**Drug advice**

**Novel stimulants sold as MDMA, cocaine or speed**

**Synthetic cathinones and PMMA are circulating in a range of forms in Victoria**

1. **A light orange ‘Kenzo’ pill** with a tiger on one side and the ‘KENZO’ logo on the other may be sold as MDMA (ecstasy) or methamphetamine (speed) but contains dipentylone and pentylone (cathinones).
2. **A black crystalline powder** that turns grey when crushed contains PMMA and MDMA.
3. **Blood results** from people reporting the use of MDMA, pills, speed and/or cocaine are more frequently showing synthetic cathinones including butylone, dibutylone, dipentylone, pentylone and methylone.

There have been a number of recent **emergency department presentations** linked to these substances in Victoria, particularly in the **Melbourne** and **Bendigo** areas.

**Cathinones and PMMA have an increased risk of negative effects**

Both **synthetic cathinones and PMMA** can produce similar effects to common stimulants such as methamphetamine, cocaine or MDMA but appear to have a higher risk of producing negative effects. People who have used synthetic cathinones report that they produce less euphoria and psychedelic effects compared with taking MDMA, and that these effects wear off more quickly. This can lead to people taking more (re-dosing), increasing the risk of toxicity.

At higher doses, **synthetic cathinones** can lead to long periods of sleeplessness and muscle twitching, increased risk of agitation, paranoia and hallucinations, and toxic effects such as overheating and heart problems.

**PMMA** has been responsible for several overdose deaths in Australia since the 1990s. Depending on the amount taken, it seems to have a **significant risk of very serious harm to health**. This includes hyperthermia (dangerously high body temperature), convulsions, sudden collapse, multiple organ failure, cardiac arrest and death. **Be very cautious if you have recently purchased a black or grey powder sold as MDMA in Victoria** – it may contain PMMA.

Some common **mental health medications** – such as **SSRIs**, **SNRIs** and **TCAs** – may increase the risk of toxicity from stimulants. Always seek information about your medications before mixing with other substances.

**Reduce the risk of harm**

If you experience adverse drug effects, or are present when someone has an unexpected reaction, **seek help immediately by calling Triple Zero (000)**.

All alcohol and other drug use comes with risks, so:

* **Be aware** that other false or contaminated drug products may circulate in Victoria, even if no specific warning has been issued about them.
* **Start low and go slow**, and make sure you’re in a **safe environment with people you trust**.
* **Remember**, even ‘pure’ drugs can produce serious side effects and death, and can interact dangerously with medications/pharmaceutical drugs. Get the facts at: [adf.org.au/drug-facts/](https://adf.org.au/drug-facts/).

Contact **Harm Reduction Victoria’s DanceWize team** for anonymous support and education from peers. Talk to DanceWize volunteers by email at info@dancewize.org.au.

If you or someone you know needs help with alcohol or drug use, call DirectLine on 1800 888 236 or visit [directline.org.au](https://www.directline.org.au/) for information and support to access treatment.