Ecstasy/MDMA

MDMA, also known as Ecstasy, is a synthetic, psychoactive drug possessing stimulant and hallucinogenic properties. MDMA possesses chemical variations of the stimulant amphetamine or methamphetamine and a hallucinogen, most often mescaline. MDMA is a "mood elevator" that produces a relaxed, euphoric state. 'Black market' ecstasy tablets vary widely in strength, and often contain other drugs. Its effects peak at about four hours and last approximately four to six hours.

Research concerning MDMA is ongoing. But there are a few things we do know about Ecstasy.

- You won't get pure MDMA (methylenedioxymethamphetamine). It's cut with something, maybe caffeine, amphetamine, ephedrine, MDE (Amphetamine Derivative), LSD and/or some other unknown ingredient
- The half-life of E is about 6 hours. 50% remains in your body after 6 hours.
- Using ecstasy causes long-lasting damage to brain areas that are critical for thought and memory
- Ecstasy use frequently causes depression in individuals after taking it.

MDMA works by releasing from certain brain cells large amounts of the brain chemical, serotonin. This release of serotonin is what causes Ecstasy’s mood elevation effect, as well as the feelings of empathy, self-acceptance, and emotional closeness with others that so many people find valuable and rewarding about the drug.

But in releasing large amounts of serotonin, MDMA also depletes the brain’s supply. It then takes some time for the brain to replenish what was released. There’s no way to tell for sure, but based on animal studies, scientists say that it could take anywhere from 48 hours to an entire week to replenish the brain’s supply of serotonin.

**Potential health hazards**

Ecstasy users may encounter problems similar to those experienced by amphetamine and cocaine users, including addiction. Physical effects include

- muscle tension,
- eye wiggles,
- auditory effects,
- next-day fatigue,
- involuntary teeth clenching,
- nausea,
- blurred vision,
- faintness, and
- chills or sweating.
- Increases in heart rate and blood pressure
• Anxiety,
• sleep problems,
• delusions and paranoia
• (depression)
• stomach tightness,
• panic,
• difficulty with orgasm and may prevent erection in some men.

Additional Info:


National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information:  [www.ncadi.samhsa.gov/](http://www.ncadi.samhsa.gov/)

National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse:  [www.casacolumbia.org/](http://www.casacolumbia.org/)