



Tips for Teens: The Truth About Methamphetamine

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 may be as addictive as crack and more powerful.(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 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. Ninety-two percent of methamphetamine deaths reported in 1994 involved meth in combination with another drug, such as alcohol, heroin, or cocaine.(2)

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. Everybody doesn't think it's okay to take methamphetamine. A 1999 National High School Survey indicates that over 80 percent of teens disapprove of using meth even once or twice.(3)

→ *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 someone 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 the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at (800) 729-6686.



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 easily attainable, methamphetamine is dangerous and addictive. Between 1993 and 1995, deaths due to meth rose 125 percent. Between 1996 and 1997, meth-related emergency room visits doubled. Use by 12- to 17-year-olds has increased dramatically in the past few years.



To learn more about methamphetamine or obtain referrals to programs in your community, contact one of the following toll-free numbers:

SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information
800-729-6686
TDD 800-487-4889
línea gratis en español 877-767-8432
Web site: www.health.org

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

Footnotes

1. Alan Leshner, NIDA.
2. 1999 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 1999.
3. Monitoring the Future Study. National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), 1999.