Meet “molly”: The real story behind MDMA and ecstasy

A press release from the Reading Coalition Against Substance Abuse

Due to recent media coverage about two drug overdoses and a drug-related death at the House of Blues in Boston, the Reading Coalition Against Substance Abuse has received inquiries about “molly.” In 2012, the Reading Police Department and RCASA began seeing and hearing evidence that a new formulation of ecstasy known as “molly” was being consumed in Reading. The Reading Police Department Detectives Division has been actively working on cases related to this substance to intervene and reduce the supply of this substance. RCASA has focused on education and prevention.

The term “molly,” which is short for “molecule,” refers to the more potent form of MDMA or Ecstasy. According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse, “Ecstasy” and "Molly" are slang terms for MDMA, short for 3, 4 methylenedioxymethamphetamine. Other slang terms that are used include “E,” “XTC,” “X,” “Adam,” “hug,” “beans,” “clarity,” “lover's speed” and “love drug.”

The National Institute of Drug Abuse describes how MDMA impacts the body below:

- For most people, a “hit” of MDMA lasts for 3 to 6 hours. Once the pill is swallowed, it takes only about 15 minutes for MDMA to enter the bloodstream and reach the brain. About 45 minutes later, the person experiences MDMA's “high.” That’s when the drug is at its peak.

- People who use MDMA might feel very alert, or “hyper,” at first. Some lose a sense of time and experience other changes in perception, such as an enhanced sense of touch. Others experience negative effects right away. They may become anxious and agitated. Sweating or chills may occur, and people may feel faint or dizzy.

- MDMA can also cause muscle tension, nausea, blurred vision, and increased heart rate and blood pressure. Forceful clenching of the teeth can occur, and individuals at clubs have been known to chew on pacifiers to relieve some of the tension.

- Even if a person takes only one pill, the side effects of MDMA — including feelings of sadness, anxiety, depression, and memory difficulties — can last for several days to a week (or longer in people who use MDMA regularly).

- MDMA was involved in 10,176 emergency department visits in the U.S. in 2011.
In Reading, 5 percent of high school-age youth reported MDMA use in 2011. Of the teens that reported MDMA use, 26 students reported using the drug at least 1-2 times; 8 students, 3-9 times; and 3 students more than 10 times. The local rate of use is lower than both the state rate (6 percent) and the national rate (8 percent). The most frequently misused substances by local teens are alcohol, marijuana and tobacco.