

## **Regional Drug Alert**

from the **South Florida Drug Observatory** -

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### **Ecstasy On the Rebound - Often Laced with Methamphetamine**

Recent drug trends suggest increases in the availability and consequences of “ecstasy” abuse that had shown sharp declines between 2001 and 2005. The name “ecstasy” refers to the illegal stimulant, MDMA (3-4 methylenedioxymethamphetamine), usually sold in a pill form. It produces an energizing effect, distortions in time and perception, and enhanced sensitivity to touch. Over the years, ecstasy has been frequently adulterated with other drugs and now its new major source is from Canadian drug trafficking organizations who often lace it with methamphetamine.

The dangerous combination of methamphetamine and ecstasy can have severe consequences, especially as both drugs have toxic effects on the brain. Both drugs interfere with the body’s ability to regulate temperature, possibly leading to sharp increases in body temperature (hyperthermia), that may result in organ failure and death. The potential for a fatal overdose is also increased when methamphetamine-laced ecstasy is combined with alcohol, even more so when mixed with an energy drink. Recent laboratory research suggests that ecstasy and methamphetamine combinations may produce more severe brain and behavioral effects than either drug alone. Deaths linked to this combination have been increasing in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties since 2006.

More than 55 percent of the ecstasy samples seized in the United States last year contained methamphetamine. Cutting their product with less-expensive methamphetamine boosts profits for ecstasy producers, likely increases the addictive potential of their product, and effectively gives a dangerous new kick to a drug that had lost its appeal. Ecstasy is now frequently associated with the “hip hop” club scene and its use is increasing among Latino and African American young adults and youth.

Ecstasy comes in a tablet form of various colors that is often branded with a cartoon character, smiley face, or even corporate logo. It sells from \$6.00 to \$30.00 per pill. Photos of different ecstasy tablets may be viewed at: [http://www.drugfree.org/Portal/drug\\_guide/Ecstasy#](http://www.drugfree.org/Portal/drug_guide/Ecstasy#)



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The South Florida Drug Observatory is a program of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Substance Abuse which is a community partnership with the United Way of Broward County’s Commission on Substance Abuse, the Florida Department of Children and Families, Nova Southeastern University, The Miami Coalition for a Safe and Drug-Free Community, and Up Front Drug Information Center.

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