

Ecstasy & Club Drugs



What Is It?

“Ecstasy” is a slang term for MDMA, short for 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine, a name that’s nearly as long as the all-night parties where MDMA is often used. That’s why MDMA has been called a “club drug.” It has effects similar to those of other stimulants, and it often makes the person feel like everyone is his or her friend, even when that’s not the case.

MDMA is man-made—it doesn't come from a plant like marijuana does. Other chemicals or substances—such as caffeine, dextromethorphan (found in some cough syrups), amphetamines, PCP, or cocaine—are sometimes added to, or substituted for, MDMA in Ecstasy tablets. Makers of MDMA can add anything they want to the drug, so its purity is always in question.

What Are the Common Street Names?

There are a lot of slang words for MDMA. “Ecstasy” is one of the most common. You might also hear “E,” “XTC,” “X,” “Adam,” “hug,” “beans,” “clarity,” “lover's speed,” and “love drug.”

How Is It Used?

Most people who abuse MDMA take a pill, tablet, or capsule. These pills can be different colors, and sometimes have cartoon-like images on them. Some people take more than one pill at a time, called “bumping.”

How Many Teens Use It?

According to a 2010 NIDA-funded study, over the past 10 years smart young teens have turned their backs on MDMA. Since 2001, the percentage of 8th graders who have ever tried MDMA dropped from 5.2 percent in 2001 to 3.3 percent in 2010. The drop among 10th graders and 12th graders was similar. However, between 2009 and 2010, some increases were seen in the abuse of MDMA by 8th and 10th graders. For example, past-year use of MDMA increased among 10th graders from 3.7 percent in 2009 to 4.7 percent in 2010. Also, fewer 10th graders saw “great risk” in occasionally using MDMA, which means that they may not understand the health risks of using MDMA as well as they should.

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What Are the Common Effects?

For most people, a “hit” of MDMA lasts for 3 to 6 hours. Once the pill is swallowed, it takes only about 15 minutes for MDMA to enter the bloodstream and reach the brain. About 45 minutes later, the person experiences MDMA's “high.” That’s when the drug is at its peak level. People who use MDMA might feel very alert, or “hyper,” at first. At clubs, they can keep on dancing for hours at a time. Some lose a sense of time and experience other changes in perception, such as an enhanced sense of touch. Others experience negative effects right away. They may become anxious and agitated. Sweating or chills may occur, and people may feel faint or dizzy.

MDMA can also cause muscle tension, nausea, blurred vision, and increased heart rate and blood pressure. Forceful clenching of the teeth can occur, and individuals at clubs have been known to chew on pacifiers to relieve some of the tension.

It’s downhill from there, unless the person “bumps” and takes more MDMA. But even if a person takes only one pill, the side effects of MDMA—including feelings of sadness, anxiety, depression, and memory difficulties—can last for several days to a week (or longer in people who use MDMA regularly).



