

MEPHEDRONE (MMCAT)

History	<p>Methedrine is the brand name for the stimulant methamphetamine. The chemical 2-methylamino-1-p-tolypropan-1-one, which is also referred to as 4- methylmethcathinone. The drug has been named mephedrone in a lot of discussion boards and by a lot of retailers. The chemical name is often shortened to MMCAT or 4-mmc. Some retailers and the media have been calling it Miaow or Meow. In this briefing it will just be referred to as MMCAT</p> <p>MMCAT first appeared in 2007 in an Israeli manufactured pill called Neodoves. By 2008 Israel had made this illegal. In 2009 MMCAT appeared in the UK on the Festival scene as a 'legal high' and availability and use has increased ever since. Widespread concern following several deaths associated with the drug led to its being added to the list of Controlled Drugs in 2010.</p> <p>A few sources suggest that MMCAT is processed from the African plant khat. Khat does contain the chemical cathinone and this could be used as a starting point for MMCAT production. However it is more likely that MMCAT is produced synthetically using ephedrine or pseudo-ephedrine as a starting point. While synthesis may be taking place in the UK it is more likely that the bulk of production is taking place in China.</p> <p>Discussion groups in the UK started to pick up on it during 2008 and it became a bigger and bigger subject of discussion. The 2009 festival season was the first year in the UK where MMCAT was both widely available and widely publicised. Availability and use has increased ever since. With increased media reporting interest in MMCAT continued to increase culminating in it being added to the list of CDs on 16th April 2010.</p>
Street name	Mkat, Miaow-miaow, 'bubbles.'
Type	Stimulant
Drug Effect	<p>A stimulant like cocaine with some of the loved up feeling of ecstasy. Increased energy, restlessness, increased heart rate and jaw clenching. Increased libido and reduced erectile function have been reported. Everyone's subjective opinions are different but the overall impression is that MMCAT is like a cocaine version of MDMA (ecstasy). User reports indicate some of the same 'loved-up' feeling of MDMA - but not to the same extent - with the euphoria, reward and ego of cocaine - but again not to the same extent. Alongside all this, some significant stimulant effects including increased energy, restlessness, increased heart-rate and jaw-clenching. Some people feel increased libido while using but others report reduced erectile</p>

	function.
Dependency	<p>This really depends on how you define 'addictive.' MMCAT certainly doesn't exhibit the same pattern of tolerance and withdrawal that (for example) opiates would cause. However a large number of experienced users describe it as being very easy to binge on. The initial euphoric high is relatively short-lived and a significant number of users report re-dosing after fifteen-twenty minutes. At these sorts of levels it would be easy for a user to get through a gram an hour and people who have bought larger quantities have found themselves in big binges using for long periods of time.</p> <p>So there is a growing anecdotal evidence base that MMCAT can be quite hard to manage, leading to people going through large quantities in short periods of time. So there should be a clear message to potential users: MMCAT can be very moreish and users should have a management strategy to avoid excessive, expensive and damaging binges.</p>
Description	<p>MMCAT is supplied a crystalline powder. Early UK supplies tended to be a drier white, fluffy powder but a lot of present supplies are more crystalline. Colour is very variable from white through off-white to yellow or brown. Crystals may have a damp consistency making the drug harder to divide in to lines. Some MMCAT has a noticeable and unpleasant aroma - a mixture of crab/shrimp smell with a sweeter, coconut scent. A cross perhaps between a glass of Malibu and a pot of anchovy paste.</p> <p>There is argument as to whether this aroma is from a chemical used in manufacture, the smell of MMCAT degrading, or some contaminant. The only consensus seems to be that it is not pleasant and some people find it makes snorting MMCAT very difficult.</p>
Street use	<p>It can be snorted or swallowed. Snorting hurts the nose and may taste unpleasant. Swallowing seems to hurt the stomach and again there may be an unpleasant taste. It would typically be put in a capsule or wrapped in cigarette paper. It lasts longer than snorting but needs to be taken on an empty or near empty stomach as eating first seems to reduce the effects substantially. It will take longer to come on when swallowed. A survey by Bluelight found slightly more people swallowing than snorting. A typical dose range would be between 75 and 200mg. Experienced users in some drug forums suggest that keeping doses below 250mg is probably sensible to reduce unwanted side-effects.</p> <p>How quickly does it work and how long does it last? Snorting comes on quickly and effects are usually felt within 15 minutes and peak within half an hour. Effects fade after around an hour. When swallowed it can last for two</p>

	or three hours.
Withdrawal	
Long term use	<p>At this stage it is impossible to state with any great confidence the nature and level of risk with MMCAT. It's a new drug, it hasn't had the same long period of experimentation that most other drugs have so there may be risks that only become apparent over the next months and years. Everyone using MMCAT at the moment could be said to be taking part in a big, uncontrolled experiment. The problem with the experiment is that users can't be sure what they are taking, everyone is using different quantities, some people are mixing it with other drugs and patterns of use are very variable. However some risks are becoming apparent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heart/circulatory problems: MMCAT appears to cause significant vasoconstriction - where blood vessels in the body get narrower. This pushes up blood pressure and can reduce blood flow to parts of the body. • Some users have reported coldness and numbness at extremities (hands/feet) suggesting reduced circulation. A small number of people have reported pallor and discoloration of knees, legs and feet and blotches appearing on skin. This may be related to circulatory problems but the exact cause is not clear. • MMCAT increases heart rate and blood pressure, putting increased strain on the heart. Some users have reported chest pains, palpitations and irregular heartbeats. • There have been fatalities where MMCAT had been used prior to death. • Convulsions: There have been a small number of reports of people having convulsions following administration of MMCAT. • Mood/comedown: Some people have reported low mood, depression and irritability following use, especially extended periods of use. • Nose damage: irritation to lining of nose, burning sensation in nose, nose bleeds, scabbing of inside of nose. <p>Unfortunately, given a new, relatively cheap and legal substance rather a lot of people were bingeing on it before it became illegal and so the number of casualties has gone up too.</p> <p>But the key message here has to be no, MMCAT is not safe and should be treated with great caution.</p>
Overdose	
Legal Status	Mephedrone is now a Class B drug schedule 4. It was added to the list of

Controlled Drugs in April 2010. A collection of other chemicals structurally related to mephedrone were also made in to Controlled Drugs at the same time.

Before April 2010 it was not controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. But if it were sold for human consumption as a psychoactive substance, it would have fallen within the terms of the Medicines Act. This would have made it illegal to supply it without a licence. To get round this problem and to avoid risks of legal action if people became ill after consuming it, it was often labelled 'Plant Food' and 'Not for Human Consumption.' It was just a legal get-out. And now that it is a controlled drug such measures are no longer required.

As a Class B drug, the maximum penalty for supply is 14 years, and the maximum penalty for possession is five years.