

# ECSTASY

# THE FACTS



Health

# WHAT IS ECSTASY?

Methylene DioxyMethAmphetamine (MDMA)

– usually called ecstasy – is a drug made from different chemicals. It can contain both amphetamines and some hallucinogens.

Amphetamines are stimulant drugs which mean they speed up the brain and the central nervous system. Hallucinogens are drugs that can cause people to see, hear, feel or smell things that do not exist (to have hallucinations).

Other names for ecstasy include E, XTC, eccy.

## FORMS OF ECSTASY

Ecstasy is made illegally and is sold as small tablets in various sizes and colours. It can also come in powder form to be inhaled through the nose (snorted).

People who make ecstasy often mix or cut the substance with other things to make the drug go further. Some substances in the tablet or powder can have unpleasant or harmful effects. It is difficult to tell what the drug actually contains.



## ECSTASY RELATED EMERGENCY

**If you can't wake someone up or you are concerned that they may have sustained a head injury from a drug related fall – call an ambulance immediately – dial Triple Zero (000).**



If the person has been mixing ecstasy with other drugs, tell the NSW Ambulance paramedic exactly what they have taken. Paramedics are there to help. Generally paramedics don't involve the police **unless** there is danger to themselves or other people/children, someone dies, or a crime (such as violence or theft) has been committed.

# EFFECTS OF ECSTASY

What ecstasy does to you depends on:

- how much you take
- your height and weight
- your general health
- your mood
- your past experience with ecstasy
- whether you use ecstasy on its own or with other drugs
- the composition of the drug.

The effects of ecstasy can start within an hour and typically last up to about six hours. Some effects may continue for up to 32 hours.

## PHYSICAL EFFECTS

Effects on your body may include:

- your heart beats faster
- your blood pressure rises
- your body temperature rises
- you sweat more
- your body loses moisture (dehydration)
- you grind your teeth or clench your jaw
- you feel sick in the stomach (nausea)
- seizures/convulsions (fitting)
- vomiting.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS

You may:

- feel very good and confident
- feel close or affectionate to other people
- feel anxious
- feel paranoid (fear that others want to hurt you).

- see, smell, hear or feel things that are not there (have hallucinations)
- feel as though you are floating
- behave strangely – do or say things you normally would not
- impair your capacity as a parent/primary carer of children.

## HANGOVER EFFECT

There is some evidence that you can have a hangover effect after the effects of ecstasy have worn off. Symptoms of this include:

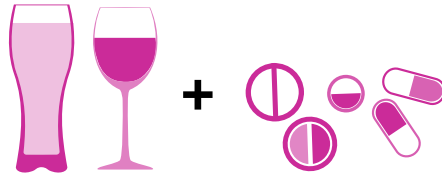
- reduced appetite
- disturbed sleep
- feeling down
- muscle aches
- finding it hard to concentrate.

## LONG TERM EFFECTS

If ecstasy is used in higher doses, the user may experience a risk of developing a mental health disorder such as depression and psychological distress. Long term effects may include damage to some of the body's major organs (liver, heart, brain).

If you use ecstasy often and for a long time you may also develop a tolerance to the drug. Tolerance means that you must take more of the drug to get the same effects you used to have with smaller amounts. It appears that you feel more unpleasant effects when you use more ecstasy.

# MIXING WITH OTHER DRUGS



People who use ecstasy sometimes take other drugs at the same time. Sometimes they do this to increase the pleasurable effects. Sometimes they use other drugs at the same time to cope with some of the things ecstasy does to the body.

Some people take drugs such as tranquilisers, alcohol or marijuana to help them sleep.

Taking ecstasy with other drugs such as speed or LSD can cause a psychotic reaction (psychosis – a serious psychological problem where you hear voices, imagine things, or fear that others want to hurt you).

Taking ecstasy and alcohol raises blood pressure and body temperature and increases the chance of dehydration.

# OVERDOSE AND BAD REACTIONS

Overdose of ecstasy can happen to anyone. When a person overdoses, it may cause:

- very high blood pressure
- fast heartbeat
- very high body temperature.

Some people have died after having a very bad reaction to ecstasy. These deaths are often caused by the body overheating and dehydrating.

Dehydration can be prevented by drinking plenty of water.

Doctors recommend that you drink 500ml per hour if you are moving around (eg dancing), and 250ml per hour if you are not moving around.

Some deaths have occurred by over-hydration (i.e. drinking too much water).

# THE LAW

Using ecstasy is illegal. If you use, sell or give ecstasy to someone else and get caught, you could face substantial fines and penalties including a prison sentence.

# DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ECSTASY

Ecstasy can make you feel more confident when you drive. This can make you take dangerous risks and have accidents. It is illegal to drive under the influence of drugs, including ecstasy as you could lose your licence for a set time or be fined.

Anyone under the influence of ecstasy who kills or injures another person while driving can be sentenced to a term in prison.



## PREGNANCY AND BREASTFEEDING



It is best not to use any drugs during pregnancy. Most drugs have some effect on the unborn baby if the mother uses them while pregnant.

It is possible that using ecstasy when pregnant increases the risk of miscarriage. The use of amphetamine-like substances such as ecstasy during pregnancy has also been associated with delayed development and subtle abnormalities in newborn babies.

Inform antenatal staff of ecstasy use and attend regular antenatal checkups.

