

Information for mephedrone users

Mephedrone is a stimulant drug with similar effects to speed, ecstasy and cocaine. Users say it gives them feelings of energy, empathy, alertness and talkativeness. It can be swallowed, snorted, stuffed, smoked or injected but the safest way to use is to swallow with food.

It has different names in different places such as Meff, Drone, Plant Food, Magic, Monkey Madness but these are all meant to mean the substance is mephedrone. Since it was banned in 2010 a range of other drugs have been produced by underground chemists but mephedrone remains popular with quite a number of people.

Some people can become **dependent** on mephedrone or have problems caused by their use of it. If it affects you in this way and you're worried please talk to your GP or other healthcare professional. There are services available which can help you. It's easier to sort problems out before they might get worse.

There are many other risks of using mephedrone but the worst include:

- **Overdose**
- **Psychosis (losing touch with reality)**
- **Suicidal thoughts and behaviour**

The only way to avoid all the risks is not to take it. If you have **mental health, heart or blood pressure problems** this drug may not be for you as it can make these worse.

However if you do choose to use it these things may **reduce the risks** of having problems:

Preparation:

- ✓ Try to **eat well, rest and drink plenty of liquid before** you start using. You'll feel better after the session. Avoid alcohol or energy drinks if at all possible.
- ✓ **Product.** Make sure you know what you are buying. Describe what you want including the effects you are seeking from the drug and see if this matches what the seller is offering. If going to a new seller be particularly cautious and ask questions about the product especially if it looks, smells or tastes different to what you are used to.

During the session:

- ✓ **Start low and go slow.** Take a small amount and let this reach its peak effect. In particular do not take any more within half an hour of your first dose even if you don't feel it coming on. Try not to redose more often than once an hour. If you wait this long (or longer) your next dose will have a better effect. Remember you can always take more later on, you can never go back and take less.
- ✓ **Dosing.** There is no completely safe dose to take. Most people dose to achieve a particular effect, a 'buzz', this depends also on how tolerant to mephedrone you are and what way you take it into the body. That said there are doses which are likely to be safer, rather than

riskier. For example someone who is fairly new to mephedrone should not use more than 50mg lines. That means they should chop a gram bag up into 20 lines to get lines of 50mg each. Users with more tolerance can snort more but sometimes this isn't effective as it can't all be absorbed through the nose and there is only so high you can get. After that you're just wasting your drugs.

- ✓ **Mixing.** Using any drug with another increases risks, even if the other is a downer. Other stimulants like coke increase the strain on the heart which is already getting a bit of a hard time. These are best avoided completely (or if not, kept to a minimum) as overdose becomes a bigger risk. Don't forget that alcohol is also a drug!
- ✓ **Hydration.** Drinking about a pint of fluid per hour during the session is important to keep hydrated and keep you feeling well. Again you should avoid alcohol as this causes dehydration and can make you take risks you wouldn't otherwise. Energy drinks contain lots of caffeine which increases the strain on the heart. Water or non-alcoholic carbonated drinks are fine.
- ✓ **Sex.** If you get lucky use a condom, and if you get very lucky use plenty of them!
- ✓ Mephedrone is described by some users as very '**moreish**' meaning users can get caught up in a binge lasting for days and their comedown is likely to be severe. Work out how long you want to use for before you start and try to stick to this. Don't buy more than you think you will need for the session and don't buy more during it.
- ✓ **Look after your mates.** It's ok to tell each other to take it easy; that's what good friends do. Don't let anyone go off by themselves. If anyone becomes unwell stay with them. **Call an ambulance especially if they have chest pains, look very hot and aren't sweating, have stiff muscles or muscle cramps or have breathing problems.** Try to remain calm yourself, keep the noise down in the area and reassure the person that you are there to help. If they are breathing normally encourage them to put themselves into the recovery position or at least to keep still.

At the end:

- ✓ **Plan for the comedown.** 'What goes up must come down'; with stimulant drug use the higher you get and the longer you remain high, the harder the comedown. Try to avoid other drugs to help you come down as these could prolong the comedown or even cause overdose. Wind the session down over an hour or so before you stop using by calming the environment down, reducing the amount of the last dose, put on relaxing music and having a shower. Plan to need plenty of rest afterwards so clean out your nostrils with water before you try to sleep, go somewhere you feel safe to relax and keep numbers of people you can talk to in your phone if you start to feel depressed, frightened or unwell.
- ✓ **Suicidal thoughts and feelings are common with people after a binge** and there are concerns that mephedrone could be linked to some recent suicides, especially if users have also used '**blues**' (diazepam 10mg) to help with the comedown. If you want to continue to enjoy using mephedrone, you won't want this to happen for you or your family. **If you are concerned about yourself or another user make sure you talk to someone like a GP, addiction service or mental health service immediately. As well as this Lifeline counsellors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to listen in confidence. Contact Lifeline at**

0808 808 8000. Try to remember that it is the comedown causing these thoughts and feelings which normally pass in a few days.

Chris Rintoul, Council for the Homeless NI