

## A BIG MISTAKE

### Daniel's Story

Daniel didn't really want to take the colorful tablets, but his friend assured him it was a "safe" drug. He had heard all the anti-drug propaganda, but a part of him was still curious . . . it sounded sort of fun – and how much damage could one pill really do?

So Daniel took the pill. He and his friend went to a party, and at first Daniel was having a good time – he felt like he had a ton of energy; like he could dance all night.

He was hooked. Every time Daniel went out, he had to take at least one tablet of X. It felt like he could no longer have any fun without it, and this worried him. When his grades started slipping, he decided that he needed to stop.

Too little, too late: Daniel had his first heart attack two weeks later, and had to go to the hospital several days a month for a regular checkup. His kidneys were so weak that he would have to stay on a strict diet for the rest of his life – eventually, he'd need dialysis.

Most users aren't as lucky as Daniel. They usually end up dead on the dance floor.

## WALKING AWAY

### Saying "No" to Ecstasy

Dealers of MDMA often say things like, "It's not like other drugs. This one's safe". When you hear this, be polite, say "no thanks," and walk away.

But if a friend or someone you know offers you Ecstasy at a party, try one of these:

- "Thanks, but I heard that stuff gives you diarrhea."
- "I'm good. I'm already having fun."
- "No thanks, I just want to remember the night for once."



## WORK IT OUT!

Time to test what you've learned, so you'll be armed next time you go out to a rave or party with your friends.

1. The two most common causes of death from Ecstasy use are heatstroke and excessive consumption of water.  
a. True                      b. False
2. What are the long-term effects of Ecstasy use?  
a. Loss of memory              b. Panic attacks  
c. Heart problems              d. All of the above
3. One of the main ingredients in MDMA, or Ecstasy, is the same chemical that is found in:  
a. Cocaine                      b. Heroin  
c. Crystal Meth              d. Water
4. Ecstasy tricks your brain into producing dopamine and \_\_\_\_\_, the chemicals that make you feel euphoric and uninhibited.  
a. Ketamine                      b. MDMA  
c. Serotonin                      d. Dialysis
5. Ecstasy is safer than heroin and cocaine.  
a. True                      b. False

