

From Ecstasy



Photo by James R. Tourtellotte

Acting Commissioner of U.S. Customs Charles Winwood addresses members of the Senate Caucus for International Narcotics Control on the growing ecstasy threat.

By Capt. John Jemionek and JO1 Joseph Gunder

That's the mind-altering trip you'll probably take if you fool around with the synthetic amphetamine drug known as ecstasy. Often referred to as a "club drug" because it's sold or used at nightclubs and rave parties, ecstasy also is known by the street names "E," "X" and "XTC." It's misperceived as a "safe drug," without the side effects of other rave drugs, such as LSD, methamphetamines, heroin, or PCP.

The ecstasy drug usually comes in pill form, about the size of an aspirin, but it's also sold as a capsule and in powder form. Immediate effects include a sense of euphoria, energy and altered sensory perception. Then, there are the

side effects. Current medical literature lists mood alteration, depression and memory deficits as some of the long-term effects (lasting several months after stopping use of the drug). Acute effects include increased blood pressure, elevated body temperature, and loss of motor skills, judgment and water (from sweating).

With the increased water loss and elevated body temperature, you'll drink large amounts of water or other fluids, which can cause a salt imbalance, fainting, and a trip to an emergency room. Ecstasy abuse, coupled with strenuous activity or exercise, can result in muscle deterioration (known as rhabdomyolysis) as well as kidney and liver damage.

to Agony

A 1997 German medical publication cites at least 53 cases of medical complications related to ecstasy abuse, 14 of which were fatal. Similar reports are found in both U.S. and Canadian medical publications of emergency-room cases, some with fatal or near-fatal outcomes. Part of the problem is that ecstasy pills are unreliable in purity. They may contain other additives, such as caffeine, ephedrine or other amphetamine compounds, which add to the complications for an adverse reaction.

Why risk your health and safety on a drug the Food and Drug Administration says has no medical-treatment value, especially one that's usually produced in someone's basement?

In the military, a lack of situational awareness can be deadly. Some over-the-counter medicines (cough medicines and painkillers) can

decrease the edge military people need to walk the thin line between life and death. A drowsy hull-maintenance technician working a metal press could crush a finger or two. A boatswain's mate watching an anchor chain pay out could lose his focus and turn the friction brake in the wrong direction, with disastrous results. If an over-the-counter medicine could lead to these kinds of situations, imagine what a mind-altering substance like ecstasy could do.

Sailors and Marines cannot afford to entrust their lives to somebody who isn't at 100-percent efficiency because of some party drug. Everyone's job is too important to be compromised by drug use. When it comes to safety, staying away from ecstasy is a no-brainer.

And, the military isn't just now catching up to the idea of its troops using ecstasy. Testing

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U.S. Customs inspectors found these bundles of ecstasy in the false compartment of a suitcase.

This chart shows different types of markings commonly found on ecstasy pills.

Lichtbild der Vorderseite										
Bezeichnung Rückseite:	ADAM	EVA 130 mg	Amor Bruchteile	Love Herz	Herz Bruchteile	Drops Bruchteile	Sonne Bruchteile	Halbmond Bruchteile	Herzspitz Bruchteile	VW Bruchteile
Käfer Bruchteile	Mercedes	Triple Five	V.I.P. Bruchteile	CAL Bruchteile	PT Bruchteile	Schlitzauge Bruchteile	ANADEN	Boomerang	Bulls Bruchteile	Delphin Bruchteile
Elephant Bruchteile	Hund Bruchteile	Pigs Riegelchocolate	Pelikan Bruchteile	Taube Bruchteile	Friedens-taube	Spatz Bruchteile	Vogel	Kernit Bruchteile	Feuerstein Bruchteile	Roman
Superman	Papeye Bruchteile	Chiensee Bruchteile	Fido Bruchteile	Haupting Bruchteile	Sonic Sana Bruchteile	Smiley SMILE	Playboy Bruchteile	Schwalbe	Dino Bruchteile	Anker Bruchteile
Pils Bruchteile	Olympics	Hammer& Sichel	Gorbys COOP	Kleeblatt Kleeblatt	Kleeblatt Bruchteile	Liebesymbol Bruchteile	Yellow Sunshine	Pink Panther	Snowball	Ying Yang

for “designer amphetamines” started in 1997. Every sample that passes military-testing laboratories gets screened for these types of drugs. Nearly 700 Sailors and Marines tested positive for ecstasy abuse in FY2001.

The Navy and Marine Corps have a “zero tolerance” policy for drug abuse, and that includes ecstasy. Drug abusers have no place in the military, and those who decide to experiment do so at their risk of detection, punishment and

separation from service with a bad-conduct, dishonorable or other-than-honorable discharge.

During the past 10 years, the Naval Safety Center has recorded 27 deaths and 39 injuries related to drug abuse. For all these reasons, the increased availability of the drug ecstasy is a concern. If you’re using it, stop. If you know others who are using it, report them. It’s a matter of safety—yours and your shipmates. Don’t accept the risk. For more information

on ecstasy, check these websites: navdweb.spawar.navy.mil, whitehousedrugpolicy.gov, and usdoj.gov/dea/concern/mdma/mdmaindex.htm. ☪

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U.S. Customs and DEA agents bring a suspected smuggler to Miami.