

Drugs that People Use and Misuse

Meth (Crank, Ice)

Methamphetamine—meth for short—is a white, bitter powder. Sometimes it's made into a white pill or a clear or white shiny rock (called a crystal).

Smoking meth is the most common way it is used. Some mix the powder with liquid and inject it (shoot up) into their bodies with a needle. Others take the meth powder by mouth or snort it up the nose.

Meth causes a rush of good feelings at first. People who take it can then feel nervous, overly excited, angry, or afraid. Their thoughts and actions go really fast. They might feel too hot.

Some slang names for meth are:

- Crank
- Ice
- Crystal
- Glass
- Chalk

Signs of Meth Use

Meth speeds up breathing and raises blood pressure.

Meth can make people hyperactive—full of too much energy. They might talk and move around a lot. They might not stop to eat or sleep.

People who use meth often scratch their skin, causing sores. They might have burns on their lips or fingers from holding a hot meth pipe.



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Meth can make a person's mood change quickly. For example, they might feel excited, and then become angry and violent. They might feel afraid that someone's out to get them. They might want to end their own life.



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Meth can make a person's mood change quickly. For example, someone using meth might become angry and violent.

Effects of Meth on Brains and Bodies

These are just some of the problems meth can cause:

Overheating

Meth can make your body so hot that you pass out. Sometimes this can kill you.

Crank Bugs

Meth can make you feel like bugs are crawling on or under your skin. It makes you scratch a lot. Scratching causes sores on your face and arms.

Meth Mouth

People who use meth can break, stain, or rot their teeth. They often drink lots of sweet things, grind their teeth, and have dry mouth. This is called "meth mouth."



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Looking Old

People who use meth can start looking old. They burn a lot of energy and don't eat well. This can make them lose weight and look sick. Their hands or body might shake. Their skin looks dull and has sores and pimples that don't heal. Their mouth looks sunken as the teeth go bad.

HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis

People who inject meth can get HIV/AIDS or hepatitis (a liver disease) if they share used needles. People also get these diseases by having unsafe sex. They often forget to use condoms because they're high on the drug.

Overdose

People can overdose on meth when they take too much of it. Sometimes drug dealers add other dangerous chemicals to meth that can help cause an overdose. They might get so hot that they pass out. If they don't get help right away, they can die. A meth overdose can also cause a stroke ("brain attack"), heart attack, or liver failure. These can all cause death.

Addiction

You can become addicted to meth. Over time, it can change the way your brain works. If you stop using meth, your body can get confused and you can start to feel really sick. This makes it hard to stop. This is called addiction.

People who get addicted to meth start needing to take more of it to get the same high. People who usually snort meth or take it by mouth might start to smoke or inject it to get a stronger, quicker high.

Meth use can hurt different parts of your brain. It can cause thinking and emotional problems that don't go away. Even after you quit using meth, the thoughts can come back. For example, you might feel, hear, or see things that aren't there. You might think that people are out to get you or start believing strange ideas that can't really be true.

People who are trying to quit taking meth might:

- feel sad
- get really tired but have trouble sleeping
- feel angry or nervous
- be unable to feel happy

They will feel a very strong need to take the drug.

Fortunately, there is counseling that can help someone with a meth addiction.

Remember that even if you get treatment, it can be hard to stay off the drug. People who stopped using meth can still feel strong cravings for the drug, sometimes even years later. This is normal. This is also why it's important to stay in treatment for as long as your doctor suggests.