

## DRUG ALERT Issued 27.01.15 by Public Health England

Following an alert received from Spain on 26<sup>th</sup> January, PHE is issuing this alert as a warning about the possible continued availability of pills sold as ecstasy but containing large quantities of PMMA (paramethoxymethamphetamine), a more potent chemical linked to a number of recent deaths and hospitalisations in this country.

**Superman-branded red pills** have been found to contain large quantities of PMMA (paramethoxymethamphetamine) and have been linked to four deaths in Ipswich, Rendlesham and Telford over the Christmas and New Year period and incidents in the Netherlands and Sweden.

There are also reports that red Superman-branded pills that contain only MDMA are in circulation but, without testing, users have no way to know what they are getting.

PMMA is a class A drug and has similar effects to MDMA (the chemical normally found in ecstasy) and therefore pills containing PMMA are often sold as ecstasy. PMMA takes longer to take effect but can kill at lower doses than MDMA. It can cause a rapid and fatal rise in body temperature, severely raised heart rate and blood pressure.

For people taking, or thinking of taking tablets, PHE has the following advice:

- Taking any tablet when you don't know what's in it is a big risk
- If you must take something, then here are things that can be done to help reduce risk
  - Take a small amount and wait for it to take effect (at least an hour)
  - Don't top-up thinking there is no effect – it may just take a while to come on
  - Stay with friends for at least an hour after taking something
  - Take regular breaks from the dance floor to cool down
  - Sip no more than a pint of water or non-alcoholic drink every hour
  - If symptoms of possible toxicity begin to develop (such as severe overheating, nausea, hallucinations), seek medical help immediately
- Anyone with a heart condition, blood pressure problems, epilepsy or asthma can have a dangerous reaction to stimulant drugs, so is best advised to avoid them.



 0808 802 5000

Free and confidential 24/7 telephone helpline