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ECSTASY RESURGENCE LINKED WITH METH!

A new combination of two very harmful drugs is making its way into the illegal drug market of the United States. Ecstasy laced with methamphetamine (meth) has been found entering the country via its northern boarder with Canada. The warning to health and safety leaders comes via the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP).

Meth-laced Ecstasy — now being called “Extreme Ecstasy” is already being produced in mass quantity in Canada. The Canadian Royal Mounted Police estimates a production capability of some 2 million tablets per week. Much of this is aimed to be smuggled into the United States.

This dangerous “poly*-drug” combination of methamphetamine and Ecstasy can have major health consequences, according to the ONDCP. Both drugs by themselves can have severe toxic effects on the brain. They both can interfere with the body’s ability to regulate temperature. This can lead to elevated body temperatures, which can result in liver, kidney and cardiovascular system failure and death. Recent laboratory research suggests that Ecstasy and meth combinations may produce greater adverse neurochemical and behavioral reactions than do either drug when taken alone. The potential for life-threatening or fatal overdose is also increased when meth-laced Ecstasy is combined with alcohol.

The current warnings about the proliferation of this new drug combination are well founded based on the fact that 55 percent of Ecstasy samples seized in the United States in 2007 contained meth. According to the ONDCP, illegal drug makers are able to boost their Ecstasy product by cutting it with less expensive methamphetamine. This both raises their profit and increases the likelihood of resale because of the new product’s more addictive potential. Effectively, this is giving a dangerous “face lift” to a designer drug that had fallen out of fashion with young American drug users.

Ecstasy use in the United States had been on the decline since reaching its peak with the “Rave” culture in the early 2000s. Since the year 2001, Ecstasy use had dropped off by some 54 percent. However, that trend now seems to be reversing. The number of people in the US who reported that they tried Ecstasy for the first time rose 40% between 2005 and 2006, from 615,000 to 860,000. One-third of these new users in 2006 were under the age of 18.

“We cannot allow our young people to once again be victimized by the ‘Rave’ culture, ‘designer’ drugs, or the myth that drug use is safe,” said John Walters, the Nation’s Drug Czar. “We cannot afford to be complacent with the progress made against Ecstasy since 2001. Just as we must teach new generations of children to read, we must continue to educate new generations of young people on the harms of drug use.”