



Ecstasy

E/Snackies/New Yorkers/Disco biscuits

What is it?

Ecstasy is a psychoactive stimulant. In fact, the term “ecstasy” does not refer to a single substance, but rather to a range of substances similar in chemistry and effects. It is usually distributed as a tablet or pill but can also be a powder or capsule. The tablets can be in many different shapes and sizes.

Over the last decade or so, ecstasy use has made its way into the mainstream culture in certain countries. Younger people in particular often seem to possess a skewed sense of safety about ecstasy use, believing rather erroneously that the substance is safe and benign.

How is it taken?

It is usually taken orally but can also be snorted or injected.

How does it affect users?

Ecstasy can heighten users' empathy levels and induce a feeling of closeness to people around them. It is often used at “rave parties” to increase participants' sociability and energy levels.

What are the risks associated ecstasy use?

In the short term, ecstasy can make the body ignore distress signals such as dehydration, dizziness and exhaustion, and it

can also interfere with the body's ability to regulate temperature. Furthermore, ecstasy can severely damage internal organs such as the liver and the kidneys, and sometimes lead to convulsions and heart failure.

Large doses of ecstasy also cause restlessness, anxiety and severe visual and auditory hallucinations.

Longer-term ecstasy use can damage certain brain regions, resulting in serious depression and memory loss.

Other risks

Tablets or pills that are sold as “ecstasy” may contain other potentially dangerous substances which can vary widely in strength and effects.

As with any illicit drug, taking ecstasy also clouds the user's judgment and increases the chance of him or her making bad choices, such as having unprotected sex. Thus, the user risks contracting HIV/AIDS, hepatitis and other infectious diseases.

