
THE TRUTH ABOUT
ECSTASY
X
Hug
Love Drug
XTC
E
Beans
drugfreeworld.org

WHY THIS BOOKLET WAS PRODUCED

You hear a lot of talk about drugs these days—at school, in the streets, on the internet and TV. Some of it is true, some not.

What you may not know is that much of what you hear about drugs actually comes from those selling them. Former dealers have said they would tell people anything to get them to buy drugs.

You need the real facts and the truth about drugs so you can make an informed decision about them. That is why we have prepared this booklet—for you.

Your feedback is important to us, so let us know what you think about this booklet. Visit us at **DrugFreeWorld.org** and email us at **info@drugfreeworld.org**.



Dancing with DEATH?

Tragically, Ecstasy is one of the most popular drugs among young people and is often linked with raves and electronic dance music.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime estimated that nearly 20 million people worldwide used Ecstasy in one year, and many Ecstasy-related deaths have been reported worldwide in hospital emergency rooms. More recently, MDMA* use has expanded beyond raves and is being consumed by a broader range of young adults as a party drug.

Mixed with alcohol, Ecstasy becomes more dangerous and can, in fact, be even more deadly.



* MDMA: abbreviation for the chemical name of an illegal man-made drug that alters mood and perception and is chemically similar to both stimulants and hallucinogens

Do you really want to party?



Nikki was like many teens who go to raves. She wanted to escape her problems and have fun, so she planned to party all night with friends. One of her friends had a bottle of liquid Ecstasy in his car, and they all decided to take some. The drug soon took over. Nikki danced for hours, way beyond her usual limits. A friend later said in a police report, "Nikki wasn't feeling anything."

The next morning, Nikki was dead. The cause: Ecstasy poisoning.

"But that won't happen to me," you might think. Maybe not, but do you really want to take that risk?

What is Ecstasy?

Ecstasy is the common name for *MDMA*, an illegal synthetic drug that changes mood and perception and awareness of surrounding objects and conditions. MDMA is chemically similar to both stimulants and hallucinogens.

Ecstasy's effects include a false euphoria, increased energy, emotional warmth and distorted perception. However, it also causes involuntary teeth clenching, dangerously high body temperature and depression. Ecstasy can also damage the heart, veins, arteries, kidneys, liver and nervous system and can lead to devastating consequences, including death.



MDMA was first developed in 1912 by the German drugmaker Merck. In the 1950s, both the US Army and the CIA used MDMA in psychological warfare tests. It reappeared in the 1960s as a therapy drug to "lower inhibitions."*

By the 1970s, MDMA started being used as a party drug. In the early 1980s, it was promoted as "the hottest thing in the continuing search for happiness through chemistry" and the "in drug" for many weekend parties. Still legal in 1984, MDMA was being sold under the brand name Ecstasy but, by 1985, the drug had been banned due to safety concerns.

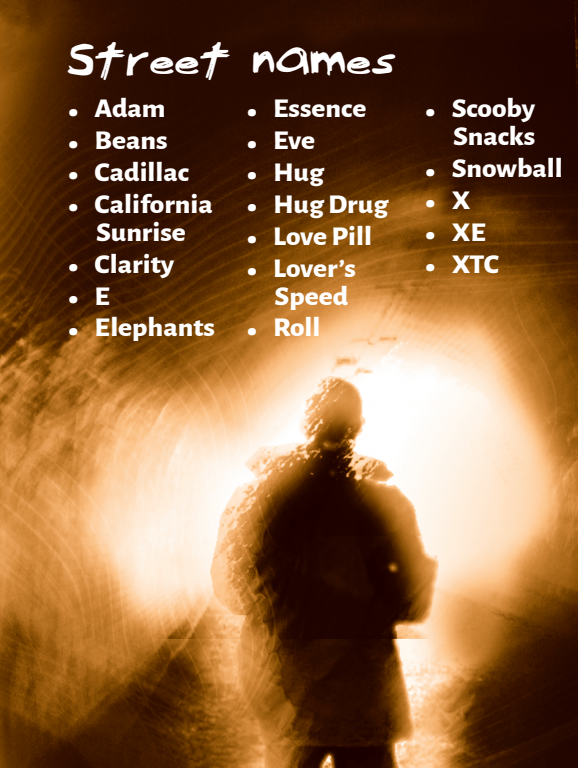
Since the late 1980s, Ecstasy has become a marketing term for drugs sold as MDMA but that may contain little or none of it. Today's Ecstasy often includes a mix of drugs such as LSD, cocaine, heroin, amphetamine, methamphetamine and even substances like rat poison or dog dewormer. Despite the cute logos dealers put on the pills, users don't know what they are taking, increasing the risk when they use more to chase a high.