Answers: 1. a; 2. d; 3. c; 4. c; 5. b

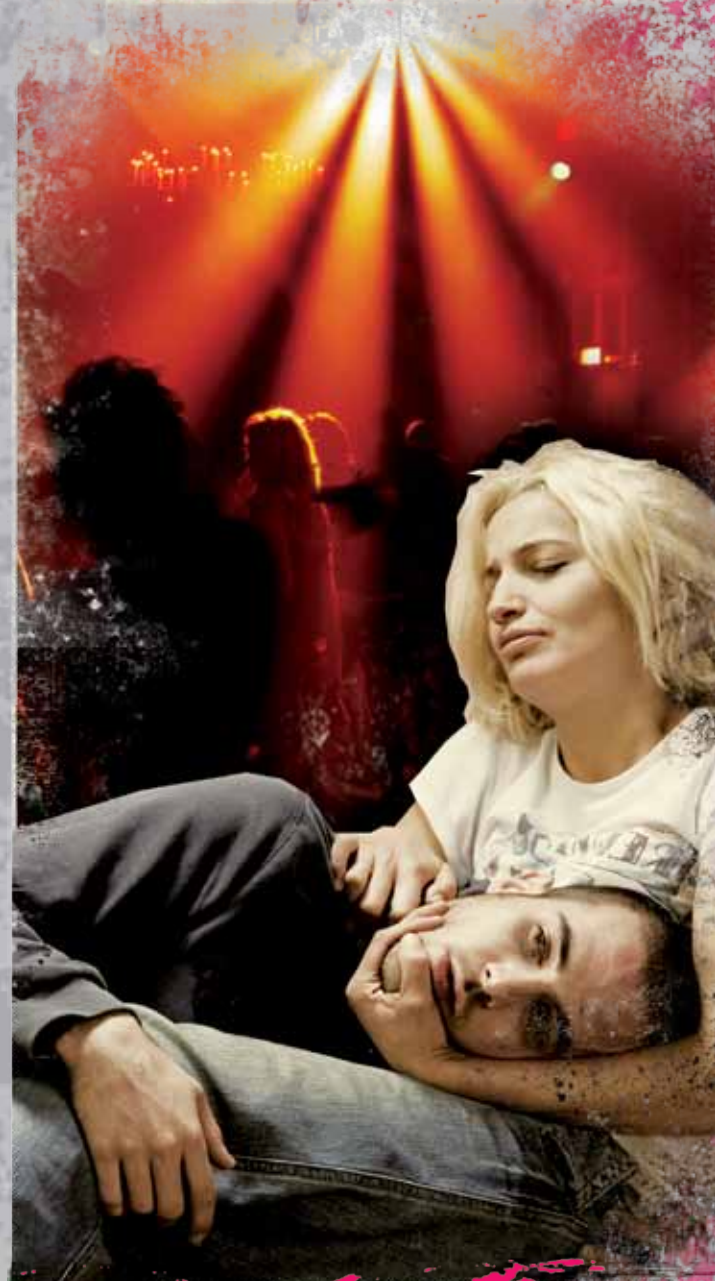


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# ECSTASY



## THE PARTY'S OVER



## HOW TO RUIN A GOOD NIGHT

You're at a party with some friends, and you just took your first hit of Ecstasy. At first, you don't feel anything. And then it hits you: Your legs begin to wobble, your heart starts pounding and your vision becomes blurred. Someone hands you a pacifier, and you stick it in your mouth – it keeps you from grinding your teeth. You're super-thirsty, and you feel like you'll overheat if you don't keep drinking water.

Suddenly, you're burning up. You drink more water, but it doesn't help. You feel weak and dizzy and begin to throw up. Someone calls an ambulance when you fall down and start convulsing.

You wake up in the hospital, covered in ice packs and hooked up to a dialysis machine.

The doctor says you were lucky to make it out of the party alive – and luckier still that you don't have any permanent damage to your brain, liver, kidneys or heart. Ecstasy may look like a harmless little tablet . . . but looks aren't everything.

## A SAFE ALTERNATIVE?

### There Is No Such Thing

Some people think that Ecstasy – also called “X,” “Adam,” or “E” – is a “safe” alternative to harder drugs. But they're dead wrong.

Ecstasy is most commonly found at clubs, raves, or parties and is usually sold as a colorful tablet. The dealers usually stamp their pills with images of playful cartoon characters, but that's just to distract you from the serious effects it causes.



## WHAT EXACTLY IS ECSTASY?

The medical term for Ecstasy is MDMA (methylenedioxymethamphetamine). It's a long word – but you might recognize part of it: methamphetamine, otherwise known as “crystal meth.” This chemical is what makes Ecstasy so addictive: it causes your brain to release serotonin and dopamine – the chemicals that your brain produces when you're having a good time. People who use Ecstasy feel euphoric, energetic and uninhibited.

But that's where the fun ends. Because of this drug, your brain stops producing serotonin and dopamine on its own – and users end up taking more Ecstasy to get that feeling back.

And like many illegal drugs, Ecstasy is often mixed with other harder drugs or dangerous chemicals. You just don't know what's in each pill. There's no such thing as a “safe” drug. Ecstasy is just as dangerous as heroin, cocaine and crystal meth.

## WHAT IF YOU GET CAUGHT?

### Ecstasy, the Law and You

Ecstasy, or MDMA, is a Schedule I type drug – no matter where you are in the U.S., you can receive six months to seven years jail time for possessing as little as less than one gram of Ecstasy. You could also lose your driver's license. If you're caught with more, then the penalties get much, much worse. Besides paying thousands of dollars in legal fees and fines, you could spend the rest of your life in prison.

Even if you don't go to prison, a drug-related offense will be on your record permanently. You may have trouble getting student loans, getting a job or finding a place to live.

## ECSTASY AND YOUR BODY

The first effects of Ecstasy are much like alcohol. Blurred vision, impaired judgment and lack of coordination. You begin taking shorter breaths as your heart starts to pound faster and faster. Many users also grind their teeth, which is why you see so many Ecstasy users sucking on pacifiers.

Just one tablet of Ecstasy can affect your body's ability to regulate its own temperature, and that's what makes it especially dangerous: Most deaths from MDMA use result from heatstroke. Ecstasy users feel like they're burning up and dehydrating – and that leads to the second most common cause of Ecstasy-related death: water poisoning.

Ecstasy users often try to compensate for overheating and dehydration by drinking very large quantities of water. And when you drink excessive amounts of water, you disturb your body's sodium balance, and your organs begin to swell like sponges. This causes your brain to press against your skull, which bends your brain stem and stops all blood flow from the heart. Once this happens, water starts to build up inside your brain and you pretty much shut down – forever.

## LONG-TERM EFFECTS

Even if you survive your first night of Ecstasy use, you still have the long-term effects to consider:

- Permanent brain damage
- Constant fatigue
- Severe liver damage
- Scarred heart tissue
- Kidney damage
- Internal bleeding
- Lack of drive, no motivation
- Memory loss
- Lack of concentration

So think about the consequences before taking that first tablet. One night of Ecstasy could lead to a lifetime of regret.

