

Facts about Mephedrone

Meow-meow, m-cat

Mephedrone (4-methylmethcathinone) is a synthetic central nervous system stimulant that has effects similar to the east African plant khat.

People sometimes confuse mephedrone with methedrine, methadone, methedrone (4-meth-oxymeth-cathinone) and methylone (bk-MDMA) because they sound the same. However, they are all different.

Mephedrone is often sold as 'plant food', 'pond cleaner' or 'bath salts' on the internet. It has little odour, is white, off-white or yellowish and is available as a powder, capsules or pills which look like Ecstasy making it easy for mephedrone to be sold as E to unknowing buyers. The powder can be snorted, swallowed in bombs (wraps of paper), injected, or 'shelved' (used rectally).

Mephedrone is an illegal Class C drug. Possession, importation or supply can lead to fines and/or imprisonment.

Harms associated with mephedrone

As yet there is little research on the long term effects of mephedrone use though it has been associated with negatively affecting memory and verbal recall.

- Like other stimulants and cathinone derivatives, mephedrone can damage your heart, kidneys and stomach. Use can lead to seizures and brain damage
- Some users report experiencing heart palpitations, or an irregular or racing heartbeat which can last for some time
- Others say their fingers and other extremities have turned blue after using mephedrone. If this occurs users should seek urgent medical attention as the consequences of prolonged vasoconstriction can be loss of fingers, toes etc.
- Once people have started using mephedrone in a particular session it is very hard to stop; people start out intending to take only a small amount but end up consuming their entire supply. Binges can last for several days increasing the likelihood of unpleasant effects including extreme agitation, insomnia, involuntary muscle clenching and hallucinations
- With increased doses comes the increased likelihood of negative effects including uncomfortable changes in body temperature (sweating and chills), heart palpitations, impaired short term memory, insomnia, tightened jaw muscles and grinding teeth, muscle twitches, dizziness, light headedness, and vertigo

As with other similar stimulant-type substances, there is no reported physical withdrawal syndrome, although regular or heavy use can lead to dependency.

Mephedrone has been associated with a number of deaths internationally, usually in cases where the person has also taken other drugs. This means that it is difficult to say what role mephedrone may have played in these fatalities.

Reducing the harms

- If you are using mephedrone, you can reduce harm by doing so moderately (not binging) and occasionally, less than weekly
- These products are not advisable for people who have or have previously had problems with their mental health, drugs and/ or alcohol, heart or blood pressure
- Wait an hour before re-dosing especially if you're taking it orally, as swallowing means it takes longer to process in your body so it'll take time for the effects to come on. using again too soon can increase the risk of OD

- Swallowing is safer than snorting which can cause painful ‘nose burns’ and nose bleeds, as well as extremely sore throats and mouths.
- Do not use if pregnant or breastfeeding or are responsible for children. Have children cared for by someone who is not using
- Ensure that all surfaces and utensils used for taking mephedrone are cleaned and out of reach of children
- Avoid mixing mephedrone with other drugs, especially alcohol, stimulants or prescribed medicines
- Chewing sugar free gum helps stop damage caused by teeth grinding and jaw clenching.
- Keep hydrated by drinking water or sports drinks in small, regular amounts.
- Wearing sunglasses in bright sunlight helps avoid potential damage to retinas because of dilated pupils.
- If you are using in bars or nightclubs stay close to friends; look out for each other and only purchase from reliable sources.
- Do not attempt to drive or operate heavy machinery while under the influence of mephedrone.

What the drug does

Commonly experienced effects include:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feeling very ‘out there’ and disconnected from the body leading to lack of coordination, sweating and slurred speech | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hallucinations and altered visual, auditory, bodily, time and space perception |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • numbness, insensitive to pain • euphoria and relaxation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distorted body image (changing size and form) and ‘tunnel vision’ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • short term memory loss: unable to access old memories or create new ones, forgetting words, names, and conversations | |

High doses can cause more intense and unpleasant or dangerous effects including:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confusion, feelings of anxiety, panic and terror, paranoia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nausea, vomiting, convulsions, twitching |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drowsiness leading to heavy sedation or loss of consciousness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unpredictable, hostile and bizarre behaviour |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incontinence, little bladder control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blurred/double vision, tics/ involuntary eye movement |

The signs that something isn't right:

Chest pain, hallucinations that don't go away, a very slow heartbeat, trouble breathing, long-lasting or very distressing paralysis, unconsciousness, psychosis or seizures. You or the people around you should act quickly.

Call 111 and stay with the person until help arrives.