Ecstasy is usually a pill, but it can also be injected. Liquid Ecstasy is not MDMA—it is *GHB*, a depressant made from dangerous chemicals like drain cleaner, floor stripper and degreasing solvents.

* inhibitions: ideas or rules that tend to stop a person from doing something

Street names

- Adam
- Beans
- Cadillac
- California Sunrise
- Clarity
- E
- Elephants
- Essence
- Eve
- Hug
- Hug Drug
- Love Pill
- Lover's Speed
- Roll
- Scooby Snacks
- Snowball
- X
- XE
- XTC



Tracking Ecstasy

- According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, an estimated 744,000 Americans aged 12 or older have tried Ecstasy at least once.
- The Monitoring the Future survey shows that 1.7 percent of 8th graders, 2.6 percent of 10th graders and 3.6 percent of 12th graders have used Ecstasy.
- Many Ecstasy users go on to consume other drugs including marijuana, amphetamines, cocaine and heroin.



Imaginary love pill

Off with the mask

Ecstasy is called “the love pill” because it heightens colors, sounds and physical sensations, including during sex.

But this “love pill” image is a lie.

Ecstasy often contains other hallucinogens that make people see or feel things that are not real. This can trap a person in a scary or sad memory without realizing it.



Rave parties are okay so long as you don't take Ecstasy. But as soon as you start, you think people who advise you to stop are idiots. You start to believe you have found something great and others must not try to tell you the contrary.

"WHEN YOU START LIKING ECSTASY, IT'S TOO LATE— YOU'RE SUNK."
—Pat

Ecstasy is emotionally damaging, and users often suffer depression, confusion, severe anxiety, paranoia,* psychotic behavior and other psychological problems.

* paranoia: extreme and unreasonable suspicion, distrust or fear of other people without evidence or justification



Luckily, I am alive, but I'm left with the days, months and years after the trauma. I have to deal with what it's done to me for my whole life. I've been experiencing everything, you name it. Depression, anxiety, stress, nightmares and bad headaches were a few things that affected me after I took Ecstasy.

"**I ALMOST DIED. IT ONLY TOOK ONE NIGHT, A FEW [ECSTASY] PILLS AND DRINKING ALCOHOL. THIS DRUG IS FATAL**, and I'm so thankful I'm alive. I can't describe how hard it is coping with these nightmares all the time. I wake up in a sweat just thanking God and being so thankful it's just another nightmare. I pray in time the nightmares will fade away. No drug is worth the roll* or high." —Megan

* roll: the experience of the euphoric, stimulant and emotional effects when taking MDMA

Consequences of using Ecstasy

Ecstasy shuts off the body's natural warning system. A user risks going beyond their physical limits and endurance.

Using Ecstasy in hot, crowded conditions found at indoor or outdoor raves can lead to extreme dehydration and overheating, muscle breakdown, kidney failure or fatal brain swelling.

Research shows that, after using Ecstasy, many people report depression, trouble concentrating, anxiety, aggression and irritability. Regular use can cause sleep disturbances, lack of appetite, heart disease and impulsive behavior.

Even days or weeks after taking it, users may still feel confused, experience anxiety or crave the drug.

