

THE HIGH-WAY CODE

THE GUIDE TO SAFER, MORE ENJOYABLE DRUG USE

(MDMA)



GLOBAL DRUG SURVEY

INTRODUCING THE GDS HIGH-WAY CODE

GDS knows pleasure drives drug use, not the avoidance of harm. As far as we know no guide has ever outlined the impact of harm reduction strategies on the pleasure users obtain from drugs... until now...



GLOBAL DRUG SURVEY

Ours is a simple premise: as with driving, there are things you need to know and 'rules' you should observe in order to get you to your destination safely. Being aware of these makes you much more likely to get to your planned destination in one piece and much less likely to cause harm to anyone around you.

Please share these findings, they really are important.



THE HIGH—WAY CODE



WHAT IS IT?

The first guide to safer drug use voted for by people who take drugs.

HOW WAS IT WAS DEVELOPED?

GDS asked loads of people who take drugs, as well as other experts, what strategies they thought would reduce the risk of harm when taking some commonly used drugs. As part of GDS2014, we asked people from around the world who had used those drugs in the last year to vote on these strategies. For each strategy we asked:

1. if they usually (i.e. more than 50% of the time) did it
2. to rate how important it is in reducing the risk of harm (10 being the max reduction of risk)
3. to tell us whether using that strategy increased, decreased or had no effect on the pleasure they got from the drug.

WHO DEVELOPED IT?

The guys and gals at Global Drug Survey—a nice bunch of smart people who know a bit about drugs and, with people's help everywhere, will continue to learn more and share what they find out.

ANYTHING ELSE?

Yep follow us on twitter @globaldrusurv
@drugsmeter, like us on Facebook and check out our free apps the drinks meter (www.drinksmeter.com and the app stores) and the drugs meter (www.drugsmeter.com and google play store)

For more interesting info on drugs check out our drugs meter minutes videos on the Global Drug Survey YouTube channel. For suggestions on how to improve GDS, email: adam@globaldrugsurvey.com

HOW TO READ THE HIGH-WAY CODE

This number indicates the percentage of people who told GDS they usually follow the strategy.

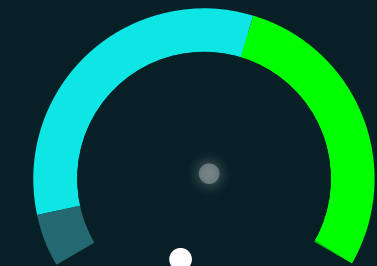
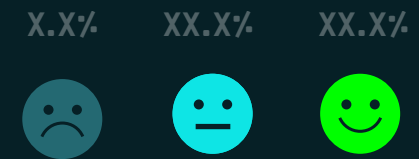


Users who usually do

This dial tells you how important users thought this strategy was in reducing the risk of harm.



Reducing risk from 0-10



Pleasure impact rated by users

Here you can check how many users thought this strategy increased, decreased or didn't affect their pleasure.



KNOW YOUR DRUG EFFECT, THE DOSE, TIME TO ONSET, TIME TO PEAK AND HOW LONG IT LASTS



All drug effects are dose related. Usually the more drugs you take the stronger and longer lasting the effects (and the greater the risk of harm). Because drug purity and potency varies so much you need to treat every new batch as a new drug. This means 'test dosing' each new batch. Knowing how strong your drug is can help you titrate (adjust/measure) how much you take so hopefully you get the effect you want and avoid overdosing. By knowing how long it takes for a drug to come on and how long it lasts, you reduce your risk of taking too much. People also vary widely in how they respond to drugs and how much they need to take. Everyone has to find their own 'right dose'. Not all drugs suit all people so if you get anxious or paranoid on a drug don't use it. Remember being greedy is not good for you. Less is more. Don't ever be worried about calling for an ambulance if you're worried about the state of a mate.

GDS does not condone or promote the use of illegal drugs. GDS does promote the use of common sense when going about one's daily activities. Drugs and alcohol can be very dangerous. They can kill you. Using drugs when you are young can have a lasting negative impact on your cognitive and emotional well-being. The only way to avoid to these harms is not to take drugs. This document represents the views of those who responded to the GDS. Please note: no amount of planning and care can ensure you will have either a safe or enjoyable experience when you take drugs. GDS is simply reporting the results of the survey which may provide some guidance in reducing the risk of harm only. The best way to avoid drug related harm is to not use drugs.

MDMA

OVER 18,000 USERS

MDMA comes as pills/tablets or crystal (powder). According to GDS2012 most people seem to prefer crystal MDMA to tablets because it is easier to titrate the dose. The variations and uncertainty about what's in your tablet or powder remain, however, regardless of preparation. Crystal MDMA can visually be almost identical to methylone or crystal methamphetamine.

See our drugs meter minute of MDMA pills and powders at:
<http://youtu.be/GzQzdE4qE4w>

Usual dose	80-100	mg	
Time to onset	30-60	min	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
Time to peak	2-3	hrs	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Duration of action	6-8	hrs	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>



