Ecstasy

Drug Classification: Hallucinogen and Stimulant
Drug Schedule: II
Addiction potential: Unknown

Modes of Administration
Oral (aspirin-sized pill or clear capsule)
Intranasal (snorted into the nose)
Intravenous (injected)

Onset of Drug Effect(s)
Onset is typically within an hour, depending on stomach contents. Initial effects last two to six hours, depending on potency/dosage. The “hangover” effect can last up to five days.

Drug Action(s)
The active chemical MDMA or MDA combines the effects of methylated amphetamines, which stimulate, with hallucinogenic effects of LSD. Ecstasy triggers neurons to release all stored serotonin and prohibits its re-absorption. This neurotransmitter promotes feelings of bliss, empathy, and perceived insight as well as affecting specific physiological changes.

Acute effects on the mind and body include:
• Euphoria, self-confidence, hyperactivity
• Sexual disinhibition and increased affection
• Distortion of time, exaggerated sensory perception, paranoia, anxiety
• Nystagmus (eye wiggles), creating blurred vision
• Nausea, vomiting
• Increased blood pressure and heart rate
• Decreased appetite
• Sleep problems
• Involuntary teeth grinding, muscle tension
• Increased body temperature, sweating, chills, fainting, dehydration
• Depression and fatigue for days following use
• Teeth clenching
• Muscle cramping

• The following effects have been reported for individuals who have used Ecstasy over a longer period of time:
  • Neurotoxicity – permanent damage to serotonin-releasing neurons with consequent memory and thought impairment
  • Elevated impulsivity
  • Depression, anxiety
  • Change in sleep patterns
  • Symptoms associated with Parkinson’s disease
  • Death has been reported in individuals, usually when a combination of other drugs is present or because of the dehydration

A Word about Drug Combinations
Ecstasy is illegally manufactured and is often used in combination and adulterated with other drugs. Ecstasy is also commonly “cut” with the following: chalk, LSD, amphetamines, heroin, caffeine, ketamine, and ephedrine.

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