

Ecstasy – MDMA

What is ecstasy?

Ecstasy (also known by its chemical name, MDMA or methylenedioxy-methamphetamine) is often seen as the original designer drug because of its high profile links to dance music scene in the late 80s and early 90s.

Many clubbers took ecstasy to feel energized, happy, to stay awake and to dance for hours. The effects often take approximately half an hour to kick in or 'come up' and tend to last between 3 to 6 hours but this can vary from person to person Ecstasy use is often followed by a gradual comedown and again this can vary from person to person.

Ecstasy is commonly referred to by the street names of 'E's, pills, X, XTC and also by the branding usually stamped onto the tablet like Mitsubishi, Rolex, Android, Superman, Playstation etc

Examples of some Ecstasy tablets seized within Northern Ireland are shown below



Personal

Professional

Protective

Classification:

Ecstasy is a Class A drug under Misuse of Drugs Act 1971

Some Common effects of Ecstasy

- People feel 'in tune' with their surroundings, and music and colours become more vivid
- Users often have temporary feelings of love and affection for friends and also others around them
- Some short-term effects of use can include anxiety, panic attacks, confused episodes, paranoia and even psychosis.
- Lots of people feel really chatty on Ecstasy
- Physical side effects can include dilated pupils, a tingling feeling, tightening of the jaw muscles, raised body temperature and the heart beating faster.

Ecstasy trends and street prices

In the past year Ecstasy seems to develop with the hot trends and whatever is current at the time there will more likely than not be an Ecstasy tablet reflecting that trend. Current prices generally vary from £10-15 per tablet across Northern Ireland. The content of MDMA tablets seized within Northern Ireland usually varies from between 100mg to 200mg. Most pills would often have a half score marking on their reverse to allow user to easily split to tablet to enable them to take or 'drop' a half tablet and gauge its dose and its effect before taking the other half.

A big problem with ecstasy is that it's rarely pure and the tablet is often bulked out with other substances. Sometimes, there is no MDMA at all. Sometimes, it contains other drugs, like PMA, PMMA or para-methyl-4-methylaminorex which can be fatal. Regardless of what it looks like and what it is called, users can't be sure what's in a pill or a powder and they can't predict how they will react upon taking the drug.

All of the tablets below have been linked to several drug related deaths in the past 2 years in Northern Ireland and the UK Mainland and a report by the NI Coroner, Dr James Lyness, assistant state pathologist in Northern Ireland at an inquest in June 2014 said "There are 19 cases from 18 June 2013 to 6 February 2014 where the 4,4-Dimethylaminorex ... is mentioned within the cause of death."



Red Cherries



Green Rolex



Pink Superman

MDMA powder and Crystal

MDMA remains established as a consumer drug in both powder and crystal form. This format of the drug is not necessarily an indication of quality. However, the physical structure and appearance of crystal MDMA is far less vulnerable to adulteration than its powder alternative, which is simply ground crystals.



Powder and Crystal MDMA

The alternative benefit of having MDMA in powder, not tablets, is the opportunity to adulterate it using a cutting agent such as Benzocaine to increasing profit margins.

Useful links:

<http://www.talktofrank.com/drug/ecstasy>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1971/38/contents>

<http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/>