It is possible that if a mother uses ecstasy while breastfeeding the drug will be present in her milk, and may have adverse effects on the baby.

It is generally risky to take any drug while breastfeeding without medical advice.

## SELF-HELP ASSOCIATIONS

[na.org.au](http://na.org.au) for **Narcotics Anonymous Australia**, a non profit fellowship or society of recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean via a program of complete abstinence from all drugs.



# INFORMATION AND ADVICE

**Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) NSW** operates 24 hours, 7 days a week to provide education, information, referral, crisis counselling and support. Call **(02) 9361 8000** (Sydney metro) or **1800 422 599** (outside Sydney metro and interstate) or visit [www.yourroom.com.au](http://www.yourroom.com.au)

Call the **ADIS Stimulant Treatment Line** on **(02) 9361 8088** or **1800 101 188** for advice, support, referral and counselling for people concerned about stimulants or for information on the **Stimulant Treatment Program**.

**Your room** provides drug and alcohol information and advice, campaigns and resources. Visit [www.yourroom.com.au](http://www.yourroom.com.au)

**Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council** provides links to Aboriginal community controlled health services across NSW. Visit [www.ahmrc.org.au](http://www.ahmrc.org.au) for information about AHMRC members including a regional map, information and links to members websites.

**Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre (DAMEC)** provides services for people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Contact DAMEC on **(02) 8113 1301** or for counselling and support services for CALD communities call **(02) 8706 0150**.

**Drug Info** provides facts and resources on alcohol and other drugs and the prevention of related harm. Visit [www.druginfo.adf.org.au](http://www.druginfo.adf.org.au)

**State Library of New South Wales Drug Info** provides up to date information on alcohol and other drugs in public libraries throughout NSW. Visit [www.druginfo.sl.nsw.gov.au](http://www.druginfo.sl.nsw.gov.au)

**eheadspace** provides mental health and wellbeing support, information and services for young people (12-25 years) and their family and friends. Visit [www.eheadspace.org.au](http://www.eheadspace.org.au)

**Family Drug Support** provides 24-7 telephone support to families in crisis due to drug and alcohol issues. Call the Helpline on **1300 368 186** or visit [www.fds.org.au](http://www.fds.org.au)

**Kids Helpline** is a free, 24 hour counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25 years. Counselling is offered via the Kids Helpline website [www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au) or email, or call **1800 55 1800**.

**Nepean Youth Drug and Alcohol Service (NYDAS)** works within a holistic model of care to address a range of issues for young people (12 –20 years of age) related to their alcohol and other drug use. Call **(02) 4734 2129** or **(02) 4734 1333**.

**NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA)** is a peak drug user organisation in NSW providing harm reduction information and blood borne virus prevention peer education. Visit [www.nuaa.org.au](http://www.nuaa.org.au)

**Poisons Information Hotline** is a 24/7 call centre service available across Australia. Call **13 11 26**.

**ReachOut** is an Australian online youth mental health service with a mobile-friendly site and forums where you can access help, information and support. Visit [au.reachout.com](http://au.reachout.com)

**Sexual Health Info Link** provides free and confidential sexual health support and information. Visit [www.shil.nsw.gov.au](http://www.shil.nsw.gov.au)

**Smart Recovery** is a voluntary self-help group that assists people in recovering from alcohol, drug use and other addictive behaviours. Visit [www.smartrecoveryaustralia.com.au](http://www.smartrecoveryaustralia.com.au)

**TAFE NSW** provides help with education, career development or personal matters. Students can contact a local TAFE/university counsellor. Visit [www.tafensw.edu.au](http://www.tafensw.edu.au)

**Youth Action** is the peak organisation for young people in NSW. Visit [www.youthaction.org.au](http://www.youthaction.org.au) and use the search option to access a directory of NSW youth services

**Youth Solutions** provides services for young people 12 to 25 years of age and the community including prevention and health promotion, drug and alcohol education, community programs and information and referral. Visit [www.youthsolutions.com.au](http://www.youthsolutions.com.au) or call **(02) 4628 2319** [provides services to young people in Macarthur & Wingecarribee].

## 24 hour confidential telephone counselling services:

**NSW:** Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) Tel. **(02) 9361 8000** \*Toll free. **1800 422 599**

**VICTORIA:** \*Toll free. **1800 888 236**

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA:** Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) Tel. **(08) 9442 5000** \*Toll free. **1800 198 024**

**QUEENSLAND:** Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) Tel. **(07) 3837 5989** \*Toll free. **1800 177 833**

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA:** Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) Tel. **(08) 8363 8618** \*Toll free. **1300 131 340**

**NORTHERN TERRITORY:** Amity Community Service Tel. **(08) 8944 6565** \*Toll free. **1800 684 372** Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) \*Toll free. **1800 131 350**

**TASMANIA:** Alcohol and Drug Information Service \*Toll free. **1800 811 994**

**ACT:** Alcohol and Drug Program Tel. **(02) 6207 9977**

\*Toll free numbers are only available if you are calling from within that state.

**NSW Health aims to reduce drug-related harm for individuals and the community by providing the facts, including the possible health, social and economic consequences of using alcohol and other drugs.**

A suite of drug and alcohol fact sheets is available for download at: [www.yourroom.com.au](http://www.yourroom.com.au)



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