

Methamphetamines: Nothing to Rave About

"Meth," "speed," "chalk," "ice," "crystal," "crank," "fire," and "glass" are street terms for a man-made drug called methamphetamine. The drug can easily be made in secret laboratories from relatively inexpensive over-the-counter ingredients. This white, odorless, bitter-tasting crystalline powder can be smoked, snorted, injected, or swallowed.



Methamphetamine is not usually sold and bought on the streets like many other illicit drugs. Instead, people obtain supplies through friends or acquaintances. It is typically a closed or hidden sale.

Because methamphetamines can be made with readily available, inexpensive materials, there is great variation in the processes and chemicals used. This means that the final product that is sold as "methamphetamine" may not be that drug at all. Uncertainties about the drug's sources and its content make it difficult to know how powerful this substance may be and what the consequences are of this potent mixture.

Signs of a Methamphetamine User

- Agitation, excited speech, decreased appetites, and increased physical activity levels (other common symptoms include dilated pupils, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, and elevated body temperature)
- Occasional episodes of sudden and violent behavior, intense paranoia, visual and auditory hallucinations, and bouts of insomnia
- A tendency to compulsively clean and groom and repetitively sort and disassemble objects such as cars and other mechanical devices.

Long-Term Effects of the Drug

- Change the brain's ability to manufacture a chemical substance essential for the normal experience of pleasure and for normal psychological functioning (these changes in the brain can persist long after the user stops taking the drugs)
- Cause a stroke, create a mental disorder that mimics schizophrenia, and be extremely addictive.

Kicking the Habit

There are currently no medications available to treat addiction or overdose to methamphetamines. Withdrawal from this drug is typically characterized by drug craving, depression, disturbed sleep patterns, and increased appetite.



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