

Parenting Matters

Quarterly Newsletter

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For Colorado Parents

CLUB DRUGS Party Enhancers or Dangerous Doses

In the past three decades, a pattern of night-long dances enhanced by drugs, commonly called raves or trances has moved from Europe to small town America. This has made the use of MDMA, Rohypnol, GHB, and Ketamine popular because the effects they create are thought to enhance the dance experience. MDMA, also known as Adam or Ecstasy, was first patented in 1914 for use in psychotherapy.

However, by 1985 the Drug Enforcement Agency had classified it as a "Schedule 1" drug because of its wide-spread illegal use. Unfortunately, many teens and young adults view it as harmless, hangover free, and relatively inexpensive. MDMA creates a sense of euphoria, heightened sense of touch, muscle tension, involuntary teeth clenching, nausea, blurred vision, faintness, and chills or sweating.

In high doses, MDMA can interfere with the body's ability to regulate body temperature causing a sharp increase in body temperature (hypothermia), that can result in liver, kidney, and cardiovascu-

lar system failure. Research suggests that chronic MDMA use can lead to changes in brain function, affecting learning and memory.

Rohypnol and GHB depress the central nervous system. Until 1992, GHB was widely available over-the-counter in health food stores and used primarily by body-builders to aid fat reduction and muscle building. GHB is abused in the United States for its euphoric and sedative effects. When combined with alcohol, GHB can result in nausea and breathing difficulties. GHB withdrawal effects include insomnia, anxiety, tremors and sweating.

Rohypnol appeared in this country in the early 1990's even though is not approved for use here. When Rohypnol is used with alcohol, it can cause incapacitation and short term loss of memory. Recently two other drugs, Klonopin and Xanax, that are colorless, odorless, and tasteless like Rohypnol, have appeared in the United States. They are known as "date rape" drugs because they can be mixed with food or drinks and not be detected.

Ketamine is an anesthetic approved for animal and human use by medical professionals since 1970. It is often stolen from animal hospitals and veterinary clinics for illegal use. Certain levels of use can cause dream-like states and hallucinations. In high doses it can cause delirium, amnesia, impaired motor function, high blood pressure, depression, and potentially fatal breathing problems.

The 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that five of every 100 Americans over age 12 had tried MDMA at least once in their lifetime. The encouraging news is that hospital emergency department mentions of MDMA and other club drug use have decreased since 2002 and the 2004 Monitoring the Future Survey found that tenth-graders showed increased awareness of harmfulness of MDMA use and a reduction in frequency of use. Yet, each year thousands of teens in the United States may be introduced to MDMA or another "club drug" for the first time.

Source: National Drug Intelligence Center- Information Bulletin, April 2001

PARENTING MATTERS, PREVENTION WORKS

Raves

Raves are high-energy, all night dance parties which feature music with a pounding beat and choreographed laser programs. This entertainment form began as an underground movement in Europe and has evolved into a highly organized and commercialized party culture.

By the early 1990's most metropolitan areas of the United States had rave clubs and a network of rave promoters. The NDIC reports that many of the rave promoters were career criminals who saw an opportunity to market rave paraphernalia to teens. This industry has evolved into a highly commercialized system with high entrance fees, very expensive bottled water, dark and overcrowded dance floors, and "chill rooms". Chill rooms are places to cool down after long periods of dancing. They are often the location for open sexual activity. Some club owners and promoters make bottled water and sports drinks

available to manage hypothermia and dehydration and sell objects to prevent involuntary teeth clenching that can result from MDMA use. They also make available other products to enhance the effect of MDMA.

Raves may have themes such as the future, space, or mystic places and attendees may wear costumes to match the theme. Rave-goers may also wear bright bracelets, necklaces, and earrings made of plastic or pill-shaped candies. The pacifiers used to prevent the teeth-clenching effect

Ravers Paraphernalia

- Glow Sticks
- Chemical Glow Bracelets
- Pacifiers
- Hard Candy
- Candy Beaded Necklaces
- Candy Beaded Bracelets
- Flashing light pins
- Plastic Pill Shaped Jewelry

of MDMA may be worn around the neck on candy-beaded necklaces.

Chemical glow sticks, bracelets, and necklaces are waved in the eyes of MDMA users to heighten visual stimulus. Ravers may also insert flashing red lights in their bellybuttons and pin flashing red lights in the shape of hearts, stars and animals to their clothing. They may also wear painter's masks with menthol vapor rub on the inside because MDMA users believe that menthol fumes enhance the effect of MDMA. In fact, the use of menthol products

may increase the risk of hypothermia.