MDMA

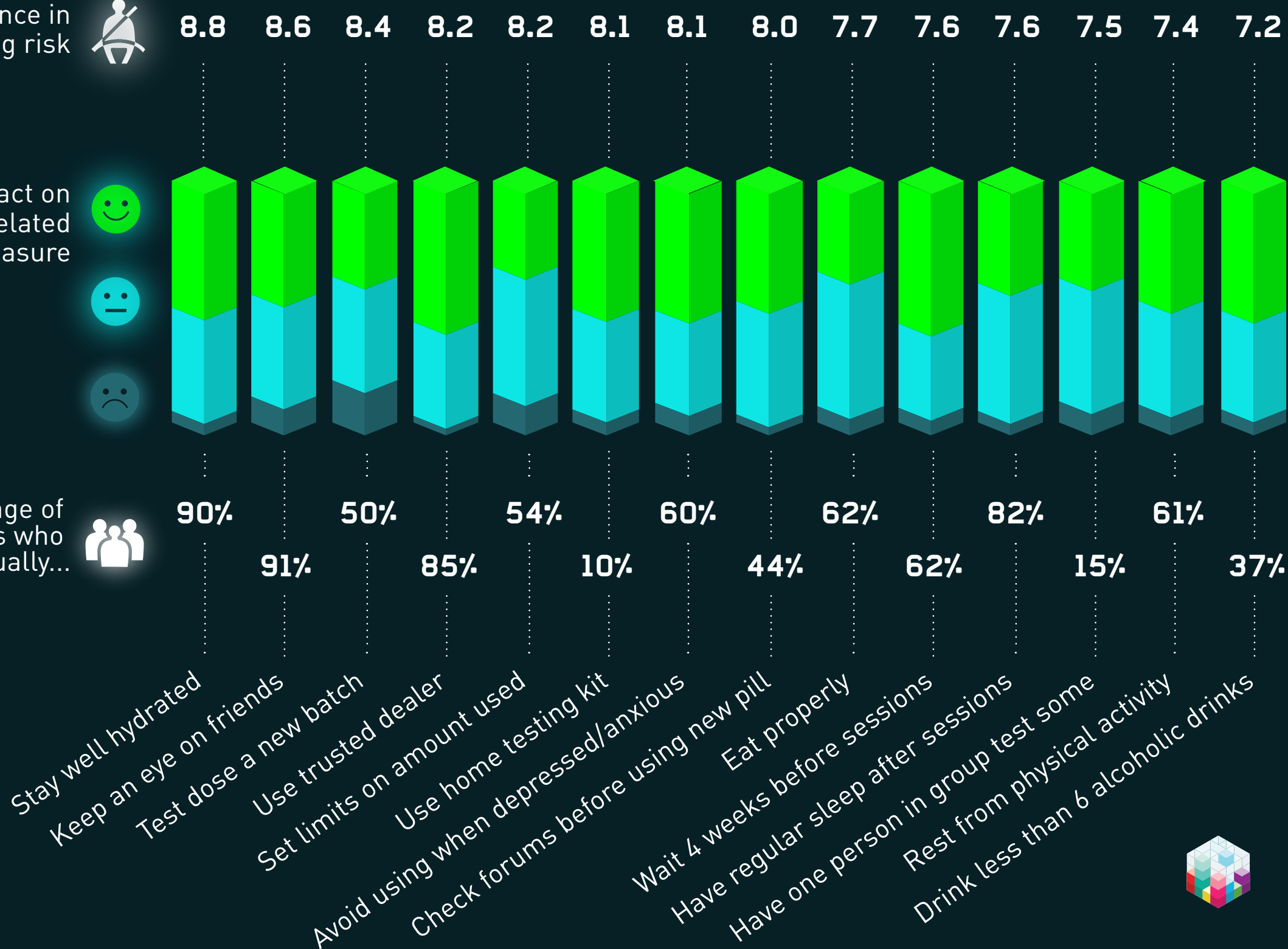
Importance in
reducing risk



Impact on
MDMA-related
pleasure

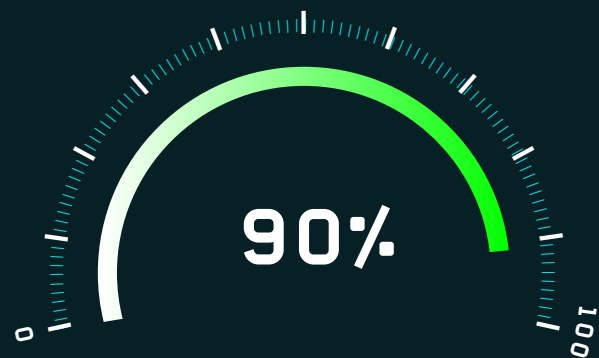


Percentage of
users who
usually...



1

STAY WELL HYDRATED

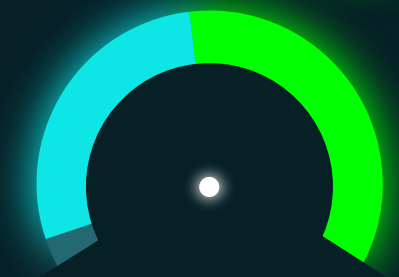
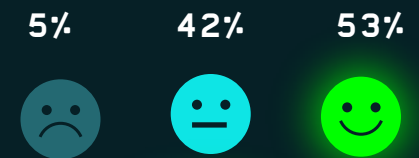


Users who usually do



8.8

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
MDMA-related
pleasure



1

STAY WELL HYDRATED BY DRINKING NON-ALCOHOLIC DRINKS

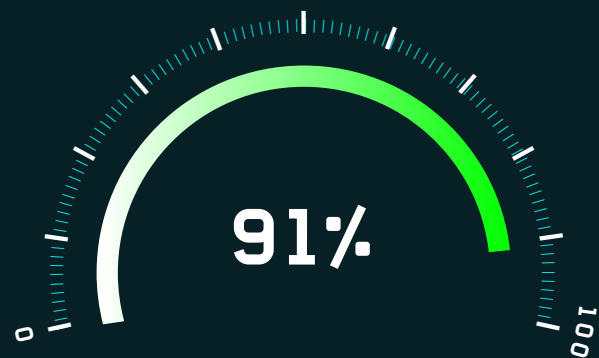
Make sure that you stay well hydrated by drinking lots of water and other non-alcoholic drinks through the course of an MDMA session

Stay well watered. If you dehydrate, your body loses the ability to sweat. If you can't sweat, then you lose one of the major ways to reduce your body's temperature. Together with taking a break from physical exertion and cooling off, drinking non-alcoholic/non energy drinks is one of the most important ways of reducing the predictable and avoidable serious risk of dehydrating and collapsing. Alcohol is a bad rehydration fluid because it is a diuretic (i.e. makes you pee), so it actually makes you lose water. Drink lots of non-alcoholic fluids and stay cool. Listen to your body and drink when you feel thirsty (about 0.5litre/hr).



