

MDMA

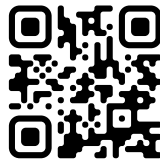
A HARM REDUCTION GUIDE



**QUEERS & PEERS
TOGETHER FOR SAFER USE**

MDMA

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SEX, DRUGS, & CARE FOR ALL
queerhealth.info/sdc4all



ANTIDOTE
LONDON FRIEND



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VERSION 1.0

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WHAT IS HARM REDUCTION?

Harm reduction is a practice that aims to minimise the negative impacts of using drugs. It means providing care, instead of judgement, to people who are using them.

This includes giving information about how to use drugs more safely, how to recognise signs of overdose or withdrawal, and when and where to seek help.

This booklet contains some essential tips about how to use MDMA as safely as possible.

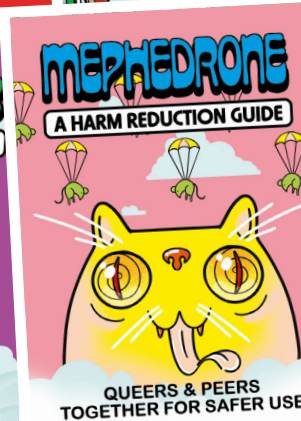
There's more harm reduction advice about MDMA and other drugs at:

queerhealth.info/sdc4all

OTHER GUIDES IN THIS SERIES INCLUDE:



- Cocaine
- GHB/GBL
- Ketamine
- Mephedrone



WHAT IS MDMA?



MDMA is a stimulant drug with hallucinogenic effects. It works by accelerating the release of mood-altering neurochemicals in the brain, like serotonin and dopamine.

MDMA comes as a powder or crystal (sometimes called MD or molly) or in the form of pills (usually just called ecstasy).

MDMA makes us feel euphoric and energised.

It's sometimes called an 'empathogen' because it can make us feel more empathy and more connected to the people around us.

RISKS AND SIDE EFFECTS

As well as the good feelings, MDMA raises your body temperature and can cause overheating (especially if dancing or getting physical).

If you're using MDMA, remember to **take regular breaks from the action and stay hydrated.**

Around one pint of water or a soft drink with electrolytes

every hour will keep you well without over-hydrating.

If someone is dangerously overheating, take them to a quieter and cooler place and remove any excess outer clothing. You can use damp cloths (or a damp t-shirt) to cool them down.

Mixing MDMA with other drugs can lead to unpredictable effects or increase the risk of adverse effects.

Avoid mixing MDMA with drugs - including prescriptions - that raise the heart rate like: some asthma medications, stimulants (like cocaine,

caffeine, or amphetamines), and sedatives (like alcohol or opioids).

Also avoid mixing MDMA with psychedelics like LSD, shrooms or 2C-B. This can lead to unpleasant highs and can even cause brain damage.

MDMA does not interact well with some prescribed anti-depressants.

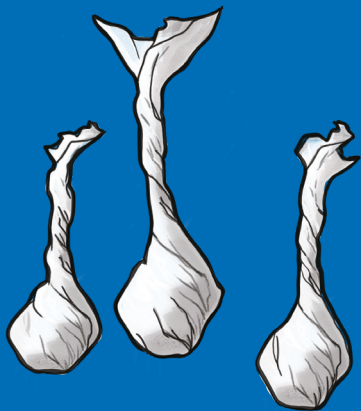
Specifically, mixing MAOIs - a type of anti-depressant, like phenelzine - with MDMA can cause death. **If you have taken an MAOI in the last three weeks, avoid using MDMA.**

SSRIs - a type of anti-depressant, like sertraline and citalopram - can also inhibit the effects of MDMA because they block the uptake of serotonin in the brain.

If you are using MDMA and a prescribed SSRI, do not use more MDMA to compensate.

SSRIs make it harder for the body to cool down, so taking more MDMA increases the risks of overheating as well as overdose.





DOSING

When MDMA comes as crystals or a powder, the safest way to take it is by swallowing it (wrapped in a piece of cigarette paper).

Roughly, a **safe dose is considered to be equivalent to someone's bodyweight in kilograms + 50 up to a maximum of 120mg** (even if you are a heavier person). For a 60kg person, this means: $60 + 50 = 110\text{mg}$.

It's usually not possible to measure doses of a powder or crystal when out and about.

AFTERCARE

It's a good idea to invest in some milligram scales to **measure out and prepare your doses in advance.**

MDMA pills vary in strength: some pills contain up to 3 doses. If you're using pills, **start slowly with a quarter or a half.**

Whether using pills, crystals or a powder, **wait at least 2 hours after dosing** before taking more MDMA. It can take a while - anywhere from 20 minutes to 2 hours - for MDMA to kick in, especially if someone has food in their stomach, so it's best to wait and be patient before deciding a dose didn't work.

MDMA depletes serotonin levels, causing comedowns that can leave someone feeling depressed or anxious for days after.

If you're experiencing a comedown, take good care of yourself by eating well, catching up on sleep, and rehydrating.

Eating foods rich in tryptophan - the amino acid serotonin is made from - could help with recovery.

Tryptophan is found in foods including: eggs, pineapples, tofu, turkey, and beans.

Some evidence also suggests that taking supplements before and after using MDMA - including alpha lipoic acid - could benefit repair and recovery.

Over-using MDMA can have a negative impact on brain chemistry.

It's recommended that someone takes **at least a 3-5 week break between sessions** to allow their serotonin levels to return to normal.

DRUG TESTING

Sometimes, people are sold drugs that are over-dosed, or contain substances other than the drug they think they are buying, which have much stronger effects. This can cause fatal overdoses, even in experienced drug users.

It's always a good idea to test drugs before using them. Links to drug testing services - including options for testing drugs at home - can be found at **[queerhealth.info/sdc4all](https://www.queerhealth.info/sdc4all)**

FURTHER SUPPORT

If you or someone you know needs support with their drug use (including addiction and dependence), you can find free LGBTQ+ inclusive support at: londonfriend.org.uk/antidote/ and more general support at: talktofrank.com

For more harm reduction advice, and advice on what to do in an emergency or if someone is overdosing visit: queerhealth.info/sdc4all

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