



MDMA/Ecstasy/Molly

What Is It?

MDMA, Ecstasy, and Molly are all different names for the same drug: 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine. Technically, MDMA is the active substance in Ecstasy and Molly. It is generally used as a party drug. MDMA is an illicit drug that has the effects of both a stimulant and a hallucinogen.

WARNING: Buyer Beware! MDMA is an illicit drug. Always assume illicit drugs may contain a very dangerous mixture of potentially lethal synthetic (man-made) opioids like fentanyl and other additives.

What Does It Look Like?

MDMA is usually sold as a small tablet of pressed powder which may be colourful with cartoon-ish designs pressed in. In some cases, it can look like candy.

How Does It Work?

MDMA triggers the brain to release certain chemicals, which can make a person feel more energetic, euphoric, and connected to others. As a stimulant, it speeds up the body's functions and processes. Since it is also a hallucinogen, it can alter how people perceive the world and make them more sensitive to lights, noise and touch. The effects may then last from 3 to 6 hours. When the pleasurable effects start to wear off, people can experience fatigue, depression, confusion or paranoia, trouble concentrating, anxiety, and hallucinations. Some of the less pleasant effects of MDMA may last up to 1 week or longer.

Why Is It Dangerous?

MDMA can have widespread effects on a person's life including physical, mental, and social harms. Short-term MDMA use can lead to increased:

- Alertness
- Heart rate & blood pressure
- Muscle tension
- Tremors, sweating, chills
- Anxiety, depression, paranoia
- Sweating and dehydration

Too much MDMA can cause serious health impacts such as seizures. It can also disrupt the body's natural ability to regulate temperature (cooling off), causing overheating that can result in organ damage, brain swelling, and even death. MDMA use can lead to long-term mental and physical effects, including nausea/vomiting, feeling tired all the time, muscle aches, kidney or liver damage, decreased interest in sex, damaged brain cells, and memory problems. MDMA use is especially dangerous for people who have diabetes, epilepsy, or take certain types of anti-depressants.



What Does MDMA Toxicity Look Like?

A person experiencing MDMA toxicity can have erratic behaviour, high blood pressure, fast heart rate, sweating, vomiting, change in breathing, convulsions, and loss of consciousness. If you are concerned about someone who you think may have been using MDMA, **call 9-1-1** and stay with them if it is safe to do so. Help them remain calm and relaxed in a safe, quiet, dark room until help arrives and encourage them to drink water. **If in doubt, give Naloxone.** Party drugs can be cut with fentanyl or carfentanil. Naloxone will not cause further harm. The **Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act** protects you from drug possession charges when helping in an overdose situation.

Safer Use Tips

There is **no** safe way to use MDMA. If you are using MDMA, here are some tips to decrease your risk:

- **Consider your mindset before using hallucinogenic drugs.** Be aware that using hallucinogenic drugs when you feel stressed, anxious, or depressed can lead to a negative experience and result in long-lasting psychological effects.
- **Consider your environment before using hallucinogenic drugs.** Be aware that being in an environment where you feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or with people you don't trust can also increase the risk of panic and paranoia.
- **Start low and go slow.** Start with a "tester dose" and wait before taking more. **Take breaks!** Allow time to feel the effects before taking more.
- **Don't use alone.** If you are using alone, call NORS -- the National Overdose Response Service Hotline, at 1-888-688-NORS (6677) so you can get help if you need it.
- **Don't mix with other substances**, including alcohol and prescription or over the counter medications.
- **Stay hydrated.** Drink lots of water, and take frequent breaks to cool down and get fresh air. Be careful not to drink too much water, which can cause an electrolyte imbalance. To avoid this, alternate water with drinks that include electrolytes, such as Gatorade and other "sports drinks."
- **Take a photo of the drug** before you use it. If you end up getting sick, this can help keep other people safe and makes it easier to help you.
- **Know the signs of an opioid overdose and act!** Stay within cell range or have access to a satellite phone in case you need to call 9-1-1. **Always carry Naloxone with you and know how to use it.** Kits are available for free at locations across the NWT – **make sure your kit doesn't freeze!**

Need Help?

Reach out to your local health centre, community counsellor/mental health professional, or call 8-1-1.