

NORTH ISLAND GAZETTE

The link between meth and ecstasy

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Many people are using the drug ecstasy believing it is a harmless party drug; the fact is it comes with some very serious side effects. Ecstasy is part amphetamine and part hallucinogen and is far from harmless.

Ecstasy can easily lead to death by inducing extreme hyperthermia and dehydration. Ecstasy has been directly linked to numerous deaths by overdose and by suicide.

Ecstasy harms neurons that release serotonin, a brain chemical that plays an important role in regulating mood, memory and other functions.

Continued use of ecstasy depresses the natural release of serotonin, which causes depression.

When a person uses ecstasy it causes significant damage to the brains' serotonin transporters and when the ecstasy wears off users have been known to experience deep and sometimes fatal depression.

Ecstasy also damages the frontal lobes of the brain; the frontal lobes play an important part in people's impulse control, judgment, language, memory, motor function, problem solving, sexual behavior, socialization and spontaneity. It is reported that regular ecstasy users will be so brain damaged at 30 years of age that they will have all the symptoms of an Alzheimer's patient and will require round-the-clock care.

Lab reports confirm that some of the drugs seized at parties or dances that were sold as ecstasy were, in fact, crystal meth.

There are additional matters ecstasy users should be aware of.

It is reported that Paramethoxyamphetamine has been found in at least 26 variations of ecstasy tablets that are on the market today.

Paramethoxyamphetamine, also known simply as PMA, is a hallucinogenic

stimulant that increases the heartbeat and raises the body temperature causing agonizing convulsions and can very easily cause death. This drug is also being sold as ecstasy or E and the main targets of the dealers are young people.

Health Canada considers PMA one of the most dangerous hallucinogens in the world. It doesn't have the same initial intensity as ecstasy, so users often take more pills, causing an overdose of an already dangerous drug. At high doses PMA often causes convulsions, coma and death. Widespread bleeding of the brain or internal organs can also occur.

Many young people think the "crusties" they and their friends get on the corner of their mouths are a natural part of taking ecstasy, what is actually happening is your internal organs are starting to shut down because your body is dangerously overheating. People who use ecstasy are taking a gamble every time they consume the drug.

The following case studies took the gamble and lost.

Case 1: A 22-year-old man complained that he was "burning up" and collapsed after ingesting drugs at a friend's house. He died soon afterwards at a local hospital, despite attempts at resuscitation, his core body temperature was 42°C.

Case 2: An 18-year-old man died at his home after ingesting a number of ecstasy tablets over five hours, both at a dance club and at home. Two hours after death his core body temperature was 39°C.

Case 3: A 19-year-old man died in hospital 40 hours after being brought to the emergency department in respiratory arrest with a body core temperature of 41.6°C.

Case 4: A 14-year-old Victoria girl died the very first time she took ecstasy.

So, now that you have all this information do you think taking drugs is worth the gamble?

I've heard people say, "I'm not worried, I trust my dealer."

Let's be straight up about drug dealers, they don't have a clue what's in the drugs they are selling you and they don't care if you live or die, they just want your money.

Trusting a drug dealer is about as smart as trusting that George Bush was actually telling the world the truth when he stated the Iraqi's had weapons of mass destruction.

Article by Lee Mason, Lee is an addictions recovery specialist and founder of the young warriors network. To contact Lee for ecstasy updates and additional information please visit www.youngwarriors.net