

## **Royal Oak Community Coalition An Important Message to the Community**

### **Ecstasy Drug in Oakland County**

Recently it was reported that police had seized a significant amount of the drug Ecstasy in a drug bust in Oakland County. Ecstasy is a drug being used by young adults at parties. While not all attendees use Ecstasy, the drug often makes the circuit of these parties and can set up dangerous circumstances that can affect everyone there. Ecstasy is colorless, tasteless, and odorless. Individuals who want to intoxicate or sedate others can add them unobtrusively to beverages. The Royal Oak Community Coalition is alerting all teens and parents to this dangerous drug.



#### **What is Ecstasy?**

Ecstasy is one of the most dangerous drugs threatening young people today. MDMA is also one of the easiest illegal drugs to obtain. Its effects are similar to those of amphetamines and hallucinogens. Distributed almost anywhere, it has become very popular at social events like raves, hip hop parties, concerts, etc. frequented by both adults and youth.

#### **How is it Used?**

Ecstasy is usually taken in pill form and swallowed and it can also be injected. Some users have been known to crush and snort the resulting powder. Others insert the pill into the anus where it is absorbed. This process is known as “shafting.”

#### **How Does It Affect You?**

Ecstasy is similar (in nature) to other amphetamines and hallucinogens. It speeds up the nervous system and acts as a mood enhancer. Also referred to as “the love drug”, Ecstasy often makes the user feel good, happy and relaxed - at least at first. Contrary to rumors, Ecstasy is not an aphrodisiac and can actually inhibit sexual performance. Some studies have linked Ecstasy use to impotence in men and long-lasting, sometimes permanent, brain damage.

Ecstasy works by forcing the brain to release huge amounts of serotonin, a chemical that helps regulate important brain functions like mood, emotion, learning, sleep, pain, memory and heart rate. These huge releases deplete the brain's serotonin, which causes short-term depression after users "come-down." Over time, the brain also becomes less sensitive to serotonin, which can cause depression that lasts for weeks, months or years.

Ecstasy also damages the areas of the brain where serotonin is stored. Scientists have found that some of these areas grow back abnormally, and some do not grow back at all, leading to lasting brain damage.

Ecstasy interacts with other chemicals in the brain to form hydrogen peroxide – the same toxic chemical that's used in hair bleach. This poisons the brain leading to more brain damage.

### **Dangerous Impurities**

One reason Ecstasy can be especially dangerous is the lack of content control. Ingredients are hard to get and manufacturers of the drug often use substitutes, mixing other harmful additives with the already dangerous mix. This practice is so common that "drug test kits" are often sold with the drug so users can test for purity. Because of the uncertainties about the drug sources, pharmacological agents, chemicals used to manufacture them, and possible contaminants, it is difficult to measure the toxicity, consequences and symptoms that might be expected.

### **Common Side Effects**

The following effects start within 20 minutes of taking E and can last for 4 - 6 hours or longer:

- Increased heart rate
- Increased body temperature
- Increased blood pressure
- Increased confidence
- Nausea
- Anxiety
- Feelings of well-being (happiness, love)
- Sweating
- Loss of appetite

### **Other Reported Effects**

Taking higher doses of MDMA will not increase the good feelings. In fact higher dosages can cause convulsions, irrational behavior, and hallucinations. Users have reported having problems with insomnia, anxiety, paranoia, concentration and depression after taking the drug.

### **Warning Signs of Overdose**

- Feeling hot or unwell
- Becoming confused, not able to talk properly
- Headache
- Vomiting
- Not Sweating
- Racing heart or pulse when resting
- Fainting or collapsing
- Loss of control over body movements
- Tremors
- Problems Urinating

Death often results from harmful overheating (**hyperthermia**), or from drinking too much at one time (**hyponatremia**). Hyponatremia is a condition where excess fluid intake swells the brain resulting in coma. A third cause of death is **stimulation**. Over stimulation of the nervous system can result in heart attack or brain hemorrhage.

### **Duration of Effects**

An Ecstasy high can last from six to 24 hours but usually averages three to four hours. Some reactions have been reported to persist from one to 14 days after use.

### **Short Term Effects**

Short-term effects include psychological difficulties (confusion, depression, sleep problems, craving, severe anxiety, and paranoia). These effects occur during use and can continue even weeks after use. Physical problems that can occur are muscle tension, involuntary teeth clenching, nausea, blurred vision, rapid eye movement, fever, chills or sweating.

## **Long Term Effects**

Recent findings connect use of Ecstasy to memory loss. Use of Ecstasy depletes **serotonin**, a very important chemical in the brain which regulates mood, sleeping and eating habits, as well as, the thinking and behavior process, sexual function, and sensitivity to pain.

## **Herbal Ecstasy**

Herbal Ecstasy is another form of MDMA that is composed of ephedrine (ma huang) or pseudoephedrine and caffeine from the kola nut. Also sold in tablet form, Herbal Ecstasy can cause permanent brain damage and death. Though not currently classified as a controlled substance, Herbal Ecstasy shares many of the same qualities and effects as MDMA. Also known as Cloud 9, Herbal Bliss, Ritual Spirit, Herbal X, GWM, Rave Energy, Ultimate Xphoria and X.

## **Drug Testing**

Ecstasy can be detected up to four days in the urine.

More information is available at [www.theantidrug.com](http://www.theantidrug.com)