

What is MDMA?

MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxy-methylamphetamine, also known as ecstasy) is a synthetic (man-made) drug that causes both hallucinogenic and stimulant effects. The drug was developed in Germany in the early twentieth century as an appetite suppressant, but today's users consume the drug for its hallucinogenic effects, which they claim heighten their senses and make them feel less inhibited. Users also consume MDMA for its stimulant properties, which enable them to dance for hours at all-night parties and nightclubs.

What does it look like?

MDMA generally is sold as a tablet, which is taken orally. MDMA tablets are available in various colors and shapes and generally are imprinted with a logo. Popular logos include smiley faces, clover leaves, cartoon characters, and symbols associated with commercial brands such as Mitsubishi, Nike, and Mercedes.

Who uses the drug?

Most MDMA users are teenagers or young adults. More than 10 percent of high school seniors have tried MDMA at least once, and more than 2 percent have used the drug in the past month, according to the University of Michigan's Monitoring the Future Survey. MDMA users typically come

from middle- and upper-class households. MDMA is inexpensive. The average retail price of an MDMA tablet is between \$20 and \$30 making it attractive and accessible to younger users.

Where is it used?

MDMA is called a club drug because it often is used at all-night dance parties (called raves) or at techno parties and nightclubs. In addition, MDMA increasingly is being used in private homes and on high school and college campuses.

What are the risks?

The effects produced by consuming MDMA can last for 4 to 6 hours, depending upon the potency of the tablet. Using the drug can cause confusion, depression, anxiety, sleeplessness, craving for the drug, and paranoia. Use of the drug also may result in muscle tension, involuntary teeth clenching, nausea, blurred vision, tremors, rapid eye movement, sweating, or chills. People who have circulatory problems or heart disease face particular risks because MDMA can increase heart rate and blood pressure.

MDMA abusers also risk dehydration, hyperthermia (exceptionally high fever), and heart or kidney failure if they use the drug while physically exerting themselves or in hot environments. (These factors pose particular risks to individuals who use MDMA at raves or techno parties, where they may be dancing among crowds of people.)

Users also are at risk of consuming other drugs that may be sold to them as MDMA. In some instances, the synthetic drug PMA (paramethoxyamphetamine) has been sold as MDMA. Because PMA's hallucinogenic effects take longer to appear, users may consume too much of the drug, which can result in overdose death.

An additional risk results when other substances are added to MDMA tablets without the user's knowledge. Drugs such as heroin and methamphetamine reportedly have been added to MDMA tablets in some parts of the United States.

What is it called?

The most common names for MDMA are ecstasy, Adam, and XTC. (Please see the Street Terms text box below for additional names.)

Street Terms for MDMA

B-bombs	Iboga
Clarity	Love drug
Cristal	Morning shot
Decadence	Pollutants
Disco biscuit	Scooby snacks
E	Speed for lovers
Essence	Sweeties
Eve	Wheels
Go	X
Hug drug	

