What are the side effects?

A recent survey for the dance magazine Mixmag found that 67% of mephedrone users reported excess sweating; 51% headaches; 43% heart palpitations; 27% nausea; and 15% cold or blue fingers.

Most of those side effects are common with other stimulants like ecstasy and cocaine.

Other anecdotal reports suggest heavy use can lead to paranoia, hallucinations and serious panic attacks.

Similar psychotic effects have been reported with heavy amphetamine use.

How safe is it? Any long term dangers?

The official line is we just do not know.

Many other illegal drugs, including amphetamines and ecstasy, were first developed as medicines. It means scientists have conducted tests and have some idea of the harm they can cause.

Mephedrone does not have that scientific background and was developed in backstreet laboratories with no human testing so the long term effects are unknown.

Les King, who was leading research into mephedrone for the government before he resigned, told Newsbeat: "Chemically it is closely related to amphetamine and ecstasy but doesn't seem to be as potent.

"On the surface that would make it less harmful but any benefit could be negated because users are taking larger amounts to get the same effect.

"So all we can say is [mephedrone] is probably as harmful as ecstasy and amphetamines and wait until we have some better scientific evidence to support that."

We still don't know if mephedrone is physically addictive. Reports suggest the effects of the drug last around an hour before users feel the need to 're-dose'.

There have been reports of users snorting more of the drug than they intended and finding it difficult to stop.

But it is unclear whether this is proof of a medical addiction or a dependence or reliance on the drug which is generally considered less serious.