**In the News**

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**Tests reveal 8 Canadian drug deaths from ecstasy laced with PMMA**

By [Marcus Hondro](http://www.digitaljournal.com/user/654780)

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The drug-related deaths of 8 young Canadians, 3 in the Vancouver area, 5 in Calgary, in the past two months are now being blamed on ecstasy laced with a drug called Paramethoxy-methamphetamine, or PMMA.

Toxicology tests revealed PMMA, a drug police say is 5 times stronger than ecstasy, was present in all of those who died. Calgary [police](http://calgary.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20120112/CGY_pmma_deaths_120112/20120112/?hub=CalgaryHome) say the ecstasy on the streets in that city is more often from dealers in the Lower Mainland area so all the victims may have died from the same 'batch' of the drug. They also say the scenario of young people ingesting a drug they did not intend to ingest, is something they frequently warn about.

"This is a prime example of the gamble people take when they use illegal drugs," Staff Sgt. Mike Bossley from the Calgary drug unit said. "You never know what is in your drug: yesterday it was MDMA, today it's PMMA, and tomorrow it could be something else. There is no safe street drug, and no safe dose of a street drug."

**PMMA laced ecstasy more potent**

The strength of PMMA is not the only thing to work against the victims. While one, a 17-year-old from Abbotsford, B.C., took a low amount of the drug for weight control, the others likely took it to get high and PMMA takes longer to act so users often take more pills in an effort to began their high sooner. The more in the system, the greater the danger.

In B.C. [all three](http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/01/12/b-c-drug-deaths-linked-to-ecstasy-tainted-by-methamphetamine-health-officials/) who died after taking what they thought was ecstasy were young women, the youngest 17. In Calgary of the [five](http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/01/11/calgary-health-authorities-warn-deadly-ecstasy-batch-tainted-by-other-drugs/) who died, at least four were male; the youngest being 16.

**RCMP says "no quality control" with ecstasy**

RCMP Corpl. Rich De Jong of Vancouver recently told *Digital Journal* there is no quality control of ecstasy, or other street drugs and no way to know who manufactured them and what may be in them. He said it is common for ecstasy to be laced with drugs like cocaine, ketamine and LSD or even a substance like PMMA.

Ecstasy appeals to young people because it is cheap and easily obtainable, De Jong said, and often marketed with 'hip' words on the front like 'sex' or with happy faces. He cautions that ecstasy without PMMA can also kill and says no street drug is safe. In B.C. there are upwards of 20 plus ecstasy-related deaths each year.