



connect
wellbeing, ability, recovery

ECSTASY

Information, guidance and advice.

What is ecstasy?

Ecstasy (also known by its chemical name, MDMA) is often seen as the original designer drug because of its high profile links to dance music culture in the late 80s and early 90s. Clubbers took ecstasy to feel energised, happy, to stay awake and to dance for hours. The effects take about half an hour to kick in and tend to last between 3 to 6 hours, followed by a gradual comedown.

The health risks of ecstasy

Taking ecstasy involves some risks. Here is what it could do to you:

- There is no way of telling what is in ecstasy until you've swallowed it. There may be negative side effects from other drugs and ingredients added to the E.
- The comedown from ecstasy can make people feel lethargic and depressed.
- Evidence suggests long-term users can suffer memory problems and may develop depression and anxiety.
- Using Ecstasy has been linked to liver, kidney and heart problems. Some users report getting colds and sore throats more often, which may be partly caused by staying awake for 24 hours, which can itself affect your immune system.
- Anyone with a heart condition, blood pressure problems, epilepsy or asthma can have a very dangerous reaction to the drug.
- There have been over 200 ecstasy related deaths in the UK since 1996. Ecstasy causes many of these deaths, but some involve other substances sold as ecstasy, such as PMA.
- Ecstasy affects the body's temperature control. Dancing for long periods in a hot atmosphere, like a club, increases the chances of overheating and dehydration. Users should take regular breaks from the dance floor to cool down and watch out for any mates who are on it – they might not realise they're in danger of overheating or getting dehydrated.



The body & the brain

Short-term effects:

- Dehydration
- Overheating
- Confusion
- Depression
- Sleep problems

Long-term effects:

- Severe anxiety
- Paranoia
- Drug craving
- Damage to the brain's nerve endings that are responsible for thought and memory
- Impaired function and bodily production of serotonin, a brain chemical that regulates mood, memory, sleep and appetite.

Brain Damage, Addiction, Severe Anxiety, Paranoia, Depression

Teeth / Jaw Clenching

Sweating, Chills, Fainting

Blurred Vision

Increases Heart Rate, Blood Pressure and Heart Failure

Increases body Temperature and can cause heat stroke

Lung Failure

Nausea

Liver Damage

Muscle Tension

Kidney Damage



ECSTASY REMAINS IN THE BODY FOR 2-4 DAYS



What is ecstasy cut with?

- A big problem with Ecstasy pills is that they're rarely pure. They can be cut with amphetamines (like speed), caffeine and other substances with some similar effects – because it's cheaper to produce and can increase the dealer's profits.
- When Ecstasy has been cut with an alternative stimulant that is slower to kick in than MDMA, some users have then topped-up with another dose prematurely; and then they find they suffer side-effects because they have then overdosed.

If you want to cut down or stop take it a step at a time:

1. Think about changing
Why do you use ecstasy? Why do you want to cut down or stop?
2. Plan for the change you want
How are you going to make it happen?
3. Act on your decision
Make a statement to yourself: 'There are going to be no exceptions, I've decided to change and I'm determined to succeed'
4. Have a back-up plan
If you have a lapse, don't beat yourself up or think you're a failure. It is not a major crisis and you can learn from it. Work out what went wrong and how to deal with the situation next time.

How do I stay off?

LIFESTYLE CHANGES

It is often useful to make other changes to your lifestyle in order to be successful in quitting. Think about what you are going to say to your old friends that you used to use with. It might be helpful to practice saying things like "I don't use anymore" or "I've given up". Change your diet to include healthier food. Set new routines – like increasing exercise. If stress is a major issue for you then learn stress management techniques other than getting off your head, or do your best to avoid stressful situations. Work hard to improve your relationships. Make efforts to meet new people. Try to find new meaning in your life without drugs.

ANGER AND FRUSTRATION

Anger and frustration can lead to strong urges to use drugs. When you feel impulsive and frustrated try not to get overwhelmed by cravings. It is helpful to focus on understanding the feelings until the craving passes. Every craving you survive puts you closer to your ultimate long term goal.

AVOIDANCE

Avoid situations that are likely to cause you to relapse.



HAVE SOMEONE LISTEN

Let someone listen to you when you need to talk about your change in lifestyle without drugs. Seek professional advice/help if required.

CLEANING UP MY LIFE

Remove all the things from your home that remind you of drug use. Consider how the world around you will be a better place if you don't use drugs. Remind yourself that many people have successfully given up and have been able to deal with their problems. Be careful not to replace one drug with another.

Advice and Getting Help

Getting the correct help and support is crucial to the recovery and success of anyone with issues linked to drug and substance misuse. We would advise anyone who is experiencing problems with drugs to seek help and support immediately. Involving your GP is strongly advised as your GP has a wide variety of services available and can also check to see if you require medical assistance as well as therapeutic support. The community and voluntary sector provides excellent services in partnership with statutory care providers.

Below is a range of info and treatment services available:

- Talk to Frank - <https://www.talktofrank.com/>
- Addiction NI - <http://addictionni.com/>
- Drugs and Alcohol NI - <https://www.drugsandalcoholni.info/>
- Inspire Wellbeing - <https://www.inspirewellbeing.org/>





Discover more information on our website:

www.inspireconnect.info