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Who Is Molly?

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The drug called Molly has been popping up everywhere from mentions in the news to pop culture references, but how much do you really know about your new “friend”?  

*Names have been changed for confidentiality purposes

It’s a Friday night and you’re approached by one of your friends who got Molly from a friend of a friend whose sister knows a guy. You don’t know much about it but would love to try something besides drinking, so why not, right?

**Hold up.**

Molly has flooded the media due to recent cases of overdoses and deaths in the northeast. According to Sgt. Scott Kickbush from the Central Iowa Drug Task force, he and his team have only run across the drug three or four times in the last year. However, he believes they will start seeing more of it since Iowa is typically behind the rest of the country.

If you’re not familiar with the increasingly popular feel-good drug, known chemically as MDMA, it is essentially the same as Ecstasy. Molly took on a different name due to its form: a “pure” powder instead of a pressed pill (although some package the powder in capsules so it’s easy to ingest). It’s become inextricably linked to music festivals since its main effects complement the rave scene. Molly can energize you for hours and give you the strongest desire to dance (think the urge to pee—so difficult to shake that you just have to dance right then and there), while at the same time it can give you a sense of connection to everyone and make you more sensitive to touch.

Charles*, a junior studying physics, says he has done Molly over 50 times and would definitely do it again. “It’s a blast when you’re on it,” Charles says. “You feel so good about everything around you and you’re just an overall happy person on it. It’s definitely an experience you should have. The more environments and states of mind you expose yourself to, the more you can grow as a person.”

Zooey*, a junior in environmental science, has done it three times in the last year and would do it again, but only on a special occasion. She doesn’t think she ever consumed enough to fully feel the positive effects, but she has felt calm and a little nauseous. Although she personally has had neutral experiences, she has seen it affect others negatively.

“I had a friend who freaked out when she was ‘coming up’ because she was extremely anxious and could hardly see straight,” she says. “However, she ended up being fine and having a lot of fun on it the rest of the night.”

Luckily, Zooey and her group of friends were there to comfort her distressed friend until she got through the first hour instead of being in a loud, crowded party.

So, what causes the feelings some would describe as euphoric, as well as the nausea and anxiety? According to the Department of Justice, MDMA causes the brain to release the neurotransmitters serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine. Serotonin is what causes many of the effects as it is involved in regulating mood, pain, sleep, appetite and other behaviors.

**Think the urge to pee—so difficult to shake that you just have to dance right then and there.**

“On the ‘come-up’ you should only be with your close friends in a quiet place in case you get anxious and uncomfortable, but once you peak, you need to find somewhere—anywhere—that you can dance freely,” Zooey says.

*Dealers are the realest geochemists in the world.*

Charles says. Zooey agrees; after the first hour she ended up being fine and having a lot of fun on it the rest of the night. “On the ‘come-up’ you should only be with your close friends in a quiet place in case you get anxious and uncomfortable, but once you peak, you need to find somewhere—anywhere—that you can dance freely,” Zooey says.

“Ecstasy and Molly are produced in super labs with people who have to know a great deal about chemistry. You, as a consumer, are and how you will react, " Kickbush says. Although Molly may have you absolutely full of happiness for one night, it could have the opposite effect for days after. Although you aren't doing any Breaking Bad shit, you still make up the MA in MDMA. Although you read that correctly: methamphetamine 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine. Yes, MDMA is short for methylamphetamine. It’s becomes inextricably linked to music festivals since its main effects complement the rave scene. Molly can energize you for hours and give you the strongest desire to dance (think the urge to pee—so difficult to shake that you just have to dance right then and there), while at the same time it can give you a sense of connection to everyone and make you more sensitive to touch.

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MDMA is short for 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine. Yes, you read that correctly: methamphetamine makes up the MA in MDMA. Although you aren’t doing any Breaking Bad shit, you still should consider the risks of consuming an amphetamine.

According to the National Institute for Drug Abuse, when taken in high doses, Molly can interfere with the body’s ability to regulate temperature. This paired with the fact that most users are in crowded, hot areas can cause hyperthermia or a sharp increase in body temperature and in rare cases—death.

Although Zooey didn’t experience any real danger herself, she suggests taking the time to research the effects, find out from your friends how much you should be taking and make sure you truly trust your source. (Don’t get it from some random guy who sits five rows behind you in your econ lecture.)

Even if you trust your friend who gave you the drug, you might never truly know who his source is or what else is in it.

“Ecstasy and Molly are produced in super labs with people who have to know a great deal about chemistry. You, as a consumer, have no idea what that person or people have included in this drug. A chemist can include anything they want in it, at any ratio in order to get the hallucinogenic and stimulant effects. You and your body have no way of knowing what these chemical ratios are and how you will react,” Kickbush says.

Of the countless times Charles has done Molly, there have been occasions he wasn’t sure what it was cut with; he believes there’s a great chance he’s done more drugs than he intended to.

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MDMA works by releasing the neurotransmitters serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine in the brain. When you are on it, your levels of serotonin skyrocket—hence the feelings of pleasure and connectedness. Afterward, however, the levels of serotonin in your brain plummet and can be depleted for awhile. It could take weeks for them to get back to their usual levels, which is what leads to the blue period.

“When you’re done with it, your body suffers. There were many times where I would roll two nights in a row [Friday and Saturday], and Sunday I would be miserable all day and watch Requiem for a Dream. Luckily, it wasn’t very long term for me,” Charles says. Zooey agrees; after the first time she did it, both she and her friend were unhappy for days—she even felt depressed.

Before trying a new drug, you should realize that Molly is not your sweet and mellow friend Mary Jane.