

Media Tip Sheet: MDMA / Molly / Ecstasy



What is the difference between MDMA, ecstasy, and molly?

MDMA, also known as 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine, is a synthetic stimulant and empathogen. It is commonly known as ecstasy or molly. Ecstasy is a trademarked name for MDMA, while molly is a colloquial term. The substances are often sold as a mixture of MDMA and other substances.

Because the substances are often sold as a mixture, it is difficult to determine the exact percentage of MDMA in a sample. A study found that 100% of samples tested were MDMA.

EXAMPLE PHRASING

“A young woman was hospitalized after taking a substance sold as molly, a drug commonly associated with MDMA. In actuality ‘molly’ can contain any number of different substances.”

Can MDMA be used as medicine or therapy?

MDMA has been used in clinical trials for the treatment of PTSD, depression, and autism. The MAPS (Multidisciplinary Approach to the Study of Psychedelics) organization is leading these studies. MDMA is also being studied for its potential in treating various forms of autism.

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EXAMPLE PHRASING

“Experts point out that a growing body of research is demonstrating MDMA’s efficacy in helping treat PTSD, various forms of autism, and the terminally ill.”

Why is using the word “overdose” in association with MDMA usually inaccurate?

Overdosing on MDMA is rare because it is a stimulant. Most cases of overdose are due to the presence of other substances, such as alcohol or other drugs. MDMA is often sold as a mixture of substances, and the presence of other drugs can lead to a fatal overdose.

EXAMPLE PHRASING

“A recent festival saw several hospitalizations as a result of attendees who had taken ‘molly’. Given the highly adulterated market, where several substances including cathinones (‘bath salts’) may be sold as MDMA, toxicologists are currently working to determine what drug the attendees actually ingested, and if overdose played a role in these medical emergencies.”

What can be done to prevent these risks?

The following are key prevention strategies:

1. Create safe settings

MDMA consumption is often associated with high temperatures, crowded spaces, and bright lights. A safe setting should be created to reduce these risks. This can be achieved by providing shade, fans, and water.

2. Provide drug education and other services on-site

On-site drug education and other services can help reduce the risks associated with MDMA use. This can be achieved by providing information on safe use, recognizing signs of overdose, and providing first aid.

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3. Promote drug checking

Promoting drug checking can help reduce the risks associated with MDMA use. Drug checking is the process of testing a substance to determine its identity and purity. This can be achieved by providing information on drug checking, providing drug checking kits, and promoting drug checking services.

Benefits of drug checking include: reduced risk of overdose, reduced risk of adulteration, and reduced risk of contamination. Drug checking can also help reduce the stigma associated with drug use.

EXAMPLE PHRASING

“To better protect young people from the risks associated with MDMA, drug education experts recommend providing free water and areas to cool off to avoid overheating at