

ru-ok? Briefing – October 2019

Newsflash (health warnings and other news):

- **Cannabis:** Grading cannabis strength in a similar way to alcohol may improve mental health. https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/oct/13/grading-cannabis-strength-health-effects?fbclid=IwAR1qdsVamxloCWGRpRjmp-RhYwQpe_yzty4pxzqjODYZh90Eq6FSzaqxFTo
- And **Cannabis** related hospital admissions increased. https://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/cannabis-related-admissions-to-psychiatric-hospitals-rose-185-in-eight-years-1.4051671?fbclid=IwAR2vBpMcqMkYSIXI5ohf3-GGY_pn5o-zOOfJk3BslJjaWZ8281otw80kj68
- **MDMA:** “I was taking MDMA alone and now I tour the world” musician CJ Gilpin of Dream State. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/newsbeat-49965086/dream-state-from-drug-addiction-to-touring-the-world?fbclid=IwAR3yTtQ20290b-6lVVRE4rxF8tKwQuyQmZXKuNx0KIXSecgGv-8dHmVGhfg>
- **Parents:** How to talk to your teens about drugs. https://theconversation.com/how-to-talk-to-your-teenagers-about-drugs-124135?fbclid=IwAR2p5ywHkJciaDFTMOJYvU5QX9WDe5J_j7_6CnyrCv3A9xI07ypOCS6z7MM
- **Cocaine and Alcohol:** “Mixing cocaine and alcohol together creates a "deadly combination" which can increase violent and impulsive behaviour, doctors are warning.” <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-49814269?fbclid=IwAR0sKnaqf6d1YH6nrm0p15LlzTPs9hDGZu9migEkqdM8B3eM5RPYodDROYSA>
- **Alcohol:** Why drinking games can be dangerous. <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/advice/staying-safe-while-drinking/why-are-drinking-games-dangerous/>
- **Ketamine:** An ex-user’s view on the current rise in ketamine amongst youth. https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/drugs-mdma-ketamine-addiction-mental-health-grief-a8769321.html?fbclid=IwAR3X71qRLCV6WFa6kbpzxp5FaqSZX1wDapbxf3C_nzLKD1QsbUh0jtOdGw

Current Trends: Ketamine

Over the years we’ve noticed that ketamine regains popularity once the nights draw in; this year is no exception. This season it appears to be linked to a resurgence of a local rave culture. Raves are usually large illegal outdoor or warehouse gatherings involving music and drugs. Occasionally they are on the beach which presents the additional risk of accidental drowning.

Ketamine, known often as K or Ket, is usually sold as a powder and snorted or bombed (wrapped in paper and swallowed). A dissociative drug; ketamine interferes with signalling between brain and body, making it hard for the body to move.

At lower doses, users can feel effects akin to extreme drunkenness. At higher doses, people describe an experience known as “k-holing” - a hallucinogenic experience. This can leave the user extremely vulnerable to accidents and abuse. With the mind being dissociated from the body, the user may not be aware of risk or harm nor be able to act against it.

Users risk losing body control, including bladder and bowel, whilst intoxicated. Some users also feel nauseous when using and risk choking on vomit. The risks increase if ketamine is used with depressants such as alcohol, Valium and other benzodiazepines and heroin. Mixing with stimulant drugs such as cocaine can increase the risk of accidental damage to the body. As always, if someone is going to use ketamine, the safest advice is to not use anything alongside it.

Bladder damage can occur in long-term users. If a ketamine user experiences pain whilst urinating, they should consult their GP for advice and contact ru-ok?. K-holes can be a distressing experience, leading to long term mental health issues. There is also a risk of ketamine dependence, which means a compulsion to use regularly. For more information, check out: <https://www.drugsand.me/en/drugs/ketamine/> or contact ru-ok?.

Children’s Emergency Department and ru-ok? stats

In September 2019, 9 young people aged between 14 and 17 attended A&E, due to alcohol, MDMA/ecstasy and cannabis. Each of these young people was offered an appointment with ru-ok? for support and advice on how to stay safer in the future.

