



meth-laced ecstasy

Office of National Drug Control Policy 2008

Is A Once-Waning Fad Making A Comeback In A Dangerous New Form?

The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) is warning public health and safety leaders across the country about a dangerous new drug threat coming from Canada. Ecstasy laced with methamphetamine (meth) has been entering the United States illegal drug markets, particularly in northern border states. Intelligence reports indicate that once smuggled into the U.S., the meth-laced Ecstasy is then being distributed throughout the country.

The dangerous poly-drug combination of methamphetamine and Ecstasy can have severe health consequences, especially as both drugs have toxic effects on the brain. They both can interfere with the body's ability to regulate temperature, leading to sharp increases in body temperature (hyperthermia), which can result in liver, kidney, and cardiovascular system failure and death. The potential for a life-threatening or fatal overdose is also increased when meth-laced Ecstasy is combined with alcohol. Recent laboratory research suggests that Ecstasy and meth combinations may produce greater adverse neurochemical and behavioral effects than either drug alone.

- Alarming, 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 Canadian Ecstasy producers, likely increases the addictive potential of their product, and effectively gives a dangerous "face lift" to a designer drug that had fallen out of fashion with young American drug users.
- Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies along the U.S.–Canada border report large increases in the flow of Ecstasy from Canada into the United States. In 2003, 568,220 dosage units of Ecstasy were seized federally in the ten Northern border states; in 2006, 5,485,619 dosage units were seized.
- Prior to 2003, Europe (primarily The Netherlands and Belgium) was the predominant source of Ecstasy consumed in the United States. Increased cooperation among U.S. and European governments, combined with improved law enforcement operations and mass media reports, effectively dismantled the European–U.S. Ecstasy trade. However, U.S. and Canadian intelligence reports indicate that Canada-based drug trafficking organizations are attempting to fill the supply void, and have drastically increased their Ecstasy production and trafficking.
- Recent data show that progress against Ecstasy use has ebbed. The number of people in the U.S. who reported that they tried Ecstasy for the first time during the past year increased 40 percent between 2005 and 2006 – from 615,000 to 860,000. One-third of these new users in 2006 were under age 18 when they started using Ecstasy. While still lower than its peak in 2002, an estimated 326,000 young adults reported past-month Ecstasy use in 2006, compared to 231,000 in 2004. These increases coincide with increased trafficking of Ecstasy from Canada.