2

KEEP AN EYE ON FRIENDS

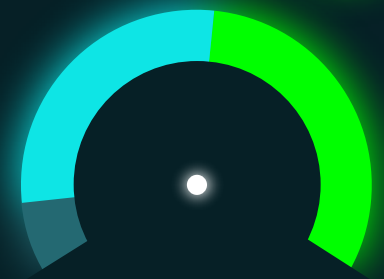
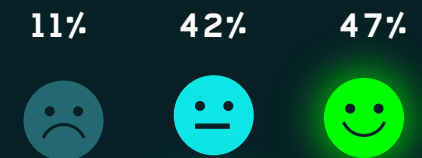


Users who usually do



8.7

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
MDMA-related
pleasure



2

KEEP AN EYE ON FRIENDS

Keep an eye on friends who have also taken MDMA through the course of a session

Common sense and being a mate don't need an explanation. Mates will spot something going wrong almost before anyone else does—so if you are worried, do as most of you do and look out for your mates. Cheap, simple and so very important. If they get unwell—get help.



3

TEST DOSE A NEW BATCH

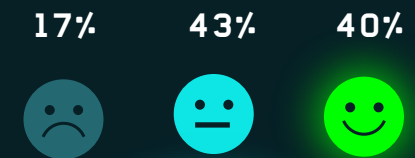


Users who usually do



8.4

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
MDMA-related
pleasure



3

TEST DOSE A NEW BATCH

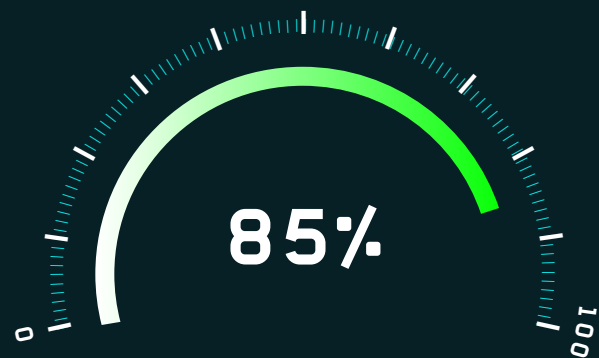
Test dose a new batch by taking a small amount first (half a pill or less/quarter of your usual dose of MDMA powder) and waiting for at least 90 minutes before re-dosing

How to deal with no quality control. You don't know what's in your pill or powder, and even if it is MDMA (as it often is these days) you don't know the amount or purity. So test dosing (using a fraction of your usual dose or $\frac{1}{4}$ pill) and waiting for at least 90 minutes (even longer to avoid the risks of drugs like PMA and really strong MDMA pills) before re-dosing, can protect you against taking too much of something nasty and/or give you some sort of clue to potency/dose in your pill/powder. Knowing how strong your drug is can help you titrate (adjust/measure) your dose so hopefully you get the effect you want. Some people think taking $\frac{1}{2}$ doses leads to a nicer, longer-lasting effect.



4

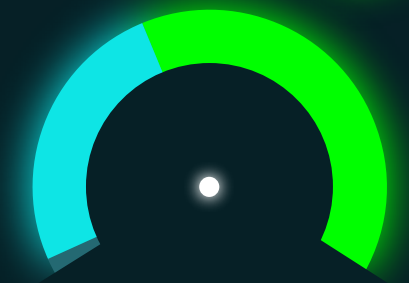
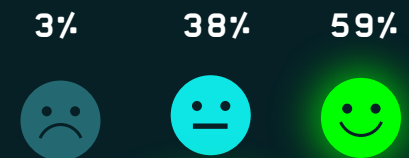
USE A TRUSTED DEALER



Users who usually do



Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
MDMA-related
pleasure



4

USE A TRUSTED DEALER

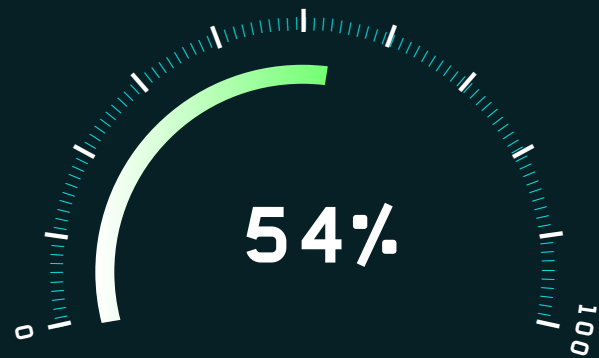
Buy your MDMA pills
/powder from a trusted
friend or dealer

It's no guarantee but a bit of common sense—someone you know is probably less likely to rip you off and may be more interested in your welfare than a random dude you meet in club. It is no guarantee but people seem to think it is very important and we guess they have based that on some extensive experience.



5

SET LIMITS ON AMOUNT USED



Users who usually do



8.2

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
MDMA-related
pleasure



5

SET LIMITS ON AMOUNT USED

Set a limit for how much you will use on a day that you use MDMA

Common sense. Not using too much too often will avoid the development of tolerance and will give your brain a chance to recover between sessions so that you can enjoy your drugs to the full when you use them. Higher doses tend to cause more unwanted effects and the comedown is worse. It also costs more. Less is more as they say.



