

# Mephedrone ●

## What is mephedrone?

Mephedrone (4-methylmethcathinone) is a stimulant drug, which means it speeds up the messages travelling between the brain and body.<sup>1</sup> Mephedrone is classed among New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), a range of drugs that have been designed to produce effects similar to those of established illicit drugs.

It was originally marketed online as a plant fertiliser or ‘research chemical’.<sup>1</sup>

Mephedrone comes in different forms, including:

- white powder with a yellowish tinge
- crystals
- capsules
- pills.<sup>2</sup>

### Other names

Meph, meow, meow-meow, m-cat, plant food, drone, bubbles, kitty cat.<sup>1</sup>

### How is mephedrone used?

Mephedrone powder is usually sniffed/snorted or swallowed.<sup>2</sup> Swallowing is the most common way of taking the drug. It is usually mixed with liquid to drink or wrapped in a cigarette paper (known as ‘bombing’).<sup>2</sup> There are also reports of people injecting the drug.<sup>2</sup>

## Effects of mephedrone

**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.

Mephedrone affects 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 varies from batch to batch).

The following effects may be experienced and may last for two-to-four hours:

- rush of intense pleasure
- feeling happy, energetic and wanting to talk more
- intense connection with music
- anxiety
- paranoia
- restless sleep
- muscle tension (face and jaw)
- blurred vision
- light-headedness, dizziness
- distorted sense of time
- memory loss
- nose bleeds from sniffing/snorting the drug
- enlarged (dilated) pupils, blurred vision
- dry mouth, thirst
- sweating
- reduced appetite
- stomach pains, nausea, vomiting
- skin rashes
- fast or irregular heartbeat
- high blood pressure and hot flushes
- strong urge to re-dose
- chest pain
- tremors, convulsions.<sup>1,3,4</sup>

Mephedrone has been linked to some deaths in the United Kingdom and other parts of Europe. Injecting mephedrone can cause soft tissue and vascular damage.<sup>2</sup>

Sharing needles may also transmit:

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

## Overdose

If a large amount of mephedrone is consumed, it could cause an overdose. If any of the following effects are experienced, an ambulance should be called immediately by dialing triple zero (000).

- limbs tingling and turning blue (due to narrowing of the blood vessels)
- seizures
- respiratory failure<sup>4</sup>
- death.<sup>5</sup>

## Coming down

In the days after mephedrone use, the following may be experienced:

- restless sleep
- tiredness
- dizziness
- low mood
- wounds, sores taking longer to heal<sup>3</sup>
- memory loss.<sup>2</sup>

## Long-term effects

Regular use of mephedrone may eventually cause:

- difficulty sleeping
- muscle spasms
- seeing and hearing things that aren't there
- needing to use more mephedrone to get the same effect
- dependence
- financial, work and social problems.

## Using mephedrone with other drugs

The effects of taking mephedrone with other drugs – including over-the-counter or prescribed medications – can be unpredictable and dangerous. The following combinations could have the following effects:

**Mephedrone + ice, speed or ecstasy:** increased risk of harms, including death.<sup>6</sup>

**Mephedrone + alcohol + cannabis:** nausea and vomiting.<sup>1</sup>

## Withdrawal

Giving up mephedrone after using it for a long time can be challenging because the body has to get used to functioning normally without it.

Reported symptoms include:

- cravings
- increased appetite
- stuffy nose
- tiredness
- feeling anxious
- feeling depressed, emotional, tearful
- irritability
- difficulty concentrating.<sup>7</sup>

## References

1. Drug Wise. Mephedrone, methedrone, methadone and methylone 2017 [Available from: <https://www.drugwise.org.uk/mephedrone-methedrone-methadone-and-methylone/>].
2. Advice I. IV use of mephedrone 2012 [Available from: <https://www.injectingadvice.com/v4/index.php/articles/harm-reduction-practice/192-iv-use-of-mephedrone>].
3. World Health Organization. Mephedrone Critical Review Report 2014.
4. Talk to Frank. Mephedrone n.d.
5. Maskell PDP, G. Seneviratne, C. & Pounder, D., Mephedrone (4-methylmethcathinone)-related deaths Journal of analytical toxicology 2011;35(3):188-91.
6. Drug Science. Mephedrone n.d. [Available from: <https://drugscience.org.uk/drug-information/mephedrone/#202482740485730>].
7. Winstock AM, L. Ramsey, J. Davies, S. Puchnarewicz, M. & Marsden, J. . Mephedrone: use, subjective effects and health risks Addiction. 2011;106(11):1991-196.

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 New psychoactive substances • [adf.org.au/drug-facts/new-psychoactive-substances/](http://adf.org.au/drug-facts/new-psychoactive-substances/)

### ● 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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