



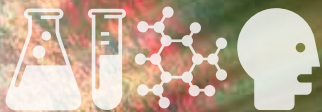
MEEOW!
MEEOW!

MEPHEDRONE

methylmethcathinone - 4-MMC - 4-methylephedrone

INFORMATION FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION





MEPHEDRONE

If you are using, or thinking of trying, mephedrone this guide will help you understand what is known (so far) about it, describe how it is used, the effects and potential risks, and highlight harm reduction advice.

Mephedrone is known by many names. Its chemical names are 4-methylmethcathinone (sometimes shortened to 4-MMC) and 4-methylephedrone, hence the shortened version 'mephedrone'. Over the past few years it has been sold by the names M-CAT, Bubble, Magic, Plant Food, amongst a long list of product names.



Usually a white powder commonly sold in gram bags, it is a short-acting, stimulant-type drug with effects similar to cocaine and amphetamines, so any problems attached to its use will be similar too.

After “killer drug” style headlines in 2009 it was made illegal in 2010. Despite this, mephedrone is now established as one of the most popular illegal drugs, on a par with ecstasy and cocaine. But mephedrone is only the tip of the iceberg. Underground chemists have hundreds of new compounds lined up for manufacture and new drugs are being identified at the rate of one a week.

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

Mephedrone is a synthetic (man-made) chemical modelled on the natural stimulant drug cathinone, which is found in the plant 'Khat'.

The leaves of the Khat plant have been chewed by people in East Africa (mainly Somalia and Ethiopia) for centuries. Chewing Khat leaves has a similar effect to caffeine (coffee) and is used as mild social stimulant. In the UK, possession of the Khat plant itself or its leaves is not illegal, you can buy it in some African food shops, but the chemical it contains, cathinone, is banned.

The first European synthesis of mephedrone was recorded in 1929, but it remained an obscure

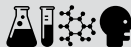
chemical compound up until 2003 when it was rediscovered by an underground chemist and publicised on the internet. From these early and enthusiastic postings on discussion forums, interest in mephedrone grew and it eventually became available to buy over the internet in 2007.

At that time the quality of both cocaine and ecstasy was dubious, to say the least: cocaine purity had dropped from 60% in 1999 to 22% in 2009; and almost all the ecstasy pills tested in 2010 contained no active ingredient, MDMA, but were made up of other substances including mephedrone. Consequently, the UK drugs market was primed for a new, cheap and, most importantly, legal alternative.

Mephedrone is one of a family of compounds known as Beta-

Ketones that also include Methyloone and Methylenedioxypropylvalerone (MDPV). As these are synthetic relatives of cathinone they weren't covered by existing laws at the time so they were sold as so called 'legal highs'.

It is thought that much of the mephedrone available in the UK today is manufactured in India or China (although it is now illegal there), bought from internet sites and shipped by post. When it was legal, in January 2010, one kilo of mephedrone from China cost £2,500 which, when sold for £10 a gram, made a profit of £7,500. When it was made illegal in the UK in March 2010 the wholesale price jumped to £4,000 a kilo, retail prices for a gram doubled, and it was more likely to be cut with other powders (caffeine, glucose, monosodium glutamate, etc.) or mixed with other drugs.



To Avoid The Risks Don't Take Mephedrone!

However, if you are determined to go ahead with it, limit yourself to small amounts (no more than half a gram per session) and occasional use (no more than once a week).

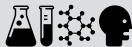
The more you take the more likely you are to have problems.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

As mephedrone usually comes in the form of a white powder, it is difficult to tell it apart from other 'white powders' sold as legal highs.

And here's the problem - there is no way of knowing for sure what is in the white powder bought from online suppliers, street dealers or even friends - you've got to believe what they tell you! There is also no way of telling that the 'mephedrone' bought from a trusted supplier last week is the same product on offer this week.

In South Wales in 2012 a mixture of mephedrone and ketamine was being sold as a cocktail called 'kit-kat', whilst in other areas of the UK it has been reported that crystal methamphetamine is being passed off as mephedrone. It is a case of 'you pay your money and you take your chance' because there really is no way of knowing what it is!



Slow & Low

If you're going to use Mephedrone take a small amount and wait.

Don't take more because you can't feel anything happening after half an hour or so. Yes, it could be some blag white powder, or even a completely different substance, but how do you know?

Give it time to start. Taking too much too soon could put you on a bad one.

Learn to recognise, and handle, the effects.

HOW IT WORKS

Stimulant-type drugs like mephedrone cause a sudden release of brain chemicals (neurotransmitters).

These include noradrenaline (which gives you the rush), dopamine (which gives you the euphoria) and serotonin (which gives you the loved-up feelings). However, as mephedrone is a short-acting drug, it also causes a sharp decrease in these chemicals and the effects wear off quickly.

As it comes on fast but wears off quickly this causes the urge to take more, or re-dose, that many users describe. This, in turn, sets up a pattern of compulsive use that may lead you to take more than you originally intended.

EFFECTS

Users report a definite feeling of ‘coming up’ or ‘rushes’, as the drug starts to work.

The main effects include alert, a sense of calm wellbeing, excitement, energy, elevated mood and feeling sociable and talkative.

Common unpleasant side-effects

Unwanted effects include dry mouth, teeth grinding, reduced appetite, poor concentration and short-term memory, increased heart rate, increased body temperature, palpitations of the heart, anxiety, depression, sweating, and pupil dilation.

REDUCE THE HARM

Cutting down on the amount you take and cutting back on the times you take it will help reduce unpleasant side-effects and other risks.

Mephedrone can seriously dehydrate you. Make sure you keep your fluids topped up - sip water, fruit juice or, better still, isotonic sports drinks as these help replace the vital salts and minerals lost through sweating.

