

A Su Salud

To your health

The Agony of Ecstasy

In late April, a 14-year old girl from Belmont, CA died due to an overdose of ecstasy. This sad event provides a window of opportunity to offer some basic information about the drug.

What is Ecstasy? The chemical name is 3-4 methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA). It is a synthetic, psychoactive drug chemically similar to the stimulant methamphetamine and the hallucinogen mescaline. The drug is also called X, XTC, E, M, adam, hug, bean, love drug, and roll. Ecstasy produces strong feelings of comfort, empathy, and connection to others. Initially it was used as a therapeutic tool by psychotherapists, and now is more associated with the underground rave and dance club scene throughout the world.

What are the effects of Ecstasy? According to Erowid.org, an online library of information about psychoactive plants and chemicals and related topics, the most common side effects include:

POSITIVE

- extreme mood lift
- increased willingness to communicate
- increase in energy (stimulation)
- ego softening
- feelings of comfort, belonging, and closeness to others
- feelings of love and empathy
- forgiveness
- increased awareness & appreciation of music
- increased awareness of senses (eating, drinking, smell)
- profound life-changing spiritual experiences
- neurotically based fear dissolution
- sensations bright and intense
- urge to hug and kiss people



NEUTRAL

- appetite loss
- visual distortion
- rapid, involuntary eye jiggling (nystagmus)
- mild visual hallucinations (uncommon)
- moderately increased heart rate and blood pressure (increases with dose)
- restlessness, nervousness, shivering
- change in body temperature regulation
- strong desire to do or want more when coming down



NEGATIVE

(negative side effects increase with higher doses and frequent use)

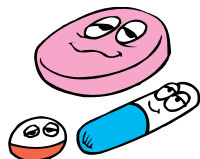
- inappropriate and/or unintended emotional bonding
- tendency to say things you might feel uncomfortable about later
- mild to extreme jaw clenching (trisma), tongue and cheek chewing, and teeth grinding (bruxia)
- difficulty concentrating & problems with activities requiring linear focus
- short-term memory scramble or loss & confusion
- muscle tension
- erectile disfunction and difficulty reaching orgasm
- increase in body temperature, hyperthermia, dehydration (drink water)
- hyponatremia (don't drink too much water)
- nausea and vomiting
- headaches, dizziness, loss of balance, and vertigo
- post-trip crash - unpleasantly harsh comedown from the peak effect
- hangover the next day, lasting days to weeks
- mild depression and fatigue for up to a week
- severe depression and/or fatigue (uncommon)
- possible strong urge to repeat the experience, though not physically addictive
- possible psychological crisis requiring hospitalization (psychotic episodes, severe panic attacks, etc.) (rare)
- possible liver toxicity (rare)
- possible neurotoxicity (controversial)
- small risk of death. Approximately 2 per 100,000 users have extreme negative reactions resulting in death. (rare)



Buyer, Beware

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse and Erowid.org, demand for ecstasy pills are higher than supply and as a result, it is notoriously unreliable in content, more so than most other street drugs. For instance, drugs chemically similar to MDMA, such as MDA (methylenedioxyamphetamine, the parent drug of MDMA) and PMA (paramethoxyamphetamine,

associated with fatalities in the U.S. and Australia) are sometimes sold as ecstasy. These drugs can be neurotoxic or create additional health risks to the user. Also, ecstasy tablets may contain other substances in addition to MDMA, such as ephedrine (a stimulant);



dextromethorphan (DXM, a cough suppressant that has PCP-like effects at high doses); ketamine (an anesthetic used mostly by veterinarians that also has PCP-like effects); caffeine; ephedrine, cocaine; and methamphetamine. While the combination of MDMA with one or more of these drugs may be inherently dangerous, users might also combine them with substances such as marijuana and alcohol, putting themselves at further physical risk. This problem has led to the development of MDMA testing kits that may help give the user a general sense of the content of a pill.

Testing, Testing

The MDMA testing kit helps determine whether ecstasy is actually present, but it does not test for *strength* or *purity* of ecstasy. Testing kits are available from DanceSafe, a nonprofit, harm reduction organization promoting health and safety within the rave and nightclub community. DanceSafe warns, though, that “a positive test for the presence of ecstasy does NOT mean the pill is “pure,” “good,” or “safe” to take. No drug use is 100% safe. All drug use contains inherent risk.” For more information about buying a testing kit, go to the DanceSafe website at <http://www.dancesafe.org/testingkits>.

More information, please

To learn more about ecstasy and other drugs, you can go to the following websites:

DanceSafe.org
ClubDrugs.org
Erowid.org
Nida.nih.gov

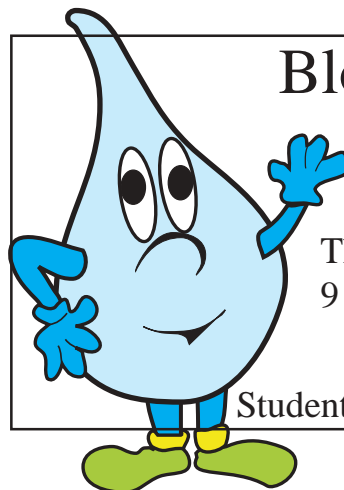
What a Trip!

I assure you that I was not taking any drugs when I wrote the following:

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Blood Drive



Thursday, May 13
9 am - 4:30 pm

Student Council Chambers

Last Chance to Quit Smoking for Free!

Health Services is offering a **FREE** smoking cessation program THROUGH THE END OF SPRING QUARTER.

The program consists of two counseling sessions and then your choice of acupuncture, hypnotherapy, nicotine replacement gum, nicotine replacement patch, or a prescription medication. All for **FREE!**

If you are interested in **QUITTING SMOKING FOR FREE**, contact Mary-Jo Lomax at Health Services, lower level of the Campus Center, 864-8903, lomaxmaryjo@fhda.

De Anza College Health Services

is available to all registered De Anza students. Some of our services include:

Health education/TB skin tests/First Aid/Blood pressure checks/Condoms/lubricants/Over-the-counter medicine/
Pregnancy tests/Family planning

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<http://www.deanza.edu/healthservices>