

Tips for Teens: Methamphetamine: The Truth About Methamphetamine

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Tips for Teens: Methamphetamine

The Truth About Methamphetamine

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Slang—Speed, Meth, Crystal, Crank, Tweak, Go-fast, Ice, Glass, Uppers, Black Beauties

Get the Facts...

Methamphetamine affects your brain. 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.

Methamphetamine affects your body. Over “amping” on any type of speed is pretty risky. Creating a false sense of energy, these drugs push the body faster and further than it’s meant to go. It increases the heart rate, blood pressure, and risk of stroke.

Methamphetamine affects your self-control. Meth is a powerfully addictive drug that can cause aggression and violent or psychotic behavior.¹

Methamphetamine is not what it seems. Even speed drugs are not always safe. Giga-jolts of the well-known stimulants caffeine or ephedrine can cause stroke or cardiac arrest when overused or used by people with a sensitivity to them.

Methamphetamine can kill you. An overdose of meth can result in heart failure. Long-term physical effects such as liver, kidney, and lung damage may also kill you.

Before You Risk It...

Know the law. Methamphetamine is illegal in all States and is highly dangerous.

Get the facts. The ignitable, corrosive, and toxic nature of the chemicals used to produce meth can cause fires, produce toxic vapors, and damage the environment.

Stay informed. The number of past-month methamphetamine users who fit the definition of stimulant dependence or abuse more than doubled from 2002 to 2004.² The number of people admitted to treatment for methamphetamine use problems has been rising for several years.³

Know the risks. There are a lot of risks associated with using methamphetamine, including:

- Meth can cause a severe “crash” after the effects wear off.
- Meth use can cause irreversible damage to blood vessels in the brain.
- Meth users who inject the drug and share needles are at risk for acquiring HIV/AIDS.

Look around you. Not everyone is using methamphetamine. In 2007, only 3 percent of 12th graders reported having used methamphetamine.⁴

Know the Signs...

How can you tell if a friend is using meth? It may not be easy to tell. But there are signs you can look for. Symptoms of methamphetamine use may include:

- Inability to sleep
- Increased sensitivity to noise
- Nervous physical activity, like scratching
- Irritability, dizziness, or confusion
- Extreme 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

What can you do to help a friend who is using meth? Be a real friend. You might even save a life. Encourage your friend to stop or seek professional help. For information and referrals, call SAMHSA’s Health Information Network at 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727).

For more information or for references to facts found in this *Tips for Teens*, go to www.samhsa.gov/SHIN.

Q & A

Q. Isn’t methamphetamine less harmful than crack, cocaine, or heroin?

A. Some users get hooked the first time they snort, smoke, or inject meth. Because it can be made from lethal ingredients like battery acid, drain cleaner, lantern fuel, and antifreeze, there is a greater chance of suffering a heart attack, stroke, or serious brain damage with this drug than with other drugs.

Q. Isn’t using methamphetamine like using diet pills?

A. No. Though it is easy to obtain, methamphetamine is dangerous. People who take meth can become paranoid, confused, and aggressive; they can die from overheating and convulsions.⁵ Over time, meth users risk brain damage and addiction.⁶

Info

To learn more about methamphetamine or obtain referrals to programs in your community, contact:

SAMHSA’s Health Information Network

1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)

(English and Spanish)

TTY 1-800-487-4889

The bottom line: If you know someone who uses meth, urge him or her to stop or get help.

If you use meth—stop! The longer you ignore the real facts, the more chances you take with your life. It’s never too late. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust.

Do it today!

Curious about the TV ads of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign? Check out the Web site at www.freevibe.com or visit the Office of National Drug Control Policy Web site at www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov.