

CALGARY POLICE SERVICE

DRUG UNIT

COMMUNITY ALERT

DRUG ALERT - PMMA

Since June 2011, the Calgary Police Service is aware of eleven deaths that are believed related to ecstasy overdoses in Calgary and the surrounding communities of Strathmore, Red Deer and Nanton. Ecstasy is the street name commonly used for 3-4 methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA). MDMA is a synthetic, psychoactive drug with hallucinogenic and amphetamine-like properties. Its chemical structure is similar to synthetic drugs MDA and methamphetamine. MDMA is also known as “E” and “X-TC”. A review of the eleven deaths reveals:

- o Toxicology results for nine of the eleven deaths have confirmed paramethoxymethamphetamine (PMMA) as the dominant drug with MDMA. o Toxicology findings have yet to be released for one of the most recent deaths.
- o All of the overdose deaths are male.
- o The age range of the overdose victims is 15 to 43 years, with only two of the victims being under the age of 18.
- o Ecstasy in the form of a powdery substance or capsules appears to be a common link to the deaths. Although the powder is the most common link it is very easy to make the powder into tablets with the use of a press. THERE IS NO SAFE ECSTASY.

ECSTASY-RELATED DEATHS

- o MDMA-related deaths are caused by complications of “malignant hyperthermia/hyperpyrexia” or what most people would call heatstroke.
- o PMMA is an analogue. PMMA (Para-Methoxyamphetamine) is similar to MDMA in effects. At high doses the side effects and danger of death are severe.
- o PMMA has a slow onset of effects so there is a tendency to take more. Characteristic symptoms are elevated body temperature, increased heart rate and blood pressure, along with agitation, confusion and convulsions. An overdose can result in cerebral hemorrhage.
- o It is believed that PMMA is being added to MDMA due its ease of availability and lower cost than MDMA.

FORMS OF ECSTASY

While ecstasy has previously been observed mainly in tablet form a transition to powder and to capsules containing ecstasy powder has been noted. The powder may be

snorted or ingested orally.

For further information please reference the Calgary Police Service website at www.calgarypolice.ca. Anyone with information about ecstasy trafficking are asked to contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222- 8477 or the Calgary Police Drug Tip Line at 403-428-8100.