6

USE HOME TESTING KIT

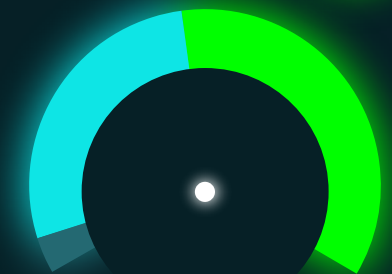
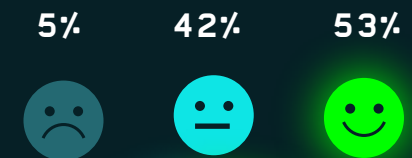


Users who usually do



8.1

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
MDMA-related
pleasure



6

USE HOME TESTING KIT

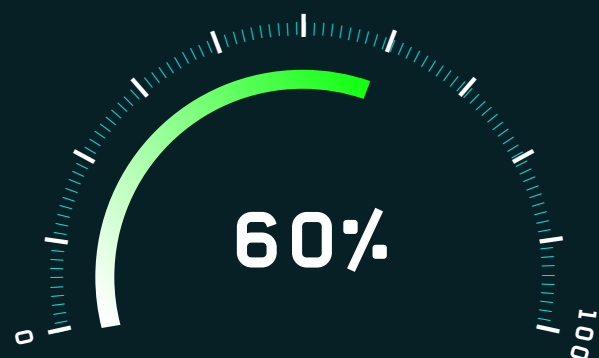
Use a home testing kit to try
and find out a bit more about
your MDMA pill/powder

Not much evidence out there. They don't seem that popular. See our drug meter minute videos on testing kits and their limitations: <http://youtu.be/rFuN2zYFeyg>
<http://youtu.be/0MbNJYoHDz8>



7

AVOID USING WHEN DEPRESSED/ANXIOUS

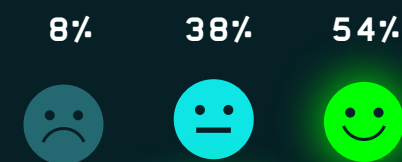


Users who usually do



8.1

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
MDMA-related
pleasure



7

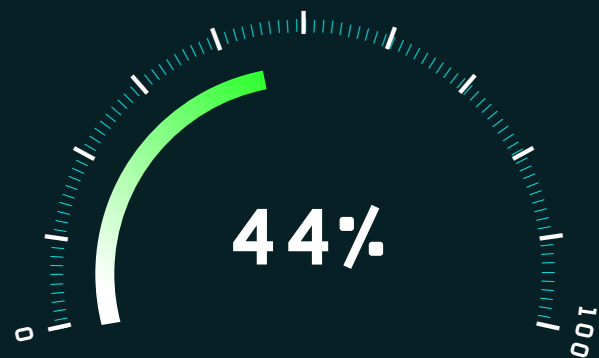
AVOID USING WHEN DEPRESSED/ANXIOUS

Avoid using MDMA when you are feeling depressed/anxious /paranoid or physically worn out

Set and setting—old school drug law. Some people find that if they are already feeling down, using ecstasy or cocaine can make them more depressed. According to one theory of depression (the monoamine hypothesis) low mood is due to low levels of certain chemical transmitters like serotonin and dopamine. These chemicals let brain cells talk to each other. A happy brain is one where there is good communication between cells. After taking a drug (like MDMA or cocaine) which empties your brain cells of what little transmitter they had left, people often find themselves even more depressed. And if you are on antidepressants, best avoid any stimulant drugs at all. Not only will the stimulant drugs work against the effects of the medication, but your comedowns will be far worse.



8 | CHECK USER FORUMS BEFORE USING NEW PILL

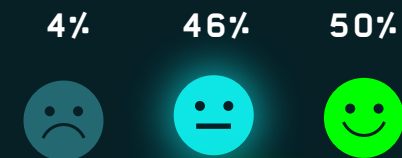


Users who usually do



8

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
MDMA-related
pleasure



8

CHECK USER FORUMS BEFORE USING NEW PILL

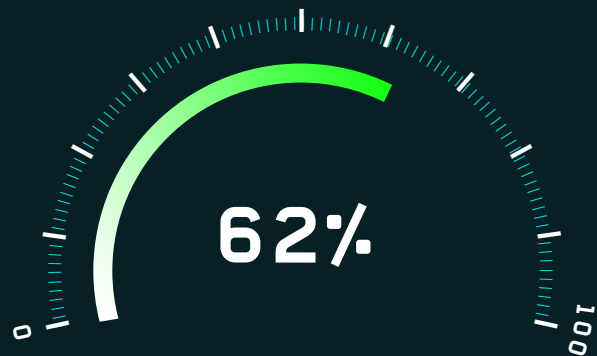
Check user forums / pill test sites before taking a new pill

Forums vary. Reviews and reviewers vary. The content of pills (even if they look the same) varies widely even over brief periods of time. In some cases, pill reports can alert users to dodgy pills. But GDS is unsure of just how much they can reduce the risk. We guess that as long as you implement everything else to keep yourself safe, then checking reports online could be a useful bolt-on.



