

FACTS ABOUT METHAMPHETAMINE

WHAT IS METHAMPHETAMINE?

Also known as crystal meth, base, crank, oxblood, paste, whiz, zest, shabu, glass, shard, rev, wax, tweak, P, Tina, fire, skates

Methamphetamine is a stimulant drug. It can have a crystalline appearance, which is why it is often called "crystal" or "ice". It can also come in a white or off-white powder, often called "speed". Less often, it is produced as a brown oily substance known as "base" or liquid. It is made with pharmaceutical drugs and household chemicals, and may include unknown or harmful ingredients.

Methamphetamine is usually smoked but it can be snorted, injected or swallowed. In Australia, crystal methamphetamine is more pure, potent and addictive than "speed" or "base".

EFFECTS OF METHAMPHETAMINE

Effects depend on the person (age, weight, size, health and tolerance), as well as the strength, the amount used, and if it is used with other drugs, including alcohol. When smoking (effects are felt immediately), injecting (15 to 30 seconds), snorting (3 to 5 minutes), swallowing (15 to 20 minutes). As it wears off, you may experience "comedown" effects, which can last 2 to 3 days.

Short-term effects, both desired and undesired, may include...

- euphoria, pleasure and confidence
- increased energy and sex drive
- enlarged pupils and increased heart rate
- jaw clenching, teeth grinding
- excessive sweating and overheating
- itching and scratching
- reduced appetite and dehydration
- stomach cramps, headaches, dizziness, trembling, blurred vision, difficulty sleeping

- anxiety and panic attacks or "ice psychosis" – which may result in aggressive behaviour
- nosebleeds and nasal passage damage (from snorting)
- tetanus, infection, vein damage, Hepatitis B or C, HIV, AIDS (from injecting or sharing needles).

Long-term effects may include...

- paranoia, mood swings, severe inability to sleep, depression, anxiety.
- missing and rotted teeth, repeated infections (flus and colds), severe weight loss, skin sores, heart and kidney problems
- methamphetamine dependence.

OVERDOSE

Effects from overdosing: chest pain, hot and flushed skin, irregular heartbeat, difficulty breathing, fits or seizures, extreme agitation and confusion, lack of co-ordination, severe headache and stomach pain, unconscious, stroke, kidney damage, heart attack or death.

If a person is experiencing an overdose or is unresponsive call 000 for an ambulance. If unconscious, put them in the recovery position. If not breathing, start CPR. Paramedics won't involve police unless the person is a danger to themselves or others.

How long does methamphetamine stay in your system?

Depends on use and person. Generally, effects last 6 to 12 hours, or longer. It can be detected in saliva 2 to 4 days, in urine 3 to 5 days, in blood up to 3 days and in hair up to 3 months.

TIPS FOR REDUCING RISK

There is no safe way to use methamphetamine. There will always be a health risk. The only way to be safe is not to use. If you choose to use, the following will help reduce risk:

Before: take a friend and tell them what you plan on using, plan how to get home (to avoid driving under the influence), use new or clean equipment. Injecting is not recommended, though if choosing to inject, get your own clean, sharp syringe and find a clean location. Boil smoking equipment in water to clean.

During: go slow, start with a low dose then wait an hour to see effects before having a bit more, know and keep to your limits. Safely dispose of syringes.

Avoid: using methamphetamine with other drugs, including alcohol, using too much or too often, needle or equipment sharing. While using don't be alone, don't drive or do risky activities or be responsible for the care of others.

IS METHAMPHETAMINE USE BECOMING A PROBLEM?

It may be a problem if you agree with any of these statements:

- I struggle to limit or reduce the amount of methamphetamine I'm using
- I spend a lot of time using methamphetamine or affected by it
- I often feel strong urges to use methamphetamine
- I'm unable to perform tasks at work, school or home due to methamphetamine use
- I have developed a tolerance to methamphetamine, so I need to have more to feel effects
- I have withdrawal symptoms – increased appetite, aches and pains, tired, sleep problems, feeling confused, irritable, anxious, depressed or have paranoia.

TIPS FOR PROBLEMATIC METHAMPHETAMINE USE

- seek support from a health professional, as well as from family and friends
- avoid people, places, objects, feelings or situations associated with using methamphetamine
- start doing activities you enjoy that don't involve using methamphetamine
- look after yourself – get enough sleep, follow a healthy diet, adopt a balanced lifestyle
- set some personal goals.

METHAMPHETAMINE AND THE LAW

It is illegal to use, possess, make or sell methamphetamines in Australia. It is also illegal to possess any implement for using methamphetamine (such as a pipe). In Queensland, it is illegal to possess needles or syringes if they are not disposed of safely and therefore pose a risk to others.

FOR SUPPORT – CALL DRUG ARM

CALL DRUG ARM CENTRAL INTAKE ON 07 3620 8880 DURING BUSINESS HOURS TO ACCESS FREE SUPPORT OR EMAIL INTAKE@DRUGARM.COM.AU. FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES, CALL 1300 656 800 OR EMAIL INFO@DRUGARM.COM.AU.

FOR 24/7 SUPPORT CALL:

ALCOHOL & DRUG INFORMATION SERVICE: 1800 177 833 (QLD) AND 1800 250 015 (NATIONAL).