



For further information:

Drugaid

Tel: 0870 060 0310

0870 numbers are more expensive from a mobile. 0870 numbers are cheaper from a landline.

Tel: 02920 868 675

Tel: 01685 721 991

www.drugaidcymru.com

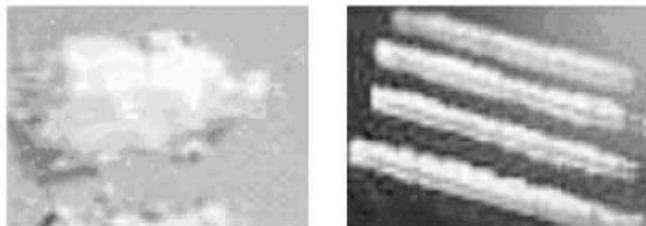


Methamphetamine

Methamphetamine

Crystal meth, ice, glass, yaba, methedrine

What does it look like?



What is methamphetamine?

Methamphetamine (methylamphetamine or desoxyephedrine) is a powerful stimulant drug that acts on the brain and the nervous system.

It is the granddaddy of the amphetamine family, being twice as strong as dextroamphetamine (e.g. dexedrine), and four times the strength of ordinary amphetamine i.e. benzedrine. The brand name for methamphetamine is methedrine.

In the UK, it usually comes in the form of crystalline whitish powder, although colour may be added and pills are also available.

It can be swallowed, snorted, dissolved in water and injected, or inserted anally.

Smoking the purer crystalline form (also known as 'crystal meth' or 'ice') produces a very intense 'rush' similar to that produced by crack cocaine but longer-lasting – between 4 and 12 hours.

What will it do to me?

Meth will give you an instantaneous, long lasting high, as much as 4-12 hours from a few doses, depending on how you take it. Repeating the dose can lead to days awake, often with little food as methamphetamine is a powerful appetite suppressant, leaving people physically run down and mentally strung out.

Methamphetamine stimulates the brain's reward centre, the hypothalamus, which chemically regulates emotions and controls feelings, mood, energy levels and creative activity. This triggers the release of high levels of the brain's feel-good chemical, dopamine, and releases neurotransmitters serotonin and nor-epinephrine into the bloodstream. Meth blocks the re-uptake of neurotransmitters but unlike cocaine and other stimulants, it blocks the enzymes that help to break down invasive drugs, so the chemicals released from only one hit in a first-time user float freely and remain active for as many as 10 to 12 hours before wearing off, compared with about 45 minutes for cocaine.

People can experience feelings of euphoria, energy, talkativeness and heightened libido.

However you can also experience panic, agitation, paranoia and confusion. Some users experience profuse sweating and jaw-grinding.

Methamphetamine can cause a rapid heart rate and a rise in blood pressure. The higher the dose, the greater these effects.

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When does it become a problem?

- Methamphetamine has very strong dependence potential and extended use can lead to psychological dependence.
- Using the drug may also increase your sex drive and risky sexual behavior thereby increasing further the risk of blood borne virus transmission in some.
- Methamphetamine-induced psychosis has been widely reported in countries where there's a lot of use. Psychosis is a serious mental state where you lose touch with a sense of reality. It is frightening and people can end up being sectioned.
- Strokes, coma and death can occur with methamphetamine use.
- It can also lead to lung, kidney and gastrointestinal damage.
- Injecting methamphetamine is taking big risks with your health and can lead to overdose, blood borne viruses and vein and tissue damage.

Staying safer

- Smoking methamphetamine is safer than injecting.
- If you inject, always use clean needles and injecting equipment (spoons, swabs, water etc). You can access these from Drugaid and needle exchanges in pharmacies.
- If you inject, learn how to inject yourself using the safest and most effective technique. There are safer ways of injecting that will do less harm to your body. Please contact Drugaid for more information.
- Try to drink some water once or twice every hour. Speed causes the kidneys to produce less urine leading to toxic wastes getting recycled back into the bloodstream, making you feel really rough.
- Eat. Eat. Eat. Ensure you are getting enough vitamins. Amphetamines don't give you extra energy – they make you use up what you already have, so feed yourself and get vitamins B and C in particular.

- Do not take Meth if you are currently taking an MAOI, most commonly found in some prescription anti-depressants (check with your GP) and don't mix with Viagra.
- People with heart disease, hypertension, epilepsy, gastric ulcers, with persisting mental ill health, impaired immunity, or who are pregnant/breastfeeding should avoid methamphetamine.
- Use dental floss before using speed. And brush your teeth before going to bed. Methamphetamine appears to do some real damage to teeth, the reasons why this happens needs more research. So take extra care with them.
- Perhaps one of the more effective treatments for methamphetamine dependence is cognitive behavioural interventions (such as CBT; Cognitive Behavioural Therapy), currently gaining popularity in the UK. These approaches are designed to help modify your thinking, experiences, and behaviours and to increase skills in coping with various life stressors. You can get CBT at Drugaid.

The Law

Methamphetamine – often referred to as crystal meth – was reclassified as a Class A drug on 18th January 2007.

Penalties

- Possession:** 7 years' imprisonment or a fine or both.
Supply: life imprisonment or a fine or both.
Production: life imprisonment or a fine or both.