

The DAWN Report

Data Spotlight

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Ecstasy-Related Emergency Department Visits by Young People Increased between 2005 and 2011; Alcohol Involvement Remains a Concern

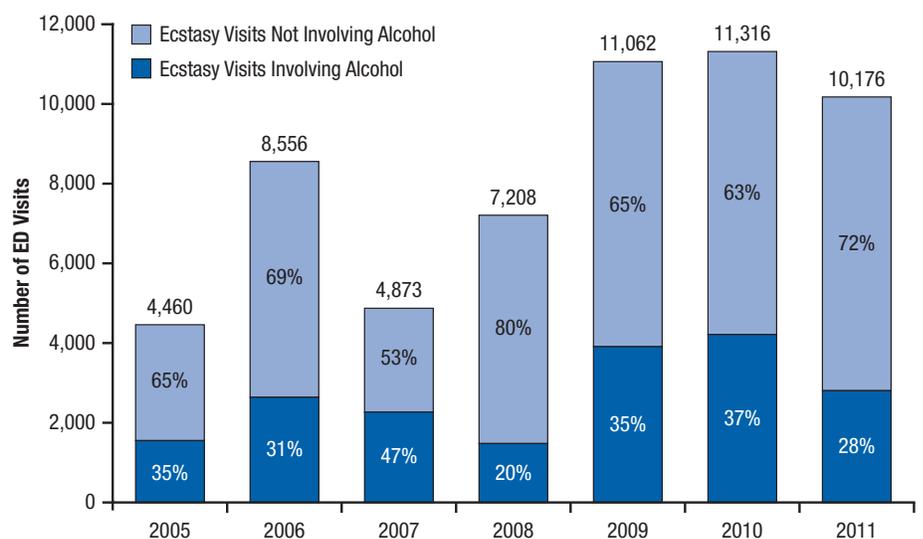
MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxy-methamphetamine), also known as Ecstasy or Molly,¹ is an illicit drug that has both stimulant and hallucinogenic properties.¹ Ecstasy is usually taken by mouth, but can also be snorted or smoked.² Ecstasy produces feelings of increased energy, euphoria, and distorts the user's senses and perception of time.^{1,2}

Abuse of Ecstasy can produce a variety of undesirable health effects such as anxiety and confusion. These effects can last 1 week or longer after using the drug.² Also, serious health risks such as becoming dangerously overheated, high blood pressure, and kidney and heart failure are associated with Ecstasy abuse.³ When Ecstasy is mixed with alcohol, the stimulating effects of Ecstasy cause the user to be less aware of alcohol intoxication.⁴ This mixture can lead to poor decision making and bodily harm.⁴ The Ecstasy-alcohol mixture also causes a longer lasting euphoria than Ecstasy or alcohol alone, which could increase the potential for abuse.⁴

According to the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN), the estimated number of emergency department (ED) visits involving Ecstasy in patients younger than 21 years old increased 128 percent, from 4,460 visits in 2005 to 10,176 visits in 2011. In each year from 2005 to 2011, an average of 33 percent of ED visits among those younger than 21 that involved Ecstasy also involved alcohol. The increase in ED visits involving Ecstasy in this population is a cause for concern due to the serious health risks involved with Ecstasy use and the higher potential for abuse when Ecstasy is mixed with alcohol. To learn more about Ecstasy and prevention of Ecstasy abuse, please visit http://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/rmdma_0.pdf.

1. National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2013, September). *DrugFacts: MDMA (Ecstasy or Molly)*. Retrieved from <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/mdma-ecstasy-or-Molly>
2. Center for Substance Abuse Research. (2005, May). *Ecstasy*. Retrieved from <http://www.cesar.umd.edu/cesar/drugs/ecstasy.asp>
3. National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2006, March). *Research Report Series: MDMA (Ecstasy) abuse*. (NIH Publication Number 06-4728). Retrieved from http://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/rmdma_0.pdf
4. Hernández-López, C., Farré, M., Roset, P. N., Menoyo, E., Pizarro, N., Ortuño, J., Torrens, M., Camí, J., & de La Torre, R. (2002). 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (Ecstasy) and alcohol interactions in humans: Psychomotor performance, subjective effects, and pharmacokinetics. *Journal of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics*, 300(1), 236-244.

Emergency Department (ED) Visits Involving Ecstasy in Patients Younger than 21, by Alcohol Involvement: 2005 to 2011



Source: 2005 to 2011 Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN). DAWN is a public health surveillance system that monitors drug-related hospital emergency department (ED) visits and drug-related deaths to track the impact of drug use, misuse, and abuse in the United States.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. The **Data Spotlight** may be copied without permission. Citation of the source is appreciated. Find this report and those on similar topics online at <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/>.

