

# PMA and PMMA.

## What are PMA and PMMA?

Paramethoxyamphetamine (PMA) and paramethoxymethamphetamine (PMMA) are empathogens with effects similar to MDMA also known as ecstasy.<sup>1</sup> In fact most people who take PMA or PMMA think they are taking MDMA. However, drugs sold as MDMA may not contain any MDMA. They can be a mix of amphetamines, PMA, PMMA, ketamine, NBOME, methylone or other substances.

This is potentially harmful as PMA and PMMA have more toxic effects (and are less euphoric) than MDMA. It also takes longer to feel these effects, so people may take another pill in the mistaken belief that the first has not worked, sometimes resulting in overdose. PMA and PMMA have been around since the 1970s<sup>1</sup> and have been associated with a number of deaths over the years worldwide including in Australia. In 2012 and 2013 there was a spike in deaths directly attributable to PMA or PMMA in England and Wales.<sup>2</sup>

## How are they used?

PMA and PMMA are usually swallowed and can be snorted or injected.

## Slang names

Death, Dr Death, Pink Ecstasy, Red Mitsubishi, Killer, Chicken Powder, Chicken Yellow.

## Effects of PMA and PMMA

**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 kind type of drug.

PMA and PMMA affect everyone differently, but effects may include:

- moderate stimulation
- seeing colours and shapes
- heightened senses (sight, hearing and touch)
- dizziness
- dry mouth and dehydration
- Increased bodily temperature - the most common cause of death from PMA is due to severe hyperthermia
- Increased perspiration
- teeth grinding
- increased sweating
- increased heart beat and blood pressure
- difficulty breathing
- irregular eye movements
- muscle spasms
- decreased appetite
- nausea and vomiting (common at any dose)
- Seizures – (more common with PMMA than with almost any other substance).<sup>3-6</sup>

## Overdose

If you take a large amount or have a strong batch, you could overdose. Call an ambulance straight away by dialling triple zero (000) if you have any of these symptoms (ambulance officers don't need to involve the police):

- kidney failure
- extremely high body temperature
- vomiting
- convulsions and seizures
- coma
- death.<sup>7</sup>

High doses of PMA or PMMA are potentially lethal.

## Long term effects

The long-term effects of PMA and PMMA have not yet been established but some research indicates they may have similar long-term effects to ecstasy.<sup>8</sup>

## Using PMA or PMMA with other drugs

Taking PMA or PMMA with other drugs such as alcohol, cocaine, amphetamines, cannabis and some prescription medications such as anti-depressants (SSRIs and MAOIs) can be potentially fatal.<sup>4</sup>

## Getting help

If your use of PMA and PMMA are affecting your health, family, relationships, work, school, financial or other life situations, you can find help and support.

## PMA and the law

Federal and state laws provide penalties for possessing, using, making or selling PMA or PMMA, or driving under their influence.

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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2. Office for National Statistics. *Deaths Related to Drug Poisoning in England and Wales: 2012*. Office for National Statistics 2013.
3. Matthews A. *PMA/PMMA Guide: Substance Create; 2016* [Available from: <http://www.substance.org.uk/resources/pma-pmma-guide>].
4. Caldicott DG, Edwards NA, Krays A, Kirkbride KP, Sims DN, Byard RW, et al. Dancing with 'Death': P-Methoxyamphetamine Overdose and Its Acute Management. 2003;143.
5. Refstad S. Paramethoxyamphetamine (PMA) poisoning; a 'party drug' with lethal effects. *Acta Anaesthesiologica Scandinavica*. 2003(10):1298.
6. Psychonaut Wiki. PMA 2019 [Available from: <https://psychonautwiki.org/wiki/PMA>].
7. National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre. Paramethoxyamphetamine (PMA). In: UNSW Australia, editor. 2016.
8. Expert Committee on Drug Dependence. para-Methoxymethylamphetamine (PMMA): Critical Review Report. World Health Organization.

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 empathogens • [adf.org.au/drug-facts/empathogens/](http://adf.org.au/drug-facts/empathogens/)

#### ● 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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