SHORT-TERM EFFECTS

- Increased heart rate and risk of convulsions
- Higher blood pressure
- Sharp rise in body temperature that can lead to kidney failure or death
- Lowered inhibition (lessened control over actions, feelings or decisions)
- Increased risk for unsafe sex
- False feelings of affection
- Mild hallucination
- Confusion
- Depression
- Sleep problems
- Becoming anxious and agitated
- Paranoia
- Drug cravings
- Muscle tension
- Faintness and chills or swelling
- Involuntary teeth clenching
- Blurred vision
- Nausea and vomiting



LONG-TERM EFFECTS

- Lasting brain damage affecting thought, memory, learning, sleep and emotion
- Degenerated nerve branches and nerve endings
- Depression, anxiety, memory loss
- Sleep problems
- Reduced interest in sex
- Brain bleeding
- Psychosis
- Heart failure

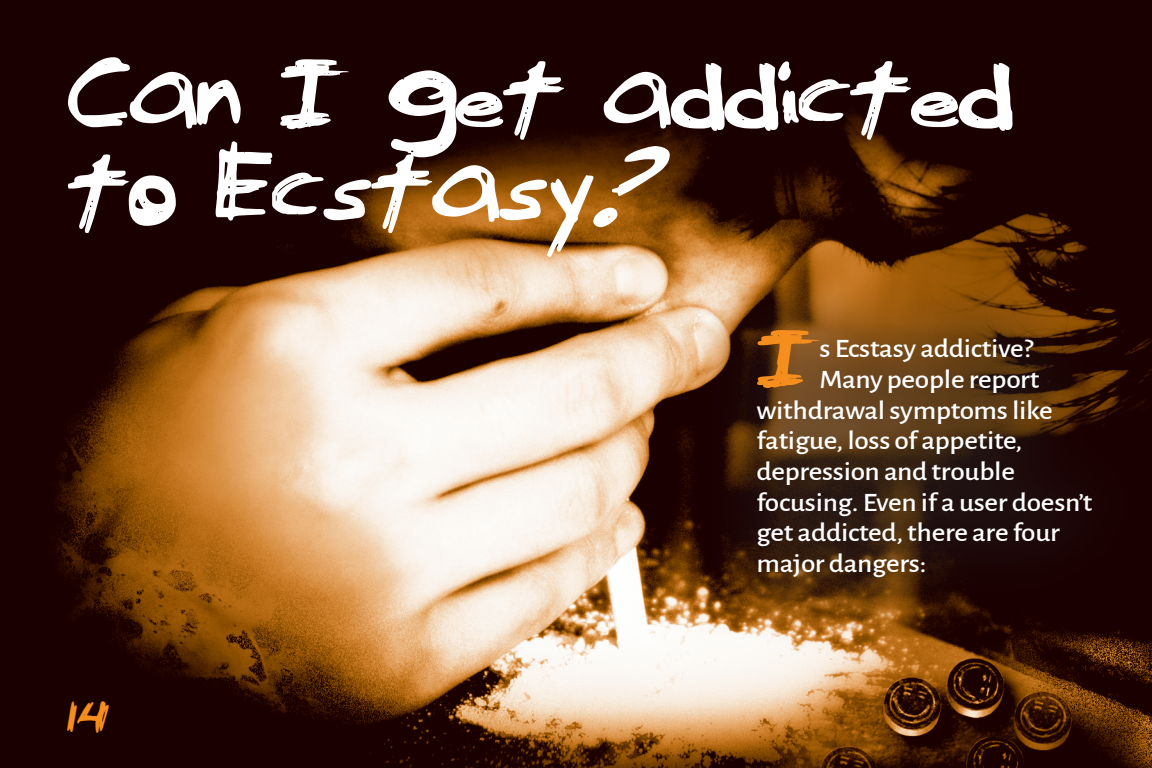
I hear a lot of people talking about Ecstasy, calling it a fun, harmless drug. All I can think is, 'If they only knew.'

"In five months, I went from living somewhat responsibly while pursuing my dream to a person who didn't care about a thing—and the higher I got, the deeper I sank into a dark, lonely place. When I did sleep, I had nightmares and the shakes. I had pasty skin, a throbbing head and the beginnings of feeling paranoid, but ignored it all, thinking it was normal. Until the night I thought I was dying.

"ECSTASY TOOK MY STRENGTH, MY MOTIVATION, MY DREAMS, MY FRIENDS, MY APARTMENT, MY MONEY AND, MOST OF ALL, MY SANITY. I worry about my future and my health every day. I have many mountains ahead of me, but I plan to keep climbing because I'm one of the lucky ones." —Lynn



Can I get addicted to Ecstasy?



