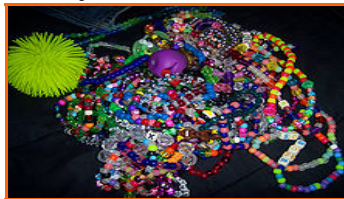
**Glow Sticks and Laser Lights** are used at raves as a visual stimulant.



The Butterfly is a symbol for Ecstasy



**Paint Masks** are smeared with vapor rub to heighten the effects of the drugs.



**Bright Colored Jewelry** provides visual stimulation and is a social identifier for the rave culture.



“PLUR” is the motto for the Rave Culture. It stands for Peace, Love, Unity and Respect.

Ecstasy can cause sharp increase in body temperature, kidney and heart failure and even death.

Some users experience transient mood disturbances even a day or two after using the drug.

In a study from the University of Cambridge Ecstasy users had significant problems in memory and visual recognition tests.