

# The truth about Methamphetamine

by Steve Danzig

According to federal estimates, more than 12 million Americans have tried methamphetamine, and 1.5 million are regular users. “Meth” making operations have been uncovered in all 50 states. Police nationwide rank methamphetamine the number one drug they battle today.

Methamphetamine (also known as speed, meth, crystal, crank, tweak, go-fast, ice, glass, uppers, black beauties) used to be known as the “poor man’s cocaine”, but today it has seeped into the mainstream affecting rich and poor, urbanites and suburbanites, men and woman, white collar and blue collar workers, soccer moms and dads, honor roll students and troubled teens alike. This crystalline white drug quickly seduces those who snort, smoke, or inject it by giving the user a euphoric rush of exaggerated confidence, hyper alertness, and an overabundance of manic energy.

For soccer moms and students, the drug is attractive because of the energy boosting qualities. For women and teen girls, the drug is attractive because of the rapid weight loss properties. For those with limited financial resources, the drug is attractive because it so cheap and the ingredients to make it are easily accessible (despite the fact that the cold pills used to make it have been moved behind the pharmacy counter). And once someone has experimented with the drug, they are quickly hooked due to the bursts of dopamine released in the brain which produces a strong euphoric effect. Addiction to meth occurs quickly and has several serious consequences including damage to the brain, to the body, and to a person’s self control.

In the short term, meth causes mind and mood changes such as anxiety, euphoria, and depression. Long term effects can include chronic fatigue, paranoid or delusional thinking, and permanent psychological damage. By creating false sense of energy, meth pushes the body faster and further than it is meant to go increasing a users heart rate, blood pressure, and risk of stroke. Meth can cause aggression and violent or psychotic behavior. Meth makes many users feel hypersexual and uninhibited placing them at increased risk of sexually transmitted diseases. An overdose of meth can result in heart failure and long-term physical effects such as irreversible brain, liver, kidney, and lung damage.

The signs of meth use are:

- Inability to sleep
- Increased sensitivity to noise
- Nervous physical activity, like scratching
- Irritability, dizziness, or confusion
- Rapid weight loss or anorexia
- Tremors or even convulsions
- Increased heart rate, blood pressure, and risk of stroke
- Presence of inhaling paraphernalia, such as razor blades, mirrors, and straws
- Presence of injecting paraphernalia, such as syringes, heated spoons, or surgical tubing

If you or someone you know is using meth, go to an emergency room immediately. The hospital staff can assist with both the detoxification process as well as providing referrals to the local resources available to assist with subsequent treatment options.

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