

# FACTS

## CRYSTAL METH

Methamphetamine is a highly addictive stimulant that can have long-lasting effects on your body. Crystal meth is methamphetamine in the form of a rock-like crystal that users heat and then smoke, although it can also be snorted or injected. Unlike most other drugs, many users report that they became addicted after trying crystal meth just once.

### **METH:**

Beannies

Brown

Chalk

Crank

Chicken feed

Cinnamon

Crink

Crypto

Fast

Getgo

Methlies Quik

Mexican crack

Pervitin (Czech Republic)

Redneck cocaine

Speed

Tick tick

Tweak

Wash

Yaba (Southeast Asia)

### **CRYSTAL METH:**

Batu

Blade

Cristy

Crystal

Crystal glass

Glass

Hot ice

Ice

Quartz

Yellow powder

### **WHAT IS METH MADE FROM?**

Methamphetamine is a synthetic (man-made) chemical, unlike cocaine, for instance, which comes from a plant.

Meth is commonly manufactured in illegal, hidden laboratories, mixing various forms of amphetamine (another stimulant drug) or derivatives with other chemicals to boost its potency. Common pills for cold remedies are often used as the basis for the production of the drug. The meth “cook” extracts ingredients from those pills and to increase its strength combines the substance with chemicals such as battery acid, drain cleaner, lantern fuel and antifreeze.

These dangerous chemicals are potentially explosive and because the meth cooks are drug users themselves and disoriented, they are often severely burned and disfigured or killed when their preparations explode. Such accidents endanger others in nearby homes or buildings.

The illegal laboratories create a lot of toxic waste as well—the production of one pound of methamphetamine produces five pounds of waste. People exposed to this waste material can become poisoned and sick.

## **THE DEADLY EFFECTS OF METH**

### ***The short-term and long-term impact on the individual***

When taken, meth and crystal meth create a false sense of well-being and energy, and so a person will tend to push his body faster and further than it is meant to go. Thus, drug users can experience a severe “crash” or physical and mental breakdown after the effects of the drugs wear off.

Because continued use of the drug decreases natural feelings of hunger, users can experience extreme weight loss. Negative effects can also include disturbed sleep patterns, hyperactivity, and nausea, delusions of power, increased aggressiveness and irritability.

Other serious effects can include insomnia, confusion, hallucinations, anxiety and paranoia. In some cases, use can cause convulsions that lead to death.

### ***Long-range damage***

In the long term, meth use can cause irreversible harm: increased heart rate and blood pressure; damaged blood vessels in the brain that can cause strokes or an irregular heartbeat that can, in turn, cause cardiovascular collapse or death; and liver, kidney and lung damage.

Users may suffer brain damage, including memory loss and an increasing inability to grasp abstract thoughts. Those who recover are usually subject to memory gaps and extreme mood swings.

## **METH HARM**

### **SHORT-TERM EFFECTS**

- Loss of appetite
- Increased heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature
- Dilation of pupils
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Nausea
- Bizarre, erratic, sometimes violent behavior
- Hallucinations, hyper excitability, irritability
- Panic and psychosis
- Convulsions, seizures and death from high doses

## **LONG-TERM EFFECTS**

- Permanent damage to blood vessels of heart and brain, high blood pressure leading to heart attacks, strokes and death
- Liver, kidney and lung damage
- Destruction of tissues in nose if sniffed
- Respiratory (breathing) problems if smoked
- Infectious diseases and abscesses if injected
- Malnutrition, weight loss
- Severe tooth decay
- Disorientation, apathy, confused exhaustion
- Strong psychological dependence
- Psychosis
- Depression
- Damage to the brain similar to Alzheimer's disease, stroke and epilepsy

Severe crystal meth abuse can also cause outward signs of aging in users. The drug destroys tissues and blood vessels and hampers the body's ability to heal. Users often develop acne, and the skin takes on a dull look and loses its elasticity. The teeth begin to decay and crack, resulting in a condition known as meth mouth. The most serious long-term side effect of crystal meth, however, is death from cardiac arrest or hyperthermia.

Consistent use of crystal meth can also cause thoughts of homicide or suicide, as well as severe anxiety, paranoia and insomnia. If you recognize any of these signs and symptoms in a friend or loved one, urge them to seek help now.

***Don't wait for your addiction to get to this point.***

## **HOW METHAMPHETAMINE AFFECTS PEOPLE'S LIVES**

When people take methamphetamine, it takes over their lives in varying degrees. There are three categories of abuse.

### **LOW-INTENSITY METH ABUSE:**

Low-intensity abusers swallow or snort methamphetamine. They want the extra stimulation methamphetamine provides so they can stay awake long enough to finish a task or a job, or they want the appetite-suppressant effect to lose weight. They are one step away from becoming "binge" (meaning uncontrolled use of a substance) abusers.

### **BINGE METH ABUSE:**

Binge abusers smoke or inject methamphetamine with a needle. This allows them to receive a more intense dose of the drug and experience a stronger "rush" that is psychologically addictive. They are on the verge of moving into high-intensity abuse.

### **HIGH-INTENSITY METH ABUSE:**

The high-intensity abusers are the addicts, often called "speed freaks." Their whole existence focuses on preventing the crash, that painful letdown after the drug high. In order to achieve the desired "rush" from the drug, they must take more and more of it.

But as with other drugs, each successive meth high is less than the one before, urging the meth addict into a dark and deadly spiral of addiction.

### **SIDE EFFECTS:**

The side effects of crystal meth can be swift and severe, especially for pregnant women. Crystal meth can cause a baby to be born prematurely or suffer birth defects, including cleft palate or heart abnormalities. Babies born to crystal meth users are often very small in size due to lack of nutrition and prenatal care during pregnancy. Crystal meth is also present in the breast milk of users, putting nursing babies at risk.

Some people take crystal meth specifically to experience the side effects. As it causes a decrease in appetite and an increase metabolism, some users take crystal meth as a weight-loss aid. Unfortunately, this is usually a short-term effect. After approximately six weeks of use, the body will develop a tolerance to the drug, and the weight loss may subside. As the amount of crystal meth taken is increased to compensate, addiction is often the next step. Crystal meth also tends to increase libido, leading to abuse of the drug for that purpose alone.

### **CRYSTAL METH WITHDRAWAL TREATMENT:**

Withdrawal from crystal meth is different from most other stimulants. Physical symptoms one might expect, including severe stomach pain and vomiting, are not a part of the crystal meth detoxification process. Once users stop taking the drug, usually in a licensed detox center, the side effects stop fairly quickly. After long-term insomnia and loss of appetite, most people tend to do little more than eat and sleep the first few weeks. It can take one to two years for normal dopamine functioning to return. During that time, many people suffer from severe depression, which can lead them back to addiction. Because of the lack of physical symptoms, many rehab centers have put little emphasis on the detoxification process for crystal meth, but that is quickly changing.

### **Source:**

<http://www.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/crystalmeth.html>