

## CAANS Brief on Ecstasy in Red Deer (v2.0)

This brief is a work in progress and all efforts are being used to keep this accurate and easy to understand.

### Background

- Ecstasy is made from MDMA (Methylenedioxyamphetamine) and is often called E
  - It is a mood-altering stimulant and mild hallucinogen, usually sold in the form of a tablet or capsule
  - E can sometimes be cut with other substances like Ketamine, DXM, PMA, caffeine, speed and crystal meth, or may not contain any MDMA at all.
- PMA (paramethoxyamphetamine) and PMMA (paramethoxymethamphetamine)
- PMA/PMMA is being cut into ecstasy,
  - Why is it being added into E? Primarily related to the access to and cost of the source drugs
  - As with MDMA, PMA/PMMA acts as a stimulant and causes an increase in heart rate and blood pressure, which can lead to heart attacks and strokes. These drugs can also cause multiple systems in the body to shut down.
- PMMA is five times more toxic than regular ecstasy and doesn't kick in as quickly as MDMA E.
- MDMA ecstasy may cost \$10, PMMA ecstasy may cost \$3
- Ecstasy is not just used at raves anymore, it's used by people in their homes, it's used at bars, it's used at all kinds of different locations.

### Top 3 CAANS tips

- If you've decided to dose, it is best to begin with half a pill rather than a whole one, to first see if it's the effects that you are looking for. A less-is-more approach can help reduce harm if it's not what you were expecting.<sup>1</sup>
- Many users who take these [PMMA E] pills don't feel them kick in and end up redosing, thus experiencing overdoses. If you do take a pill and you don't feel it hit soon enough, avoid redosing as it could potentially be PMMA.<sup>2</sup>
- If someone is worried about the police coming in response to a call from an ambulance, we recommend that you do not say it is drug related or an OD, just describe what is happening, this will dramatically reduce the likelihood of RCMP being dispatched

### How would I know if I have taken PMA/PMMA rather than MDMA, and what should I do?

You won't know. The only way this can be determined is by testing urine or blood or by laboratory assessment of the pills themselves. An adverse reaction to PMA/PMMA can be very similar to MDMA and can mean different things to different people. These drugs can often cause feelings of anxiety, paranoia and can lead to hallucinations (hearing voices or seeing things). Users will also often report dry mouth, teeth grinding, sweating or nausea. Some may experience chest pain, palpitations (an awareness of their heartbeat), headache, weakness, or difficulty speaking.<sup>3</sup>

The Poison and Drug Information Service (PADIS) is a free, confidential, 24/7 service for all Albertans. Staff are specially trained in the assessment and management of exposures to drugs and toxins like PMA/PMMA and are available by calling 1-800-332-1414.

Symptoms of a drug overdose may include difficulty breathing, nausea, muscle spasms, increased blood pressure and increased body temperature. If anyone becomes unconscious, stops breathing, experiences chest pain or has a seizure, call 911 immediately.

**In the rest of Canada** - PMMA laced ecstasy overdose deaths - As of 1/31/12 media – Confirmed 9 deaths in Alberta (one in Red Deer) and five in British Columbia have recently been linked to ecstasy laced with PMMA.

Call us with any questions, call CAANS at 403-346-8858 or NightReach (evening and weekend outreach) 403-896-3879.

<sup>1</sup>TRIP! Project, a project of Central Toronto Community Health Centres <http://www.tripproject.ca/trip/?q=node/11>

<sup>2</sup> ibid

<sup>3</sup> Alberta Health Services PMA/PMMA FAQs

# FIGHT DANCE

## ECSTASY

3,4 - Methylendioxyamfetamine - MDMA

### HOW TO MINIMIZE POTENTIAL HARMS

**Take Frequent Breaks** - Let your body cool and rest.

**Stay Hydrated** - Sip or take small gulps of water (to help cool your body) and non-caffeinated sports-drinks like Gatorade (to replenish electrolytes). Alcohol and caffeine dehydrated the body.

**Don't Mix** - Taking ecstasy with other substances (especially alcohol or other stimulants) can increase the risks, and lead to potentially dangerous interactions.

**Recognize Overdoses** - Signs include extreme headaches, nausea, confusion, blurred vision, inability to talk, racing heart, vomiting, fainting, muscle tremors, and convulsions. Seek medical help if you or your friends experience even just one sign.

**Keep An Eye On Your Friends** - Stay together.

**Don't Drive** - Ecstasy affects physical and mental functioning (like vision, reaction time, and judgment).

**Aim Low (dose AND frequency)** - Ecstasy risks increase with larger doses (stacking) and re-dosing when you start to come down.

**Stay Away** - The only way to completely avoid the risks is to avoid the drug, enjoy the music and dancing instead.

**Educate Yourself & Your Friends** - The best decision is a well-informed one.