9

EAT PROPERLY



Users who usually do

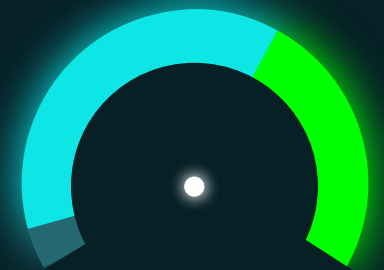


7.7

Importance in reducing risk



6% 56% 38%



Impact on
MDMA-related
pleasure



9

EAT PROPERLY

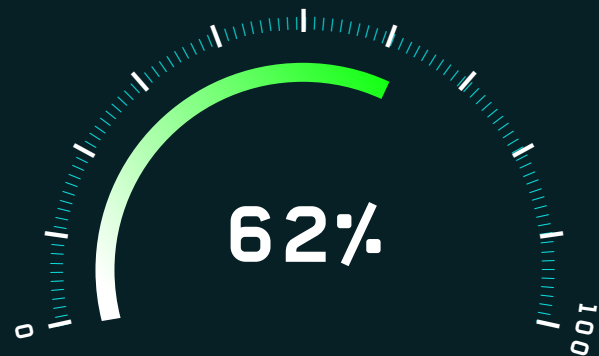
Make sure that you eat properly after a period of MDMA use, even if you don't feel hungry

Your brain on/after drugs needs food. Food refills your body with the building blocks it needs to make the chemical transmitters which your MDMA session has just emptied. Bananas, chocolate, kiwi fruit, nuts, honey, marmite, turkey, multivitamins, milk or juice are all good recovery foods.

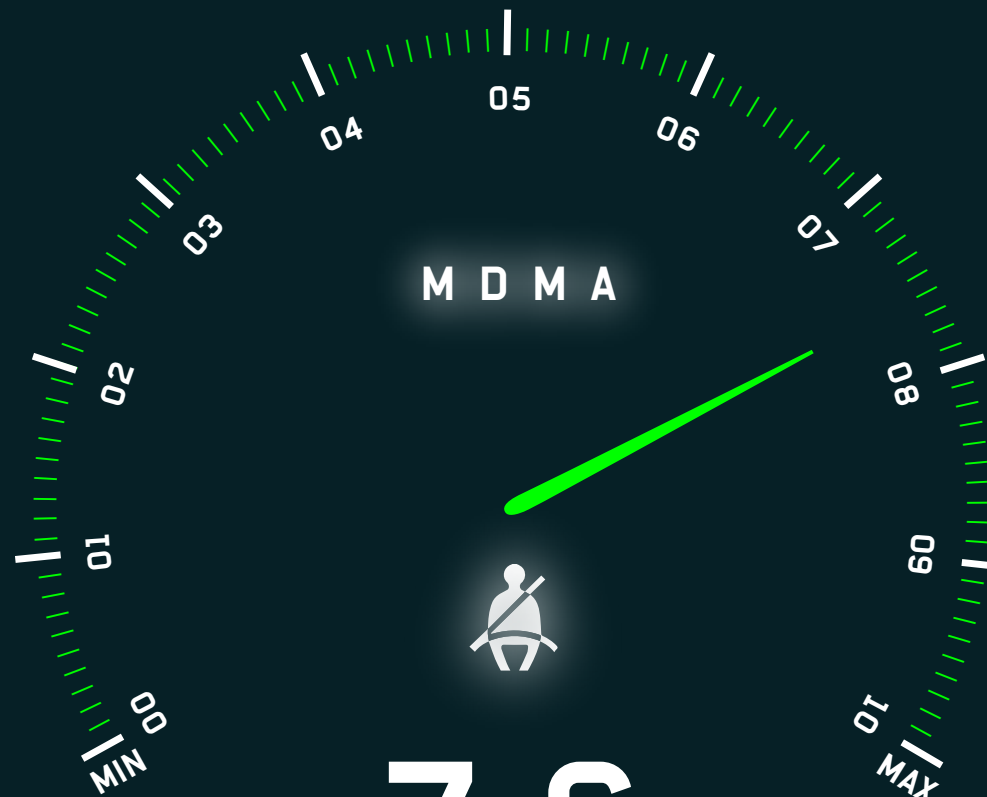


10

WAIT 4 WEEKS BETWEEN SESSIONS

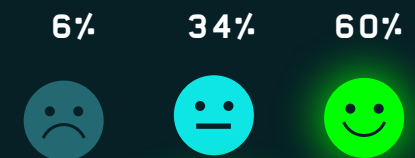


Users who usually do



7.6

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
MDMA-related
pleasure



10

WAIT 4 WEEKS BETWEEN SESSIONS

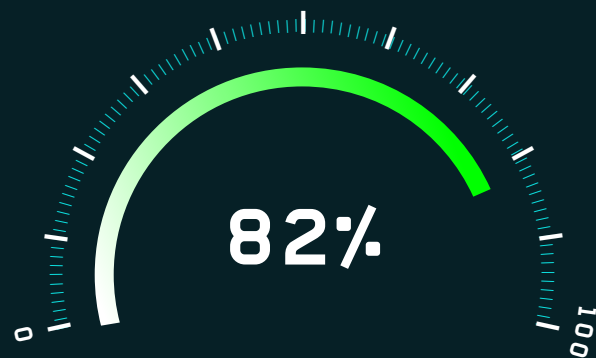
Leave a gap of at least 4 weeks
between MDMA sessions

Don't drive on empty. MDMA causes a massive release of chemical transmitters in your brain (that's why you get a buzz). After a session, your brain can be pretty much emptied of them (the comedown). MDMA also slows down the refilling of brain cells with these chemicals (by blocking an enzyme that converts tryptophan into serotonin). It takes at least a week or two to get back to normal. Not using too often means that you also avoid developing tolerance to the desirable effects of MDMA. Many people think that a four week break is a good minimum distance between use periods. Lots of clubbers seem to agree as well.

