

# Ethylone ●

*Note: Due to the lack of formal research about the use and effects of ethylone, much of this information has been informed by research on synthetic cathinones (a category of drugs that includes ethylone).*

## What is ethylone?

Ethylone is a synthetic cathinone which is a category of drugs related to the naturally occurring khat plant.<sup>1</sup> Ethylone is also an empathogen, which means it increases an individual’s feeling of empathy and compassion toward others.

Its effects are similar to other stimulant and empathogenic drugs such as MDMA, cocaine and amphetamines.<sup>2</sup>

The chemical structure of synthetic cathinones continue to change, this is thought to be an attempt to avoid existing legal regulations.<sup>1</sup> Ethylone began to appear in 2011 and is a newer form of another synthetic cathinone called methydone<sup>1</sup> which first emerged in the early 2000s.<sup>3</sup>

### Other names

Bath Salts, plant food, research chemicals, bk-MDEA, MDEC, and 3,4-methylenedioxy-N-ethylcathinone.<sup>1</sup>

### Other types of empathogens

MDMA, PMA and PMMA

### How is ethylone used?

Research on how ethylone is used is limited, however it is reported that synthetic cathinones are most commonly snorted or swallowed.<sup>4</sup> Injecting, smoking, inhaling, as well as administering the drugs anally have also been reported.<sup>4</sup>

## Effects of ethylone

**There is no safe level of drug use.** Use of any drug always carries some risk. It’s important to be careful when taking any type of drug.

Depending on the amount taken, the following effects may be experienced and may last up to four hours:

Ethylone can affect everyone differently, based on:

- the amount taken
- a person’s size, weight and health
- whether the person is used to taking it
- whether other drugs are taken around the same time
- the strength of the drug (which can vary from batch to batch).

- euphoria
- increased energy
- heightened senses (sight, hearing and touch)
- feelings of empathy and openness
- increased sociability
- decreased inhibition
- sexual arousal
- increased blood pressure
- pupil dilation
- reduced appetite
- teeth or jaw clenching.<sup>4</sup>

Higher doses may result in the following adverse effects:

- headache
- agitation
- insomnia
- anxiety and paranoia
- hallucinations
- aggressive or violent behaviour
- fast or irregular heartbeat
- sweating and hot flushes
- nausea and vomiting
- cold extremities
- dehydration
- hyperthermia (high body temperature)
- haemorrhage
- psychosis
- seizures
- death.<sup>4</sup>

### Using ethylone with other drugs

The effects of combining synthetic cathinones (such as ethylone) with other drugs – including over the counter or prescribed medications – can be unpredictable and dangerous. The following combinations could have the following effects:

**Synthetic cathinones + ice, speed or ecstasy:** increase the risk of cardiovascular (heart) problems and substance-induced psychosis.<sup>5</sup>

**Synthetic cathinones + alcohol + cannabis:** nausea and vomiting.<sup>6</sup>

## Health and safety

If possible, find out what a common dose is of ethylone is. As ethylone is a relatively new synthetic cathinone the harm reduction advice is partly based on what is known of related drugs like amphetamines and MDMA, as not enough research has been done on ethylone specifically.

Use of ethylone is likely to be more dangerous when:

- taken in combination with alcohol or other drugs, particularly stimulants such as crystal methamphetamine ('ice') or ecstasy
- driving or operating heavy machinery
- judgment or motor coordination is required
- alone (in case medical assistance is required)
- the person has a mental health condition
- the person has an existing heart problem.

In Australia, poisons information centres and clinical toxicology units are often contacted for advice on poisonings from synthetic cathinones. Features of these poisonings include agitation, tachycardia (increased heart rate), hypertension and in severe cases delirium, aggressive behaviour, hallucinations, hyperthermia, cardiac dysrhythmia (irregular heartbeat) and seizures.<sup>7</sup>

Injecting synthetic cathinones can cause soft tissue and vascular damage.

Sharing needles may also transmit:

- Tetanus
- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis C
- HIV/AIDS.

### Dependence and tolerance

Currently there isn't available data on people seeking treatment for ethylone dependence.<sup>1</sup> However, the limited data available on people who use synthetic cathinones demonstrates that frequent use and strong doses can lead to a strong compulsion to re-dose, as well as dependence, tolerance and withdrawal.<sup>8</sup>

## **Ethylone and the law**

In Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria there is now a 'blanket ban' on possessing or selling any substance that has a psychoactive effect other than alcohol, tobacco and food.

In other states and territories in Australia specific New Psychoactive Substances (including synthetic cathinones) are banned and new ones are regularly added to the list. This means that a drug that was legal to sell or possess today, may be illegal tomorrow. The substances banned differ between these states/territories.

See also, drugs and the law - [adf.org.au/talking-about-drugs/law/](http://adf.org.au/talking-about-drugs/law/)

## References

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Always call an ambulance on triple zero (000) if an overdose is suspected: tell the paramedic exactly what has been taken. Paramedics are there to help and will not involve the police unless there is a danger to themselves or others.

## Other help, support services and resources

Links to further help and support • [adf.org.au/help-support/](http://adf.org.au/help-support/)

Information on synthetic cathinones • [adf.org.au/drug-facts/synthetic-cathinones/](http://adf.org.au/drug-facts/synthetic-cathinones/)

### ● Further information

#### DrugInfo • 1300 85 85 84

Free confidential information and advice about alcohol and other drugs (9am - 5pm, Mon-Fri)

#### Family Drug Help • 1300 660 068 • [www.familydrughelp.com.au](http://www.familydrughelp.com.au) (Victorian-based)

Services are available to support those around you who may be affected by your drug use. As well as providing understanding, they can provide information about how best to help during treatment.

#### Family Drug Support • 1300 368 186 • [www.fds.org.au](http://www.fds.org.au) (Australia-wide)




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