

Alcohol and Other Drugs

Understanding ecstasy.

1800 700 514 (Freecall)
unitingvictas.org.au/aod

What is ecstasy?

Ecstasy is made from MDMA (3,4 MethyleneDioxyMethAmphetamine) which is a white powder. Ecstasy is the name generally given to MDMA in capsules, pills or as a powder. It's both a stimulant and hallucinogen. It's synthetically made and was used legally in the 1970s for psychoanalytic therapy. In the mid-1980s it was made illegal in Australia.

Common effects include:

- Euphoria
- Elevated mood
- Empathy
- Compassion
- Lowered inhibitions
- Pleasure
- Feeling more connected with the world and people
- Sensing light and hearing music differently

Negative effects include:

- Drained
- Dehydrated
- Depressed
- Anxious
- Irritable
- Nauseous (vomiting)
- Hopeless
- Confused

Reducing risks

The purity of ecstasy / MDMA can vary greatly, and some pills sold as ecstasy can contain other substances, including new psychoactive substances (NPS). They may not be made safely and can lead to unpredictable side-effects. Every batch may be different.

Here are some ways to reduce the risks if you're planning to use ecstasy:

- Plan how you'll minimise the negative effects and the crash. Think about who you'll be with, where you'll find a safe and quiet space if it's needed, and how you'll get home (don't drive).
- Avoid using if you feel sick, haven't eaten, or haven't slept as you may feel worse.
- If you plan to use, take a little bit first and wait to see what effect it has. Avoid 'double-dropping' (taking another pill) if you think the first pill isn't working. Some pills come on slower and stronger, and using more than your body can process might lead to overdose.
- If you're using powdered MDMA, crush the rocks to avoid variance in the strength. Don't share snorting equipment.
- Be careful about mixing ecstasy with other drugs or medications that affect serotonin. Mixing can lead to serotonin toxicity which can be lethal.

The future is bright.



Getting support

Pill testing and drug alerts

You can buy pill testing kits to give you a better idea of what's in the pill before you take it. Testing can indicate the concentration of MDMA, or identify a limited number of other substances present.

Pill testing is also available at some public events, and it's a good idea to take advantage of it. You won't be reported, and testing can help you make informed choices about what you're taking.

You can find up-to-date drug alerts on the Department of Health website. See the website address under 'Contacts' on this page.

Emergencies

Look out for the following signs after taking ecstasy, as immediate medical attention may be needed:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Muscle spasms
- Overheating
- Inability to sweat or urinate
- Confusion
- Loss of consciousness.

For medical staff to apply effective treatment, they will need to know what substance was taken including what it looked like.

After care

Plan to have some time to rest and replenish with water and healthy food after use of ecstasy. Check in with friends who were with you when you were using.

Contacts

If you want to talk to someone about your own or someone else's alcohol or other drug use, you can get more information from these Victorian and Tasmanian state-wide services. If you are located in another state, these contacts will direct you to your local support services:

DirectLine

24/7 service offering counselling, information and referrals.

T 1800 888 236

directline.org.au

Harm Reduction Victoria

Support and information from other drug using peers.

T 03 9329 1500

hrvic.org.au

QUIT

T 13 78 48

quit.org.au

Family Drug and Gambling Help

Victorian support for family members.

T 1300 660 068

sharc.org.au/sharc-programs/family-drug-gambling-help

Drug alerts

health.vic.gov.au/alcohol-and-drugs/drug-alerts

Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Tasmania Service Directory

atdc.org.au/service-directory

Alcohol and Drug Information Service TAS

24/7 service offering counselling, information and referrals.

T 1800 811 994

Uniting would like to thank consumer partners for drawing on their lived experience to contribute to this series of publications.