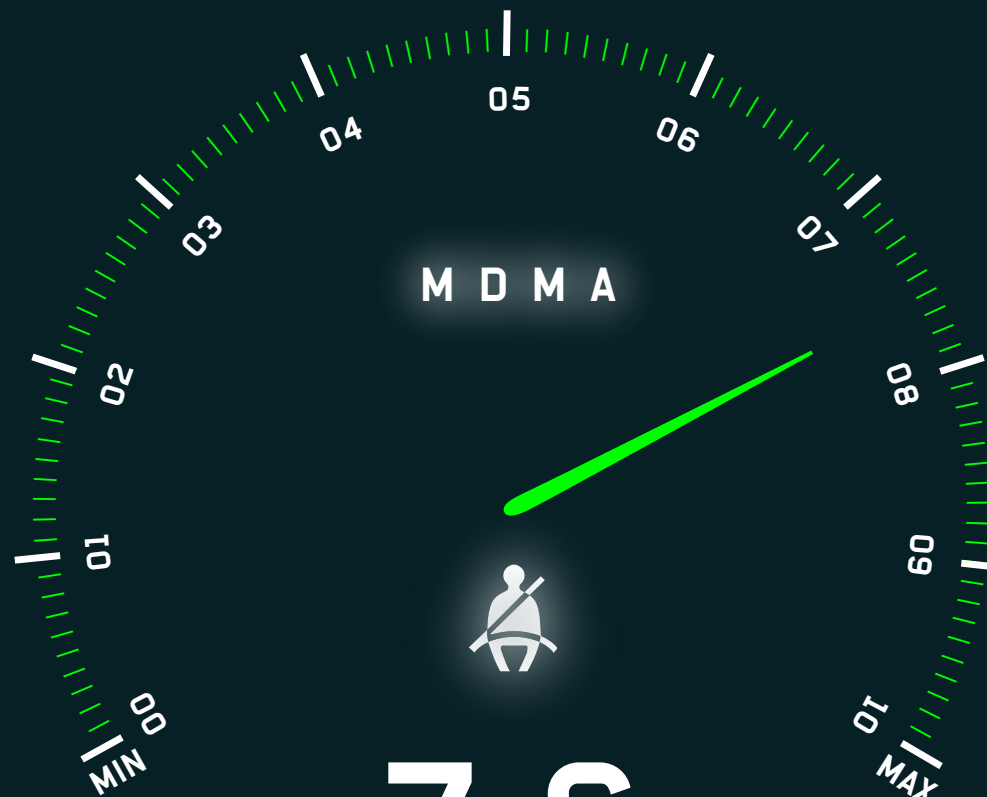


11

HAVE REGULAR SLEEP AFTER SESSIONS

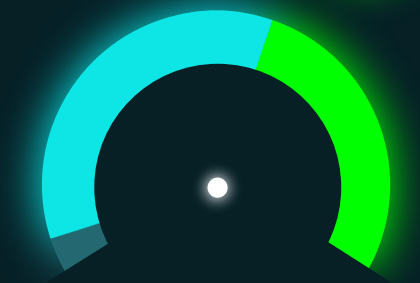
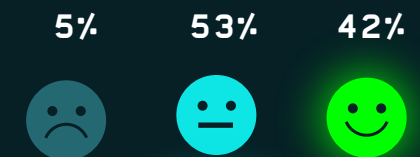


Users who usually do



7.6

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
MDMA-related
pleasure



11

HAVE REGULAR SLEEP AFTER SESSIONS

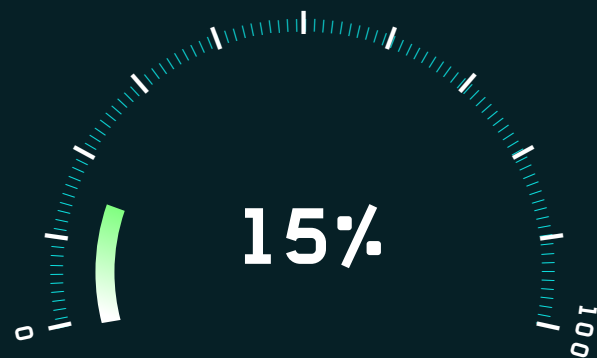
Make sure that you get regular sleep after a period of MDMA use

Sleep rests your brain. Sleep is good. Sleep lets your brain catch up and process all the stuff that has been going on. Sleep gives your brain and body time to recover. Several days of not sleeping worsens your concentration and comedown, increases the risk of accidents and delays your recovery to feeling back to 'a normal you' again. Try to avoid sleeper drugs like benzodiazepines or Z drugs because they don't give you normal sleep. Avoid any caffeine drinks after 2pm and have a pee before bed.

