

Meth in Our Community

Issue 1

Know what to look for?

Methamphetamine, or meth, is a highly addictive stimulant which affects an individual's central nervous system.

Meth can be found in several forms. It is generally a white, odorless, bitter-tasting 'grainy' powder. Poorly manufactured meth can also look like brown sugar or dirt. Crystal meth, a more pure form, looks like glass fragments, water softener salt or ice crystals.

Meth can be smoked, swallowed, snorted, or injected after dissolving. Meth can even be absorbed through contact with the skin. Any way you can get it into the body, it will make you high.

Other common names include chalk, crank, speed, crystal, and ice.

Meth releases high amounts of a natural brain chemical called dopamine, producing a sensation of euphoria. Meth can have the following effects:

- Nervousness, anxiety, paranoia
- Decreased appetite
- Increased respiratory rate
- Rapid/Irregular heartbeat
- Increased blood pressure and body temperature.

Where are you safe?

Meth can be made almost anywhere using common chemicals available at the hardware store. Many of the chemicals are unsafe when improperly used, and quite dangerous when combined. We will discuss those dangers in future issues.

Where is the harm?

Meth creates a sense of euphoria that starts quickly and last for hours. The longer users are involved with the drug the more they need to use to reach the same 'high.' It is the most highly addictive street drug we see today.

What should I look for?

Taken in even moderate doses or over long periods of time meth can lead to many negative consequences including:

- Extreme weight loss
- Severe dental problems ("Meth Mouth")
- Intense itching and sores from scratching
- Apparent learning disabilities

Individuals may have the following negative psychological effects:

- Anxiety
- Confusion
- Sleep deprivation
- Violent behavior
- Paranoia
- Hallucinations (including auditory)

Continued methamphetamine use causes changes in the brain's chemistry that are associated with erratic emotion, reduced coordination and impaired learning.

The areas of the brain most affected are those which control emotion; love, hate, fear and anger. Both short and long term memory may also be affected.

Overdoses can lead to stroke, heart attack or other internal organ failure. These conditions can result in death.

What can I do?

People who have overdosed need urgent medical help (call 911 immediately).

If you suspect a friend or loved one is using meth contact professionals to get them help.



For more information:

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NIDA

www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/methamphetamine
<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/methamphetamine/what-methamphetamine>