DRUG OF THE MONTH: MDMA/Ecstasy – the return of the raver

Perhaps the raver never left, but there seems to be a new generation of young teenagers talking about going to raves and getting high. The main drugs that we hear of people using at these events are MDMA/Ecstasy and ketamine. We can't cover everything here and will focus on harm reduction advice around MDMA. If you would like more information, please contact us.

ALERT
www.WeAreTheLoop.org

DUE CAUTION IS ADVISED WITH THE FOLLOWING PILLS TESTED BY THE LOOP AT UK FESTIVALS IN 2019

Think you've had a bit too much? Don't be afraid to ask for help.
Talk to your mates, take breaks and remember to keep having sips of water.
Aim for a half a pint of water an hour.

Just because a pill isn't on this list doesn't mean that you shouldn't take extra care - pills in general circulation contain more than one dose.

#StartLowGoSlow
#StartWithQuarterAndSipWater

Oral MDMA Dosages, provided by www.Erowid.org
Light 40 - 75 mg
Common (small or sensitive people) 60 - 99 mg
Common (most people) 75 - 125 mg
Common (large or less sensitive people) 110 - 150 mg

Pill Name	MDMA Content	Notes
Yellow & White TECHNOGYM	~330mg	
Orange & White SPRITE	~300mg	Alert released at Parklife 2019
Blue PUNISHER	~250-300mg	Multiple alerts
Purple AUDI	~260-310mg	
Pink & Purple SKYPE	~250-300mg	Alert released at Kendal Calling 2019
Brown DONKEY KONG	~210-260mg	Alert released at Kendal Calling 2019
Brown PHILLIPP PLEIN	~170-230mg	High Variability
Orange TRUMP	~260mg	High variability Alert summer 2018, tested again this season
Pink PUTIN	~280mg	
Purple MAYBACH	~220mg	Alert released at Kendal Calling 2019

The Lingo:

Mandy, MD, crystal (for MDMA), E's, pills, ping or any press name (such as orange Trump) for ecstasy.

The experience is often called 'getting on it', 'pilled up' or 'pinging'.

Harm Reduction:

- Encourage people to know the strength. Some pills, as in this infographic, are approx. 4x stronger than an active dose. Users can't assume that anything NOT in this image is safe. All pills are potentially dangerous.
- Advise to Go low and go slow. Small amounts over a long period of time.
- Advise to not trust a 'brand'. A pill of the same press type (e.g. Donkey Kong) can be an entirely different strength or even a different drug than that previously taken.
- If using crystal, advise to crush and dab – if it tastes or feels wrong, don't trust it. It's not worth the risk.
- Encourage them not to mix with other substances, including alcohol.
- Remind them to sip water throughout the experience, approx. 1 pint per hour, to prevent de- or over-hydration.

- Get them to tell someone, who is not using, what they are on so they can help keep them safe.
- If over-heating, the person using needs to tell someone and go somewhere cool and calm.
- If someone on E/MDMA is feeling confused, agitated, distressed, can't cool down – call an ambulance immediately and tell them what drugs are taken. It could save their life.
- Encourage them to prepare for the comedown. It can last 2-3 days and be delayed. It can be anything from feeling very tired to feeling suicidal. Make sure they have food in and can take time out for themselves.

The above advice is for those who are already choosing to use MDMA/Ecstasy. It is important that young people are informed that there is no safe way to use it and that there are more deaths in the last few years linked to this drug than ever before. The above advice is aimed at reducing harm to those who take that risk. We encourage all young people considering using it to do a lot of research and recommend The Loop as a good place to start. Any drug use under the age of 18 carries potential risks of damaging body and brain development as well as life potential.

If you have any concerns about a young person's drug or alcohol use, contact Brighton & Hove's U18s substance use service (ru-ok?) which provides confidential support, advice and guidance to young people, their families, carers, friends and professionals, alongside treatment programmes for young people identifying problems arising from substance use. A duty worker is available each weekday from 2 pm – 5 pm (4:30 on Fridays)

ru-ok? details: ru-ok? has a Facebook page which includes useful information around drugs and alcohol. Please LIKE our page '*Ru-ok? Brighton*'. Contact us at ru-ok? Tel: 01273 293966 or 07795 336436 or email Luci.Hammond@brighton-hove.gov.uk or RUOKDB@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

We would love your feedback!