

What is Methamphetamine?¹

Methamphetamine is a stimulant drug usually found as a white, bitter-tasting powder or pill. Crystal methamphetamine is a form of the drug that looks like glass fragments or shiny, bluish white rocks.

Common names for methamphetamine include: chalk, crank, crystal, ice, meth and speed.

How do people use Methamphetamine?¹

People can take methamphetamine by:

- Inhaling/smoking
- Swallowing (pill)
- Snorting
- Injecting the powder that has been dissolved in water/alcohol

Effects of Using Methamphetamine

Short-Term Effects¹

- Increased wakefulness and physical activity
- Decreased appetite
- Faster breathing
- Rapid and/or irregular heartbeat
- Increased blood pressure
- Increased body temperature

Long-Term Effects¹

- Addiction
- Psychosis, including: paranoia, hallucinations, repetitive motor activity
- Changes in brain structure and function
- Deficits in thinking and motor skills
- Increased distractibility
- Memory loss
- Aggressive or violent behavior
- Mood disturbances
- Severe dental problems
- Weight loss
- Increased incidents of infections such as HIV and Hepatitis
- Intense itching, leading to skin sores from scratching

Methamphetamine



Methamphetamine Crystal



Methamphetamine Pills



Methamphetamine Powder

Methamphetamine Overdose¹

A person can overdose on methamphetamine. Because methamphetamine overdose often leads to a stroke, heart attack, or organ problems, first responders and emergency room doctors try to treat the overdose by treating these conditions:

- restoring blood flow to the affected part of the brain (stroke)
- restoring blood flow to the heart (heart attack)
- treating the organ problems

Withdrawal from Methamphetamine¹

Methamphetamine is highly addictive. When people stop taking it, withdrawal symptoms can include anxiety, fatigue, severe depression, psychosis, and intense drug cravings.

Treatment providers may suggest a variety of options to help clients address these effects.

How Does Methamphetamine Affect the Brain?¹

Methamphetamine increases the amount of natural chemical dopamine in the brain. Dopamine is involved in body movement, motivation, pleasure and reward. The drug's ability to release high levels of dopamine rapidly in reward areas of the brain produces the "rush" (euphoria) or "flash" that many people experience.

Continued methamphetamine use causes changes in the brain's dopamine system that are associated with reduced coordination and impaired verbal learning. Severe changes also affect areas of the brain involved with emotion and memory.

Although some of these brain changes may reverse after being off the drug for a year or more, other changes may not recover even after a long period of abstinence.¹

Talking Points

- Methamphetamine is usually a white, bitter-tasting powder or pill. Crystal methamphetamine looks like glass fragments or shiny, bluish-white rocks.¹
- Methamphetamine increases the amount of dopamine in the brain, which is involved in body movement, motivation, pleasure, and reward.¹
- Short-term health effects include increased wakefulness and physical activity, decreased appetite, and increased blood pressure and body temperature.¹
- Long-term health effects include risk of contracting HIV and hepatitis; severe dental problems; intense itching, leading to skin sores from scratching; violent behavior; and paranoia.^{1, 5}
- Continued methamphetamine use causes changes in the brain's dopamine system. Some of these brain changes may reverse after being off the drug for a year or more, however, other changes may not recover even after a long period of abstinence.¹

New Hampshire Resources

NH Statewide Addiction Crisis Line toll-free 1-844-711-HELP(4357).

2-1-1: You can phone this number at no cost to find information about critical health and human services available in your community.

NH Alcohol and Drug Treatment

Locator: www.nhtreatment.org: An online directory to search for treatment and recovery resources in New Hampshire.

Works Cited:

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3. MMWR Report "Acute Public Health Consequences of Methamphetamine Laboratories -- 16 States, January 2000--June 2004" (April, 2005) <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5414a3.htm>
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Promoting Prevention and Recovery