Mixing mephedrone with other drugs also increases the risks. Drinking alcohol and taking mephedrone can cause confusion and aggressive, erratic behaviour. Taking other stimulant-type drugs at the same time as mephedrone can increase the risks of dehydration and heatstroke, which could prove fatal.

The comedown can leave you feeling miserable, tired and drained but unable to sleep, and wanting to take more. These feelings can last well into the next day. So look after yourself through the week, eat and sleep well, get plenty of exercise to build stamina and resilience. Plan for the comedown, take the next day off, stay in bed, eat & drink (but no alcohol!), watch TV, just slob out or go for a refreshing walk and the bad feelings will soon be gone.

Mephedrone has been confirmed as causing or contributing to the deaths of 42 people (so far). So it's clear that mephedrone can kill. Heatstroke may be a contributing factor, so stay hydrated and keep cool.



The Law!

Mephedrone is illegal here and in most of Europe. In the UK, mephedrone is a Class B controlled substance under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971). This means it is illegal to possess (maximum penalty five years in jail) or supply (maximum penalty 14 years in jail).

SO WHY WERE THEY CALLED 'LEGAL HIGHS'?

Under the Consumer Protection Act it is illegal to sell food, drinks or anything else for human consumption without rigorous safety checks. To get around this, suppliers initially described mephedrone as plant food, usually clearly marked 'NOT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION'.

Some products are also sold as 'research chemicals' or 'incense', as in the case of cannabis-like substances such as Spice. Spice and other smoking preparations like Back Mamba and Annihilation are now illegal. Interestingly, six weeks after mephedrone was made illegal (in March 2010) products being sold as NRG1, NRG2 and MDAI were found to contain mephedrone



**HOW IS MEPHEDRONE USED
AND WHAT ARE THE RISKS?**



SWALLOWING

The powder could be wrapped in a cigarette paper and swallowed (bombed), or dissolved into a drink. Capsules or tablets are usually swallowed.

How much?

Users say an effective oral dose is around 150mg, it comes on within about half an hour and lasts for 2-3 hours. Swallowing is possibly the least harmful way to take it, but if you take lots of it you risk damaging your stomach.

Reducing the harm

Drink plenty of water to dissolve it fully and help flush it through your system.



SNORTING

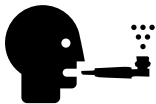
The powder can be snorted but it is reported to be very unpleasant, causing a burning sensation and nosebleeds.

How much?

Users say an effective snorting dose is around 50mgs, it comes on within a few minutes and lasts about an hour.

Reducing the harm

Mephedrone can damage the skin in the nose and nasal passages, causing inflammation, pain and nosebleeds. Washing your nose out with warm water between lines, or at least at the end of a session, will help reduce the damage.



SMOKING

Mephedrone melts at around 67°C which is much lower than the direct heat generated by a match, lighter or joint.

To release the vapour without burning the drug, indirect heat needs to be applied, usually on tinfoil or in a glass pipe.

How much?

Users say an effective dose is around 50mg, it comes on within seconds but only lasts about half an hour.

Reducing the harm

The more you smoke the faster it comes on and wears off and you will want to take more to keep the buzz going. So have a look at the time when you take it and don't have another hit for half an hour.

LONG-TERM HARM

As it is such a recent addition to the drug scene no long-term studies have been conducted.

Many users report a strong desire to continue taking it (craving) so it is possible that mephedrone could be psychologically addictive, on a par with cocaine and crack.

It may be too early to say whether it is physically addictive or not.

We don't know if mephedrone can cause specific damage to your heart, liver, brain or central nervous system.

Basically, it's not yet known what long-term harm might be caused by mephedrone. The only way to avoid the potential risks is not to use mephedrone.



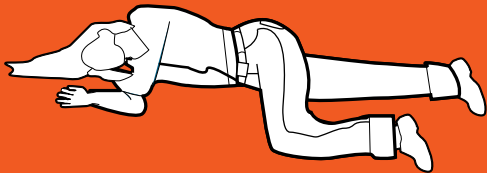


Overdose!

Mephedrone, like all stimulants-type drugs increases heart rate, blood pressure and body temperature. Taken to excess they can cause overdose and convulsions.

Early signs of stimulant overdose include:

- > Sudden rise in body temperature
- > Flushed face
- > Hot, dry skin but no sweating
- > Muscle cramps and stiffness in the arms and legs



What To Do

1. If the person is panicking and hyperactive, reassure them that they will be alright if they relax and calm down. Explain what's happening to them and what you are going to do.
2. Get them to breathe in and out, deeply and slowly. Count with them the breaths in and out to slow the rhythm down. If they can't control their breathing - hyperventilating - use a paper bag to breathe in and out of.
3. They will start to feel very hot so take them to a cool place, loosen their clothing, particularly around the neck (but be careful not to panic them, they may interpret your movements as an attack!) and apply cold/wet towels or ice to the back of their neck.
4. If they stop sweating or collapse, phone an ambulance **IMMEDIATELY!**
5. Lay them gently on their side in the recovery position (see illustration) so they are comfortable and if they vomit it will drain away from them.
6. Stay with them until the ambulance arrives, and tell the medics what they have taken. Don't worry, you won't get into trouble and this could save their life.

FURTHER HELP AND SUPPORT

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Helpline 0800 77 66 00

Call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, **FRANK** is around to give you **FREE** info on drugs

RELEASE

www.release.org.uk

Helpline 0845 4500 215

Release is the national centre of expertise on drugs and drugs law – providing free and confidential specialist advice to the public and professionals.

EROWID

www.erowid.org

Erowid is a member-supported organization providing access to reliable, non-judgmental information about psychoactive plants, chemicals, and related issues.

URBAN 75

www.urban75.com

A resource for people who want to access drug information and make their own, informed decisions.