Is Ecstasy addictive? Many people report withdrawal symptoms like fatigue, loss of appetite, depression and trouble focusing. Even if a user doesn't get addicted, there are four major dangers:

DANGER NO. 1: What is sold as Ecstasy might not be Ecstasy (MDMA) at all, but a mix of harmful drugs and toxic substances.

DANGER NO. 2: Users quickly build a tolerance, needing more of the drug to achieve the same high.

As doses increase, so do the severity of side effects. When the effects of Ecstasy diminish, many turn to even riskier drugs.

DANGER NO. 3: To cope with the aftereffects of Ecstasy, users may resort to stronger substances like heroin or cocaine. In fact, research shows that most Ecstasy users don't stop at Ecstasy—they go on to combine it with other drugs.

DANGER NO. 4: Believing Ecstasy is needed for fun leads people to take it more often. This can make them use it beyond raves and parties. Like other stimulant drugs, users continue to take Ecstasy despite experiencing unpleasant effects.



Scientific information

A great many studies have been conducted on Ecstasy. They show that:

- Ecstasy can cause liver failure. A 14-year-old girl died, despite an attempt by doctors to save her with a liver transplant.
- Ecstasy is often mixed with dangerous substances like rat poison.
- Young people have died from dehydration, exhaustion and heart attacks linked to Ecstasy use.
- Ecstasy can damage the kidneys and brain, including causing brain sores.
- Even a small amount of Ecstasy can poison the nervous system and cause permanent damage.

Cutting through the hype about drugs

The "positive" image of drugs mostly comes from how movies and music make them look glamorous.

When a new drug first appears, people don't usually think it's dangerous until it's too late. By the time the harm is clear, many already believe the false idea that the drug is "safe" or "harmless."

Ecstasy is a good example of that kind of hype. As one media observer said, "It is almost as though some clever marketing wizard came up with a campaign for it."



ECSTASY MADE ME CRAZY. ONE DAY I BIT GLASS, JUST LIKE I WOULD HAVE BITTEN AN APPLE. I had to have my mouth full of pieces of glass to realize what was happening to me. Another time I tore rags with my teeth for an hour." —Ann

what dealers will tell you

When teens were surveyed to find out why they started using drugs in the first place, 55 percent replied that it was due to pressure from their friends. They wanted to be cool and popular. Dealers know this.

They will approach you as a friend and offer to "help you out" with "something to bring you up." The drug will "help you fit in" or "make you cool."

Drug dealers, motivated by the money they make, will say anything to get you to buy their drugs.

They will tell you that if you take Ecstasy, "You will be popular" or "You will get girls or guys."

They don't care if the drugs ruin your life as long as they get paid. All they care about is money. Former dealers admit they viewed buyers as "pawns in a chess game."

Get the facts about drugs. Make your own decisions.

The Truth About Drugs

Drugs are essentially poisons. The amount taken determines the effect.

