

THE BASICS



Methamphetamine (Meth, Crystal Meth, Speed, Glass, Ice, Shards, Krank)

What it is:

Methamphetamine is a powerful stimulant (a drug that increases energy and alertness).

Forms:

- Powder or crystal chunks (smoked in a pipe or snorted).
- Pill or capsule (taken by mouth).
- Mixed with water (injected with a needle).

Do you know?

- Effects of the drug are almost immediate if smoked or injected, take about 5 minutes if snorted, and about 25 minutes if swallowed.
- Effects can last up to 12 hours.
- Methamphetamine is made in illegal labs using cheap and toxic ingredients. Making one pound of the drug creates 5-7 pounds of toxic waste along with poisonous gas that is released into the environment. Making methamphetamine is very dangerous and explosions occur often.



Effects

Short-Term:

While using, a person may experience:

- Feeling more energetic and alert
- Feeling very happy and excited
- Less hunger
- Dry mouth and cracked lips
- Larger pupils and quick eye movement
- Flushed, clammy skin
- Increased heart rate and blood pressure
- Shortness of breath
- Trouble speaking
- Acting aggressively or violently
- Feeling suicidal
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Trouble coordinating body movement
- Severe effects include:
 - Convulsions (severe muscle spasms)
 - High body temperature, blood pressure, irregular heart beat
 - Stomach cramps
 - Stroke
 - Death if above side effects do not get medical attention



Long-Term:

With heavy use over a long period of time, a person may experience:



- Hallucinating, including imagining having bugs crawling on/under skin
- Sores on skin from scratching imaginary bugs
- Damage to inside of nose from snorting drug
- Blurred vision and dizziness
- Intense feelings of rage
- Weight loss
- Feeling anxious and unable to sleep
- Psychotic episodes (don't know what's real and what's not)
- Paranoia (feeling scared and suspicious for no reason)
- Inflammation of the heart lining
- Blood vessel damage and skin problems if injecting
- Lead poisoning, depending on the method used to produce the drug

Tolerance and Dependence

- Regular users of methamphetamine can develop a powerful dependence quickly. This can be both psychological (they feel they need it) and physical (the body needs it).
- People who use methamphetamine regularly can develop a tolerance, so more is needed to get the same effect.
- It is very common to become addicted to methamphetamine if you continue to use it.

Withdrawal Symptoms

- Withdrawal may include: feeling sad, lack of pleasure, worry, tiredness, paranoia, feelings of aggression, and intense cravings for the drug.
- Other symptoms are dry mouth, headaches, and hunger.
- Withdrawal effects generally start within 24 hours of last use, and partial recovery can take 3-4 weeks.
- Withdrawal symptoms depend on how much and how frequently a person was using the drug.
- After early withdrawal symptoms pass, people can experience several months during which nothing seems pleasurable. It is very important to have lots of support from people who care (family, friends, counsellors, doctors) during this time.
- Psychotic symptoms (the person doesn't know what is real) and/or symptoms of depression may go on for months or even years after stopping use.

REMEMBER

A person's experience with any drug can vary. Some things that may affect the experience: the amount and strength of the drug, the setting, a person's mood and expectations before taking the drug, gender, overall health, past experience with the drug, and whether more than one drug is being used at the same time. Using alcohol and other drugs at the same time can be dangerous.

Other Risks

- Sharing needles can lead to infections such as HIV and hepatitis.
- If used by a pregnant woman, this drug can cause problems for the baby such as premature birth, deformities, and reflexes that do not develop properly.
- Methamphetamine is neurotoxic (damages brain cells). One consequence is a higher risk of developing Parkinson's disease.
- People can put themselves and others in risky situations when using these drugs such as driving while high, having unprotected sex or taking other unsafe actions that could harm themselves or others.
- Drug use can also lead to bad decision-making and embarrassing actions that the person might regret.
- Substance use may increase the risk of mental health problems. People with mental health problems are at higher risk of developing substance abuse problems.
- Drug use during one's youth (a time of important brain development) may affect physical, mental, and emotional development.

We're Here For You

If alcohol, drugs or gambling are causing problems for you or someone you know, call us at **1-866-638-2561 (toll free)** for information about our programs and services.



* Contact us if you would like the sources for this info sheet or more information on the subject.

