



About ice

School Fact Sheet

What is Methamphetamine?

Methamphetamine is an amphetamine-type stimulant. Stimulants speed up the function of the brain and central nervous system. Methamphetamine comes in three different forms:

- powder or pills (speed) that can be swallowed, snorted or injected
- a thick, oily substance (base) that can be swallowed or injected
- crystals or coarse, crystal-like powder (ice) that can be smoked or injected.

Effects of Methamphetamine

As with any drug, the effects of methamphetamine vary from person to person and can depend on:

- how much is used
- mood
- body size such as weight and height
- overall health
- previous experience with this drug
- whether it is used on its own or in combination with other drugs
- purity and potency.



Physical effects of using Methamphetamine

- increased heart rate and blood pressure
- breathing faster or irregular breathing
- enlarged pupils
- difficulty sleeping
- restlessness and moving more quickly
- increased sex drive
- reduced appetite
- sweating
- chest pain
- trembling
- headaches and dizziness
- blurred vision
- teeth grinding and jaw clenching.

Psychological effects of using Methamphetamine

- feeling confident, alert and energised
- being talkative
- feeling excited or euphoric
- feeling sexually aroused
- feeling anxious or panicky
- feeling agitated, aggressive or being hostile
- feeling powerful or superior to others
- unusual risk taking.

The longer someone uses methamphetamine, and the more frequently they use it the greater the chance of their experiencing harms such as:

- insomnia
- tolerance and dependence
- malnutrition, exhaustion and reduce resistance to infection
- explosive outbursts
- dental problems
- depression, anxiety and mood swings
- drop-off in school or work attendance or performance
- trouble with the police
- relationship breakdown
- problems with memory and concentration
- paranoia and delusional thoughts/behaviour
- risk of stroke and heart attack
- periods of psychosis.

Methamphetamine induced psychosis

When people are affected by psychosis they may experience hallucinations (see or hear things that aren't there), delusions (strong beliefs that are not grounded in reality), and paranoia (feeling overly suspicious and frightened). Sometimes, this may lead to strange or difficult behaviour including aggressive or violent outbursts. These symptoms usually disappear a few days after a person stops using methamphetamine.

The way someone takes methamphetamine can cause other problems

- Snorting – can lead to sinus problems, damage to nasal passages and nosebleeds.
- Injecting – use of unsterile and/or shared injecting equipment can increase risk of blood poisoning, skin abscesses, blocked blood vessels and blood borne viruses like HIV, hepatitis B and C.
- Swallowing – effects are not immediate when swallowed which can lead to risk of use of more to achieve the effect which can then lead to overdose.
- Smoking or injecting - the drug enters the brain more quickly creating a kind of “rush”. The intensity of this feeling can lead to people wanting to repeat use in order to experience this again.

Just as with any other illegal drug, methamphetamine may be “cut” or mixed with other substances to make the drug go further – especially easy to do with powder form (speed). It is therefore difficult to tell what the drug contains which increases the risk of unpredictable harmful effects.

Overdose

Overdose of methamphetamine can happen to anyone, even when small amounts are used. Everyone is different and some people may have a stronger reaction to it. When a person overdoses they may experience:

- sudden, severe headache
- racing, irregular or weak heartbeat
- increased body temperature
- psychosis – usually only for a short period
- death.

Risks of overdose may be increased if methamphetamine is used in combination with other drugs.

What to do in an emergency

If you are worried that someone may be at immediate risk due to having used methamphetamine – and/or other drugs – call Triple Zero (000).

Generally, paramedics will not involve the police unless they feel threatened by someone's behaviour, consider others to be under threat, if a crime has been committed or if someone dies.

Methamphetamine and driving

It is dangerous and illegal to drive under the influence of methamphetamine. Feelings of overconfidence can lead to poor judgement and risk taking behaviour. Police are able to test drivers for recent amphetamine use.

The law

Use of methamphetamine is illegal. If the police find someone using, selling or providing these drugs to another person, penalties including fines and prison sentences can result.

For more information

For information on resources and support services in your area that can help if you think your child may have a drug use issue, call the Alcohol and Drug Support Line or your local Community Alcohol and Drug Service or talk with your doctor. Click on the Who can help? tab on the SDERA website for contact details and options.

Parent and Family Drug Support Line

T: (08) 9442 5050

T: 1800 653 203 (country callers)

E: alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au

Alcohol and Drug Support Line

T: (08) 9442 5000

T: 1800 198 024 (country callers)

E: alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au

Meth Helpline

(24/7 free & confidential, counselling and referral)

T: 1800 874 878

E: alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au

W: alcoholdrugsupport.mhc.wa.gov.au

Where to go for help

If you need help for your own or someone else's drug use, information about support services is provided on the SDERA website under the Who can help? Tab and in the [Connect](#) directory which can be found in the [Resources](#) section. Support services are bound by confidentiality.

Contact SDERA

T: (08) 9402 6415

F: (08) 9402 6399

W: www.sdera.wa.edu.au

E: sdera.co@education.wa.edu.au