Other practices that are related to the drug and dance club connection are posters, flyers and clothing with pro-drug messages and nitrous oxide filled balloons called "whippets".

Denver was among several cities including Chicago, Hartford, Milwaukee and New York that took deliberate steps in the late 1990's to combat raves. The steps taken include enforcing juvenile curfews, fire codes, health and safety ordinances, liquor laws, and licensing requirements for large gatherings. These steps combined with requiring emergency medical treatment personnel and uniformed security have contributed to promoters moving away from major metropolitan areas. More rural areas have become the venue for raves because cell phones can be used to announce rave dates and identify places for potential Ravers to gather and get directions to the next event.

MDMA Street Names

- Ecstasy
- Adam
- 007's
- XTC
- Batmans
- Care Bears
- Cat in the hats
- Charity
- Four Leaf Clover
- Happy Pill
- Pink Panthers

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Parenting Tips

In her book, *Raising Children Who Think For Themselves*, Dr. Elisa Medhus acknowledges that one of parents' greatest fears is that their child will be drawn into drug and alcohol behavior or be impacted by friends who use drugs or alcohol. She emphasizes the importance of unconditional love and support and opportunity to become self-directed as the most important protections from drug use. The five essential qualities of self-directed children that Dr. Medhus has identified are:

- High self esteem and self confidence that comes from the ability to rebound from defeat and view failure as a learning experience.
- Competence that comes from a keen awareness of their potential.
- Independence that comes from confidence in their ability to make decisions and solve problems.
- Character that comes from good role-modeling of moral principles and values by parents.
- Being an asset within a group because they have a strong sense of purpose and appreciation of their own uniqueness.

She states, "The stronger these five qualities become the less youth rely on outside influences. They have no reason to look to outside sources for approval."

Fastbreak For Fathers

The Importance of Connecting

by Rich Batten
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Research

A study published this fall by Brotherson, Yamamoto and Acock explores the influence of communication and connection on father-child relationships. In regards to connection, their research supported the hypothesis that **higher levels of father-adolescent connection tend to have a positive and significant influence on the quality of the father-child relationship.** Father-child connection in this study referred to a father's efforts to create and maintain an interpersonal connection with his child by active participation in the child's life. Adolescence may be a time when connection through mutual activities is an especially important part of the father-child relationship for both sons and daughters. Findings from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health indicate that "connectedness to parents/family" is **perhaps the most important protective factor for adolescents in reducing behavioral risks**

Ideas

- **Turn toward your child:** Pay attention to how you physically respond to your child. Do you make it a point to give her your undivided attention? Who communicates more joy in seeing your child – you or the family dog?
- **Tune into your child's world:** Can you name his best friends? Do you know her favorite music? What are his current worries? What are the three most special experiences in her life? These and similar questions will help gauge how in tune you really are.
- **Look into your child's heart:** What do you see in her movements, his expressions, her eyes? Most children wear their heart on their sleeve; we just don't take the time to observe it. Try using feeling words to describe what you see – "You seem . . . Disappointed/encouraged/hurt/excited/distracted/hopeful/lonely/overwhelmed/happy."

- Original article edited to fit publication

Parents Make A Difference

According to Ben Silliman, University of Wyoming Family Life Specialist, “a close family that stresses adaptability and open lines of communication will help children stay drug-free.” Silliman also emphasizes some tools and strategies families can use to resist drugs in *Family Strengths for Keeping Children Drug-free* (University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service Publication B-1100). The four tools he recommends are:

- Closeness
- Adaptability
- Communication
- Values of responsibility and flexibility

Closeness blends the freedom to be oneself with a sense of family connection. *Adaptability* in partnership with consistency and flexibility further strengthens the family’s ability to keep life in balance. *Communication* that fosters openness, honesty, and a willingness to confront or support others has application throughout life for all family members. *Responsibility and flexibility* are most likely to become part of all family members’ life tool kit when they are modeled by parents and applied to family members in ways that match age, personality and circumstances.

Research shows that youth who feel comfortable talking to their parents are more likely to stay drug-free.

By modeling and encouraging good health habits from early childhood, parents set the stage for age-appropriate conversations about the risks of drug use. By clearly stating that drugs are only to be used under adult and professional supervision to treat illness, parents avoid confusing messages about drug use. Parents that resist the urge to use alcohol or drugs to unwind send the most convincing messages about restraint and responsibility.

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Putting Knowledge to Work



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