

MDMA/ Ecstasy

How does it make you feel?

Most people feel:

- very happy – hence the name
- 'loved up' – users often feel love and affection for the people they're with and the strangers around them
- energised and alert

Some users have reported feelings of:

- anxiety
- panic attacks
- paranoia after taking ecstasy

How does it make people behave?

Lots of people feel very chatty and uninhibited on ecstasy, which makes them open up and talk about things they might not do normally.

Physical side effects can include:

- dilated pupils
- tingling sensations
- tightening or moving of the jaw muscles (gurning)
- raised body temperature
- a faster heartbeat and nausea

Physical health risks

- Because the strength of ecstasy pills are so unpredictable, if you do decide to take ecstasy, you should start by taking half or even a quarter of the pill and then wait for the effects to kick in before taking anymore – you may find that this is enough.
- Use of ecstasy has been linked to liver, kidney and heart problems.
- Some users report getting colds and sore throats more often when they take ecstasy.
- Anyone with a heart condition, blood pressure problems, epilepsy or asthma can have a very dangerous reaction to the drug.
- Ecstasy affects the body's temperature control. Dancing for long periods in a hot atmosphere, like a club, increases the chances of overheating and dehydration. Users should take regular breaks from the dance floor to cool down and watch out for any mates who are on it – as they might not realise they're in danger of overheating or getting dehydrated.
- Drinking too much (including water) can also be dangerous. This is because ecstasy can cause the body to release a hormone which stops it making urine. If you drink too quickly you might affect your body's salt balance, which can be as deadly as not drinking enough water.

What is ecstasy cut with?

There's no way of knowing what's inside your ecstasy pill or MDMA powder until you've taken it. Even testing kits may not find everything.

You may be at risk from other drugs and ingredients added to the pill or powder, as well as to the ecstasy itself.

Ecstasy pills are sometimes cut with amphetamines (like [speed](#)), caffeine and other substances that have some similar effects but are cheaper to produce. Some pills are cut with stimulants that are slower to kick in than MDMA, and so users have taken more of the pill (or pills) and then overdosed. Health experts advise that if you choose to take Ecstasy then taking a small amount at a time would be less risky. MDMA powder can also be cut with other ingredients. You should always start by taking a very small amount to begin with and wait for the effects to kick in before deciding whether to take anymore.

Can you get addicted?

It's possible to build up tolerance to ecstasy, which means people need to take more of the drug to get the same buzz.

You may also develop a psychological dependence, even when you know it's bad for you.