Dear Alice,

Me and my friends are users of X. We know that it’s illegal and not good for you, but it’s only a once in a while thing. My question is that I know there are different types of X pills that you can take. We have been getting motorolas and I know a friend told me that mitsubishis are really bad to take. I was wondering the differences between the pills and the differences between triple and double stacked pills......

Thank you,
curious X

Answer

Dear Curious X,

MDMA, also known as Ecstasy, E, or X, is a mood elevator that aims to produce a relaxed, euphoric state. "Molly" is the powder or crystal form of MDMA. Ecstasy is usually sold in pill or capsule form, and may cause rushes of exhilaration, often accompanied by nausea. Most pills are stamped with a popular logo or brand name, and "Motorolas" are a common type. Double or triple stacked pills are so called because they supposedly contain twice as much or three times as much MDMA as regulars. They are usually thicker. Because there is no regulation or quality control of illegal drugs like X, it is very difficult to know what or how much MDMA each pill contains. This makes taking E risky, because the pills frequently include substances besides MDMA that can be toxic. So even if you always buy Motorolas, they may not be what you've had before. Logo or brand names are not true indicators of pill content.

Paramethoxyamphetamine (PMA) is one substance that is substituted for MDMA, and is associated with the pills called "Mitsubishis" that you mention. PMA produces similar effects to MDMA, but is more dangerous. Because it is slower to take effect, people may think nothing is happening and take more, leading to an overdose. Drug experts believe PMA has never become a popular recreational drug because it is so highly toxic. It is usually sold as a fake form of Ecstasy because the chemicals used to make it are easier to obtain. Overdoses of PMA can occur from just one pill.

The long term effects of X are uncertain. Many scientists think it leads to permanent brain damage, affecting memory, mood, sleep, sex, and appetite. Short term effects may include depression, due to depletion of the body's serotonin. Ecstasy causes the body temperature to rise, and is often used at parties with many people dancing in an enclosed space. High
temperatures may lead to dehydration and heat stroke. However, drinking too much water can also be dangerous. X causes the body to release a hormone that reduces urination. The resultant fluid retention may cause brain swelling, which can lead to coma, permanent brain damage, or death. Slowly drinking 2-4 cups of water an hour and eating a salty snack helps maintain the body's fluid balance. Mixing X with alcohol or other drugs increases the risk of bad reactions. People with heart conditions, blood pressure problems, epilepsy, or asthma may have very dangerous reactions.

Avoiding pills called Mitsubishis seems like a good bet, since there is a known association between those pills and PMA. Motorolas don’t appear to be similarly associated with PMA, but as with any street drug, it’s not possible to be sure that what you’re getting doesn’t contain ingredients you may not be expecting, or in a different potency than you may desire?so you may want to be cautious. It’s worth noting that some pills have a "good" reputation, but there can be significant variations amongst pills with the same stamp based on region and time differences. The website www.dancesafe.org [2] has information about pill testing programs and test kits for determining the actual contents of pills sold as E.

While you mention only taking E from time to time, it might be beneficial to consider why you and your friends use it. Have you considered other options for enjoying activities without the use of an illegal drug? How about how you might handle the situation if an unwanted effect occurs? Ultimately it will be up to you and your friends to each determine what level of risk is acceptable. One of your best tools is information to make informed choices.

Alice!
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