



MDMA | THE FACTS

WHAT IS MDMA?

MDMA (otherwise known as ecstasy, E, MD, pills or caps) stands for 3,4-methylenedioxyamphetamine. Drugs sold as MDMA will have varying levels of MDMA and the purity and strength (dose) will be unknown. It can often contain other ingredients (in addition to the MDMA) that can be toxic. MDMA is traditionally sold as pills but it is becoming more common in powder and capsule form (containing powder or crystals).

THE EFFECTS OF MDMA

The effect of drugs is a result of the interaction between the drug, person and the environment. The environment MDMA is used in can increase the risk of harm. For example, night clubs and festivals increases the risk of harm due to high temperatures, dancing for long periods of time, crowds and difficulty accessing water.

MDMA is a stimulant drug which means it speeds up the messaging in the brain and the central nervous system. It also has hallucinogenic and psychoactive effects. Short term effects include:

- Jaw tension, teeth grinding and dry mouth.
- Increased heart rate.
- Increased body temperature and sweating.
- Pupil dilation, headaches and muscle aches.
- Paranoia, irritability and anxiety.
- Nausea and vomiting.

Some effects will not appear initially and can be felt up to 32 hours after use. Look out for reduced appetite, disturbed sleep, feeling down, muscle aches and finding it hard to concentrate.

HOW MDMA CAUSES HARM

Purer MDMA does not mean safer MDMA. More deaths related to MDMA are a result of MDMA rather than contaminants.

MDMA can contribute to causing dangerously high body temperatures, brain swelling, and seizures. These conditions can cause death unless recognised and treated early.

HOW TO REDUCE THE RISK OF HARM

Choosing not to use drugs is always the safest option, and using drugs can never be safe.

If someone chooses to use MDMA, they should educate themselves about the risks. Here are some other things they should know:

1. Know about the drug. Do research, find out the basics such as how it might feel, dose, how long it takes for the effect to start, peak and finish.
2. Hydrate safely. Stick to 500ml (one small bottle or two cups) of water each hour. MDMA can cause your body to retain water which can have harmful effects, such as cells swelling and seizures.
3. Chill out. Especially if you're feeling hot, it will help to cool you down. MDMA alters the body's ability to regulate its temperature, increasing the risk of serious heat stroke.
4. Try a small amount and wait to feel the effects. Everyone should take a test-dose. If there is no feeling, don't take more, the drug probably isn't MDMA.
5. Have salty snacks or sports drinks.
6. Know the signs that help is needed (visit drugaware.com.au).
7. Stick with mates and make emergency plans; download the festival map, have a meeting point, make sure mobiles are charged, and know where on-site support services are.
8. Do not mix different kinds of drugs, including alcohol. This increases the chance of something going wrong and the effects are unpredictable.
9. Avoid alcohol, caffeine and energy drinks. This will dehydrate you and increase your risk of heat stroke.
10. Don't double drop.

IF YOU NEED HELP

If you're at a festival or event go to the nearest First Aid tent. If you aren't at a venue with a First Aid tent call an ambulance on triple zero (000) or go to the nearest Emergency Department. Remember the medics will help you, not call the police (unless they are threatened or there is a death). Even if you don't think it's serious, the most important thing is that you get help ASAP.

For more information visit www.drugaware.com.au or call a qualified alcohol and other drug counsellor at the Alcohol and Drug Support Line. You can call them 24/7 on (08) 9442 5000 or 1800 198 024 (country callers).