

# -PILL TESTING-

## 4 Realities you may not have considered!

Pill Testing may sound like a compassionate option...but what really happens?

### Reality 1

#### PILL TESTING CAN INCREASE DRUG USE & LIKELIHOOD OF RISK & DEATH

**First principle of consumption: accessibility, acceptability and availability all increase consumption.**

- **Pill Testing will be seen by many young people as a clear endorsement of drug use. It sends a message that illicit drugs are acceptable and 'safe'.**

**Outcome? - This gives permission for young people to engage in an otherwise illegal act and worse, harmful drug use. It is very likely to encourage use.**

- **Pill Testing facilitates the taking of illicit drugs by equipping young people to consume illicit drugs.**

**Outcome? - More lives are put at risk with a belief that the drug they are taking is somehow 'safe' after testing. However, there is no 'safe' level of drug use for the developing brain or at any age.**

#### The type of Pill testing being used at Festivals is not reliable:

##### What testing procedure is reliable?

The High Performance Liquid Chromatography - Mass Spectrometry (HPLC- MS), is regarded as the gold standard for pill analysis ('anything less is not really a 'test' at all!'). This is not practical for music/dance events because it is not portable.

##### What has been used at such events?

The pill testing equipment at Canberra's youth festival on April 29 2018, was limited. For example it was simply Infrared spectroscopy that provides little or no information about the dose, which is an essential life-saving consideration in determining toxicity. It also tested only a 'scrape' of the pill for sampling. This is inadequate because more than 90% of the total drug in any pill is not uncommonly in less than half of the volume - so the only way to determine the exact contents of any pill is to test the entire mass of the pill. This of course, would renders it user-resistant or rejectable.

For more go to [www.drugfree.org.au/index.php/resources/news/192-pill-testing-in-canberra-s-high-performance-liquid-chromatography-mass-spectrometry-hplc-ms-not-portable.html](http://www.drugfree.org.au/index.php/resources/news/192-pill-testing-in-canberra-s-high-performance-liquid-chromatography-mass-spectrometry-hplc-ms-not-portable.html)

#### PILL TESTING HAS NO SAFETY GUARANTEES - IT WILL ADD TO RISK!

### Reality 2

Young people are dying (which include the first recorded Australian Death of MDMA poisoning of Anna Woods in 1995. See "Anna's Story") because of something more akin to an allergic reaction to the drug itself, not purported 'additives'. Of course, the more people that try MDMA thinking that pill testing have now made it 'safe' to use, the more will be exposed to a substance that causes death via a physiological reaction to the substance. According to [Drug Free Australia](http://www.drugfree.org.au) people were dying with 1/70th the amounts of ecstasy that others were happily consuming, so 'purity' testing for MDMA is not going to abate these harms, due to many idiosyncratic variables.

Research on Acute toxic effects of 'Ecstasy' (MDMA) and related compounds: overview of pathophysiology and clinical management States: "There are still many unanswered questions regarding the pathophysiology and pharmacology of the acute toxic effects of MDMA. It is clear that many different neuroendocrine systems can be affected and that the variety of side-effects may depend upon a multitude of other factors both environmental and pharmacogenetic. Additionally, there still remains the possibility of permanent damage to serotonergic neurological pathways in users of MDMA."

- **Pill Testing does not (and cannot) guarantee that the drug being taken will not cause any physical/mental harm or death to the individual consumer.**
- **Pill Testing cannot account for the individual's physiological response to each drug i.e. allergies, levels of toxins or bio-chemical and/or genetic variants etc...**

**Outcome? - More young people risking harm to their bodies and brains while potentially destroying their lives, and their families through another 'facilitated' ill-informed decision to consume illicit drugs.**

#### Testing MDMA purity, does not diminish the harm - It's still a dangerous toxin!

"Alcohol is certainly a damaging drug, but to suggest that MDMA is less damaging than alcohol does not agree with the scientific evidence. Comparing these two drugs is like comparing an F1 sports car to a basic family saloon. MDMA is an extremely powerful drug, which heats up the brain, causing a massive increase in neurochemical activity, dramatic changes in mood state, and it takes the brain several days to recover. Regular MDMA usage impairs memory, reduces problem-solving ability, reduces white cell blood count, increases susceptibility to infections, causes sleep problems, and enduring depression. In pregnant women MDMA impairs foetal development. We and other research groups worldwide have compared the psychobiological functioning of recreational Ecstasy/MDMA users with alcohol drinkers, and in numerous studies it is always the Ecstasy/MDMA users who are comparatively worse. The 'family car' may kill more people each year than the F1 speed machine, but to suggest that the latter would be safer for everyday driving is completely erroneous. MDMA kills many young people each year, and the death toll is currently rising."

By Andy Parrott, Professor of Human Psychopharmacology, School of Health Sciences, Swansea University. (May 30, 2018)  
For more go to [MDMA/EcstasyHarms](http://MDMA/EcstasyHarms)

## Reality 3

PILL TESTING PROMOTES 'NORMALISATION OF ILLICIT DRUG USE' AND IGNORES THE VAST MAJORITY OF FACTS ABOUT THE IMPACT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY OF DRUG USE.

### The potential outcomes?

- Young people damaging or even destroying their brain function during a critical stage of brain development (up to age 25-28).
- Increasing numbers of young people developing depression and psychosis and risk of suicide amongst young people.
- Increased risk of family violence and resulting impact on interpersonal, social and family relationships.
- Increase an individuals co-morbidity, entering addiction cycles and engaging in drug related crimes in pursuit of funding their dependency.

GOVERNMENT, COMMUNITIES, NGO'S AND INDIVIDUALS/  
FAMILIES... WHO WILL PAY THE PRICE OF DRUG USE?

## Reality 4

Pill Testing that is permitted and/or approved by government implicates government as an enabler and endorser of illicit drug use.

- Will governments endorse a practice that will facilitate harm to its citizens, their health, productivity and well-being? Will taxpayers have to wear this cost, particularly in relation to lives lost? Who can place a price on that potential outcome?
- Will event managers be liable? Who will wear the impending litigation from individuals and families impacted by potential physical, mental harms and even cessation of lives post consumption after 'pill testing' endorsements?
- Will insurance providers cover the risk of death and permanent injury costs as a result of damage from one incident or subsequent uptake of illicit drug use and abuse after Pill Testing at an event?
- Will young individuals be required to sign disclaimers on potential harm to their health or even death, after having a pill tested prior to consumption? What is the effect on those under 18 – the children?
- Frontline service providers are already stretched to capacity and the need for many more facilities and services is already paramount. Are we able to accommodate more individuals and families needing assistance and support due to a decision to endorse uptake of illicit drugs?

As frontline service providers we urge you to thoroughly consider the impact of Pill Testing!

For more evidence and information contact:



[Drug Free Australia](#)



[Rural Health Tasmania Inc.](#)



[Dalgarno Institute](#)



[Australian Family Association](#)



[Family Council of Victoria](#)



[Drug Advisory Council of Aust.](#)



[Teen Challenge – TAS](#)



[Focus on the Family Australia](#)



[Live Free – T. C. Victoria](#)



[Living Free – T.C. South Australia](#)



[Teen Challenge QLD](#)



[One80 TC – NSW](#)



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