



American College of Medical Toxicology

Physicians Specializing in the Care of Poisoned Patients

Designer Amphetamines

What is a designer amphetamine?

The term 'designer amphetamine' is often used to describe synthetic chemicals that are derived from amphetamine or methamphetamine. Designer amphetamines, like other designer drugs, are often created to avoid regulation by existing drug laws.

What are some examples of designer amphetamines?

MDMA (methylenedioxymethamphetamine, commonly known as ecstasy) is the most well-known designer amphetamine. Other examples include, but are not limited to, MDEA (commonly known as 'Eve'), MDA, 2-CB, and 25-I.

What are the effects of designer amphetamines compared to amphetamines?

Designer amphetamines produce many of the same effects as amphetamine. They can increase attention, cause anxiety, increase blood pressure and raise heart rate. Designer amphetamines may also produce some different effects based on their particular structure. Designer amphetamines often produce more psychedelic effects with altered perceptions and hallucinations.

Are designer amphetamines safer than amphetamines?

No. Use and overuse of any amphetamine-like substance can lead to serious short-term or long-term medical problems.

Are designer amphetamines the same as "bath salts"?

The term 'bath salts' is used to describe a large variety of synthetic drugs. Although many bath salts are derived from a naturally-occurring amphetamine-like compound found in the Khat plant, it is difficult to predict what substances will be found in any product labeled 'bath salts'. People who are exposed to bath salts exhibit similar effects as those who are exposed to methamphetamine or designer amphetamines.

What are some serious health effects that can result from taking designer amphetamines?

Extreme elevation of temperature can occur which can cause many different organs to shut down (brain, heart, liver, kidney, muscle). MDMA can also cause

abnormally low sodium levels which can result in confusion and seizures. Being under the influence of these substances can result in poor coordination or taking unnecessary risks that lead to serious trauma or injury.

What treatment is provided for someone who becomes ill after using designer amphetamines?

This depends on the severity of their illness. Treatment often involves sedation with medications, and in the most severe cases patients may require admission to an intensive care unit and be placed on a ventilator and receive other life-supporting treatments.

Can I cause permanent damage to my brain by taking designer amphetamines?

The long-term effects of using designer amphetamines are not completely understood, though it appears that repeated use of MDMA may result in problems with memory and brain function.

Created by Paul Stromberg, M.D. on behalf of the American College of Medical Toxicology