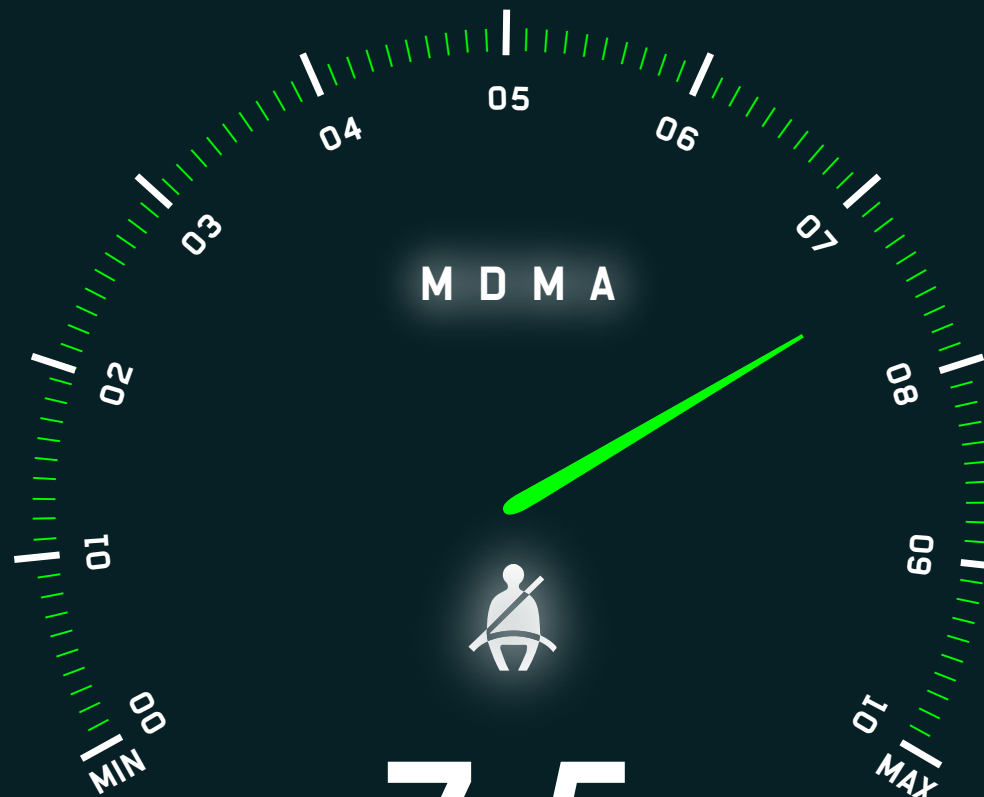


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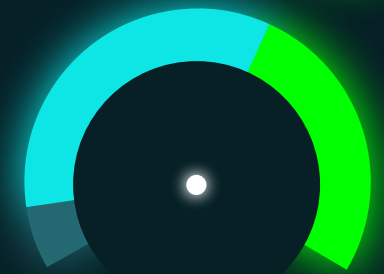
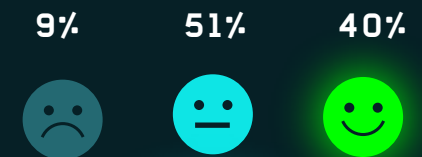
HAVE ONE PERSON IN GROUP TEST SMALL AMOUNT



Users who usually do



Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
MDMA-related
pleasure



12

HAVE ONE PERSON IN GROUP TEST SMALL AMOUNT

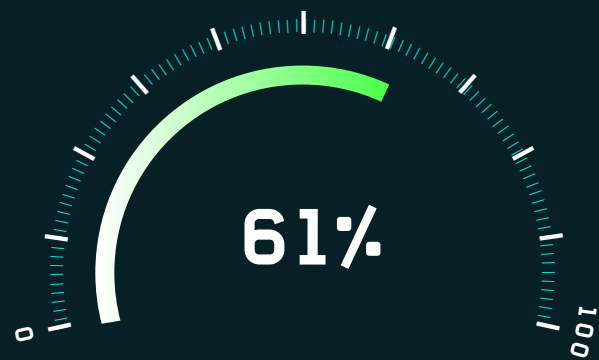
Get one person in your group to test a new batch by taking a very small amount first and waiting for at least a couple of hours (even longer ideally since PMA can take 3 hours to kick in) before taking another dose

Who's the guinea pig today? Although people vary in their response to pills (even dodgy dangerous ones), having, at least, a 'tester' who takes a tiny dose while being watched over by his/her mates somewhere safe before everyone else takes it seems like a good idea (you just have to decide who is going first). If it looks like an E, but doesn't make you come up like an E and it doesn't feel like an E—then it is probably not an E. So bin it!

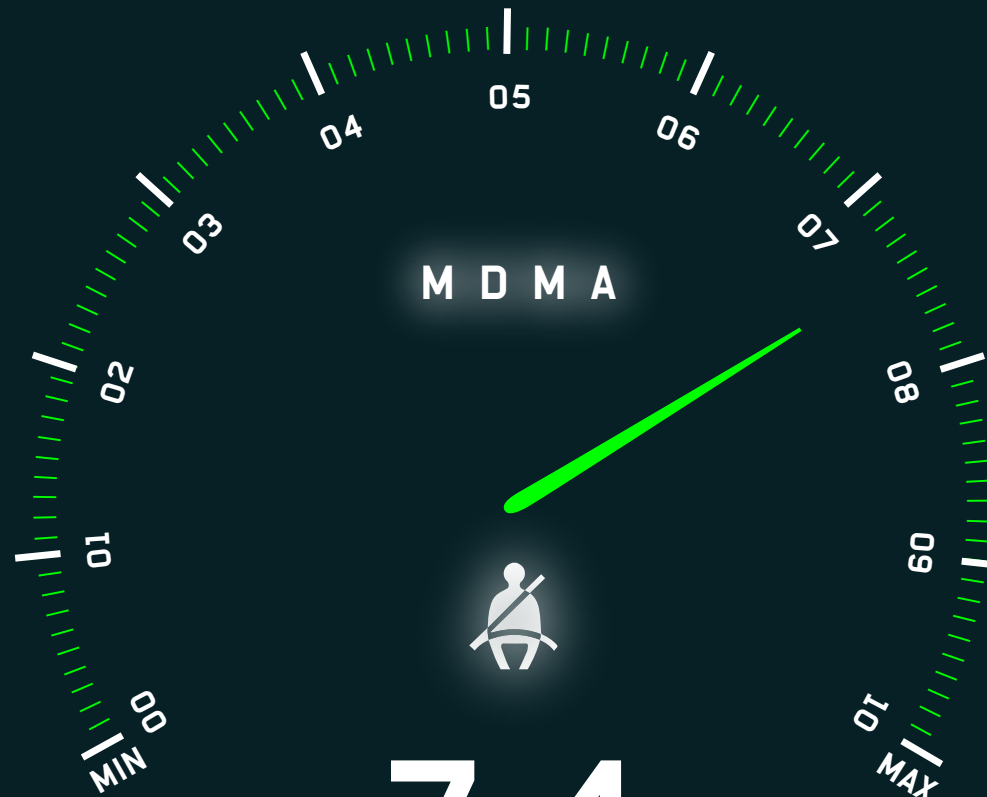


13

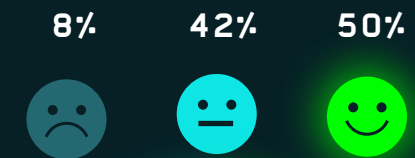
REST FROM PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