Dangers

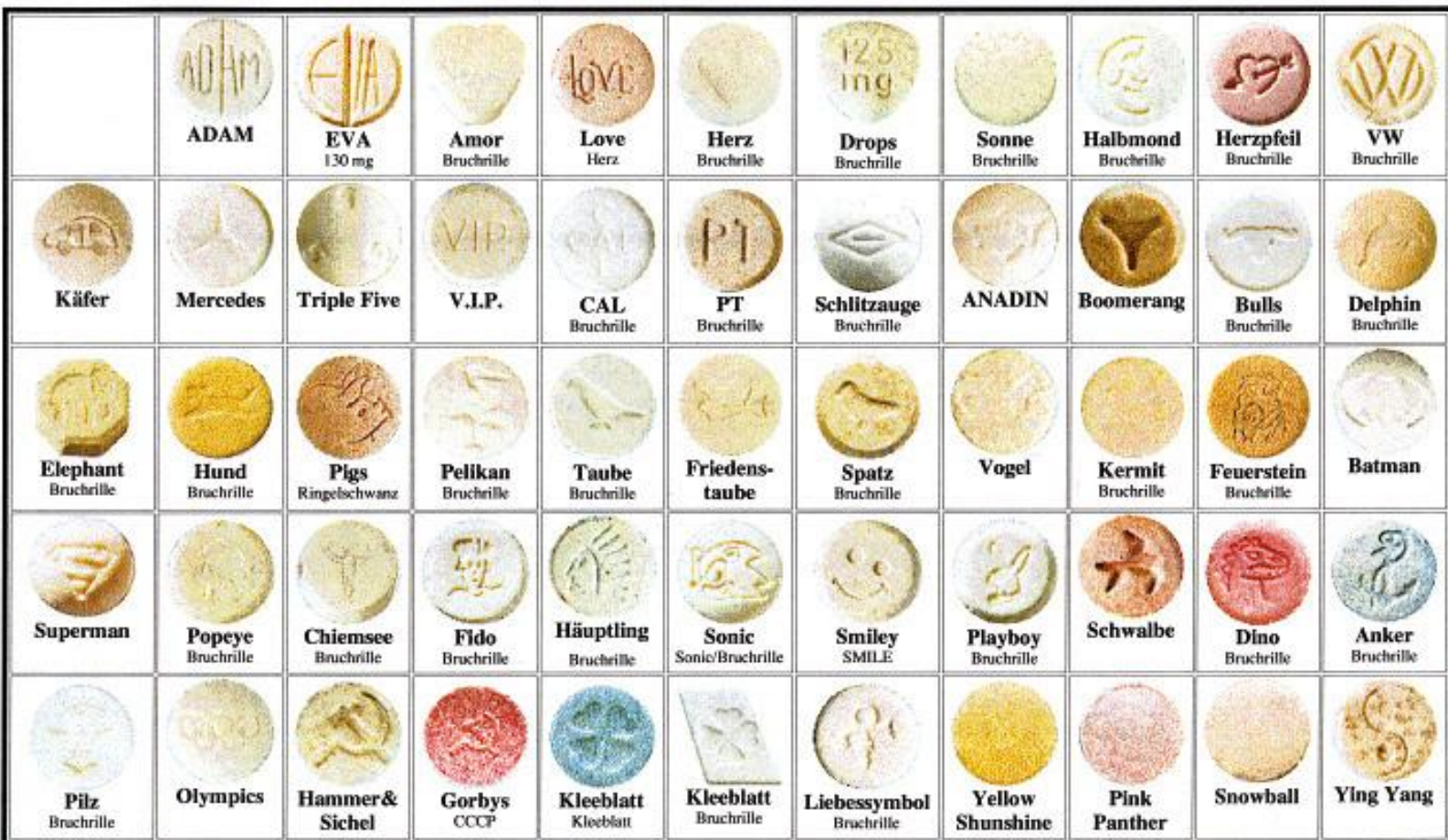
People who use MDMA can become dehydrated through vigorous activity in a hot environment. It may not seem like a big deal, but when MDMA interferes with the body's ability to regulate its temperature, it can cause dangerous overheating, called hyperthermia. This, in turn, can lead to serious heart and kidney problems—or, rarely, death. MDMA can be extremely dangerous in high doses or when multiple small doses are taken within a short time period to maintain the high. High levels of the drug in the blood stream can increase the risk of seizures and affect the heart's ability to maintain its normal rhythms.



Risks to the Brain

Messages travel through our brains through nerve cells, or neurons. Researchers that study the brain think that MDMA may affect neurons that use serotonin to communicate with other neurons. The serotonin system plays a direct role in controlling our mood, aggression, sexual activity, sleep, and sensitivity to pain. Another bit of bad news—researchers have seen memory loss among regular users of MDMA.

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Short-Term Side Effects:

- ✓ Nausea
- ✓ Hallucinations
- ✓ Chills & sweating
- ✓ Increased body temp
- ✓ Tremors
- ✓ Muscle cramping
- ✓ Blurred vision

If someone is 'rolling':

- ✓ Smell like or be applying Icy Hot
- ✓ Demonstrate strong oral fixation
- ✓ Strong emotions (i.e. touching others and "loving" things excessively)
- ✓ Extremely dilated pupils
- ✓ Extreme thirst