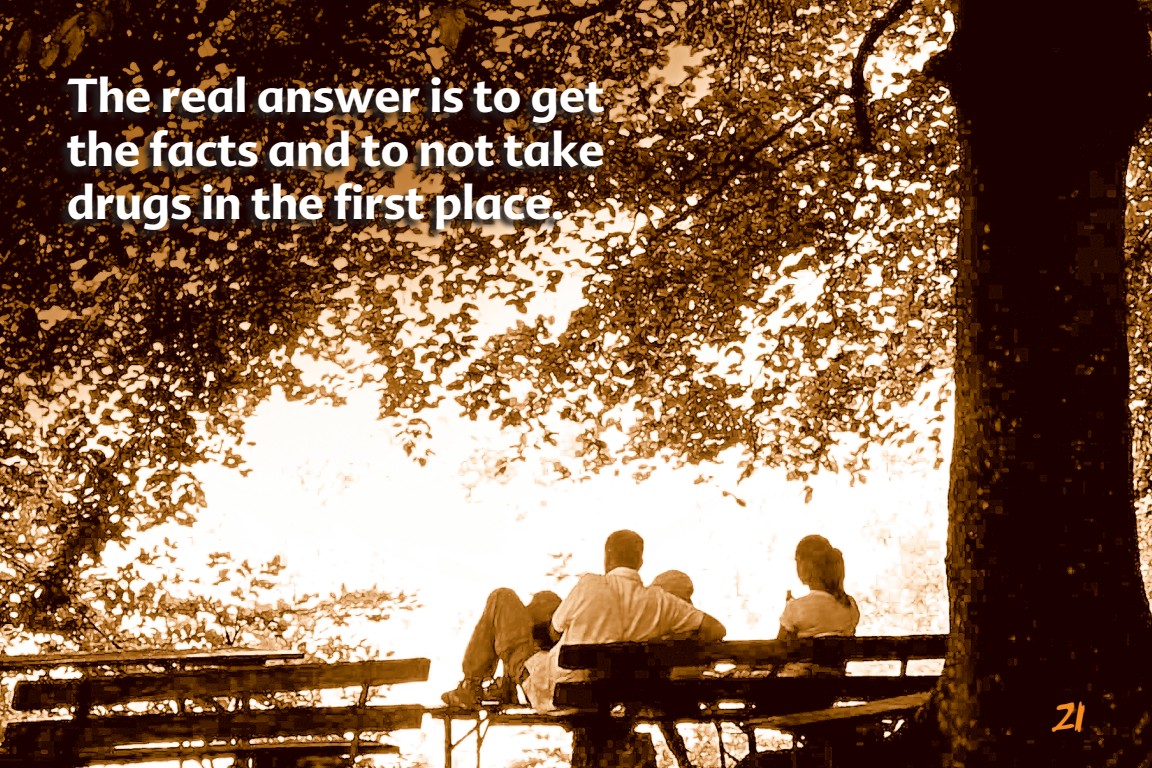
A small amount acts as a stimulant (speeds you up). A greater amount acts as a sedative (slows you down). An even larger amount poisons and can kill.

This is true of any drug. Only the amount needed to achieve the effect differs.

But many drugs have another liability: they directly affect the mind. They can distort the user's perception of what is happening around him or her. As a result, the person's actions may be odd, irrational, inappropriate and even destructive.

Drugs block off all sensations, the desirable ones along with the undesirable. So, while providing short-term help in the relief of pain, they also wipe out ability and alertness and muddy one's thinking.

Medicines are drugs that are intended to speed up, slow down or change something about the way your body is working to try to make it work better. Sometimes they are necessary. But they are still drugs: they act as stimulants or sedatives, and too much can kill you. So if you do not use medicines as they are supposed to be used, they can be as dangerous as illegal drugs.


The real answer is to get
the facts and to not take
drugs in the first place.

WHY DO PEOPLE TAKE DRUGS?

People take drugs because they want to change something in their lives.

Here are some of the reasons young people have given for taking drugs:

- To fit in
- To escape or relax
- To relieve boredom
- To seem grown-up
- To rebel
- To experiment

They think drugs are a solution. But eventually, drugs become the problem.

Difficult as it may be to face one's problems, the consequences of drug use are always worse than the problem one is trying to solve with them. The real answer is to get the facts and to not take drugs in the first place.



Millions of copies of booklets such as this have been distributed to people around the world in over 20 languages.



As new drugs appear on the streets and more information about their effects becomes known, existing booklets are updated and new ones created.

The booklets are published by the Foundation for a Drug-Free World, a nonprofit public benefit organization headquartered in Los Angeles, California.

The foundation provides educational materials, advice and coordination for its international drug prevention network. It works with youth, parents, educators, volunteer organizations and government agencies—anyone with an interest in helping people lead lives free from drug abuse.

REFERENCES:

For the references used to compile this booklet, go to DrugFreeWorld.org/refs.

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FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

This booklet is one in a series of publications that covers the facts about marijuana, alcohol, fentanyl, synthetic drugs, Ecstasy, cocaine, crack cocaine, crystal meth and methamphetamine, inhalants, heroin, LSD and prescription drug abuse. Armed with this information, the reader can make the decision to live a drug-free life.

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