Users who usually do



Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
MDMA-related
pleasure



13

REST FROM PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

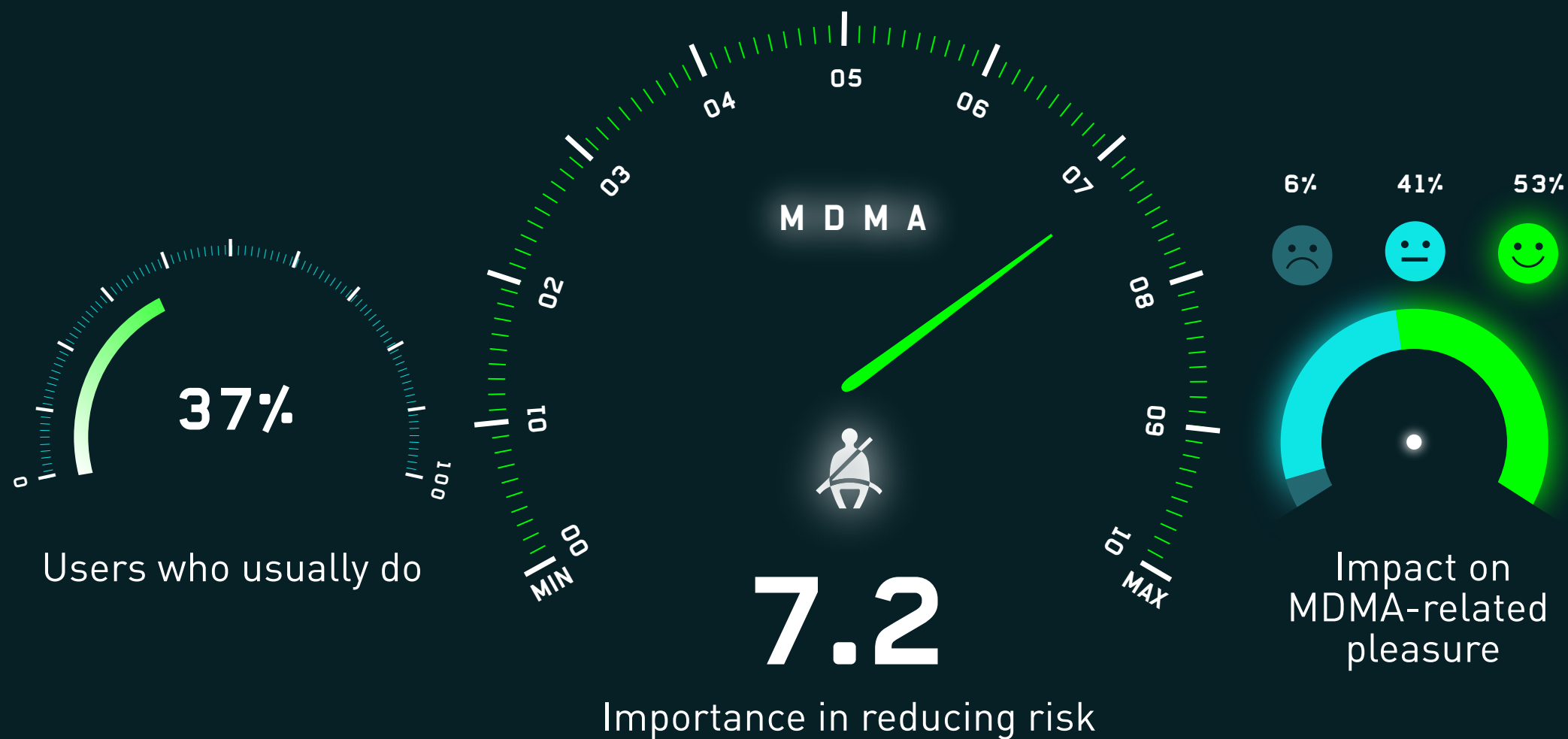
Make sure that you take regular rest/breaks from physical activity when you are out clubbing and using MDMA

Be cool. One of the biggest but most avoidable risks associated with E is overheating and dehydration. Part of the risk is due to MDMA messing with your body's thermostat and another part of it is that physical exertion (like dancing) can increase your temperature. Night clubs can be hot places and dance floors often have the worst ventilation. Taking a break from dancing and getting off the dance floor for 10 minutes every hour or two can help you avoid overheating.



14

DRINK LESS THAN 6 ALCOHOLIC DRINKS



14

DRINK LESS THAN 6 ALCOHOLIC DRINKS

Drink less than 6 standard alcoholic drinks (equivalent to about half a bottle of wine or 3 x 330 mls bottles of 5% beers or 6 single measures of spirits) when you use MDMA

Alcohol dehydrates you, impairs your body's ability to regulate body temperature and tends to work against the stimulant effects of E. Stimulant drugs tend to offset some of the desirable effects of alcohol, so you're kind of wasting your money if you drink loads. If you are really thirsty—try a non-alcoholic drink first—and then see if you still need that beer! Lots of people seem to do E without any alcohol—they still seem to enjoy themselves (a lot).

