

CRYSTAL METH

Methamphetamine (MA) is not a new drug. This is its third wave of popularity in North America and each wave has ebbed with the assistance of education and legislation.

Originally used by truckers & others to stay awake for long hours, it was also prescribed to treat conditions such as asthma, obesity & narcolepsy.

Today amphetamines are controlled substances, rarely prescribed.

Crystal methamphetamine is an addictive central nervous system stimulant. It belongs to a group of chemicals called speed on the street. It is distributed as a capsule, powder or in chunks resembling ice. The crystalline form of methamphetamine goes by the street names of jib, crank, glass, crystal, shards, Tina, and ice. Ecstasy pills often contain a high percentage of MA.

Typically it is snorted (inhaled), smoked, eaten, drunk (dissolved in water) or injected. MA is more quickly and more completely absorbed by the brain than is amphetamine, so the high is faster and more intense. Those on a high report they feel confident, powerful, successful, sexy, joyful, and have a sense of focus.

MA represents a shift from plant-derived stimulants such as cocaine to those easily quick cooked from inexpensive materials in makeshift home laboratories with recipes courtesy of the web. While potentially explosive and highly toxic, it can be easily produced by mixing a cocktail of substances including pseudoephedrine (a cold remedy), red phosphorous and iodine, ammonia, paint thinner, ether, drain cleaner, antifreeze, and the lithium from batteries.

MA use has been on the rise in certain parts of the country. This appears to be driven by the following.

- MA is easily synthesized from legally purchased substances.
- MA is cheap, cheaper than cocaine that must be smuggled into Canada.
- Smoking MA gives quick effects without the dangers of intravenous use.
- MA's effects are similar to cocaine, but last longer.

While used by all ages, MA is one of the so-called club drugs because of its frequent use at concerts and other dance venues for young people. In many areas it is said to be replacing ecstasy as it is cheaper.

High School Student Use of Crystal Meth (MA)

A self-administered questionnaire completed by over 600 high school students in Victoria & Vancouver found:

- **13.6% reported use of MA**
- Use appeared to be experimental or occasional within the context of multi-drug use
- Every MA user but one reported using alcohol and marijuana

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Heavy use of MA is associated with numerous physical problems that can lead to serious health problems, including stroke and inflammation of the heart lining. Users may also experience episodes of paranoia, anxiety, violent behaviour and insomnia. The physical and psychological risks increase when MA is taken with other drugs, including alcohol. **Boosting** (taking more while already high) is even riskier.

What to Look For

If you are concerned that someone close to you might be **tweaking** or using MA, common signs to look for -

- euphoria
- extreme energy
- dramatic weight loss
- grinding teeth
- paranoia
- nervous activity like obsessive picking of their face or scratching their body
- inability to sleep or no sleep for 2-3 days
- irritability, dizziness or confusion
- the presence of inhaling or injecting paraphernalia
- increased sensitivity to noise
- aggressive behaviour

Crashing from MA can involve -

- severe lack of energy
- increased appetite
- depression & fearfulness,
- wanting to sleep a lot or difficulty sleeping
- sustained lack of motivation to perform normal tasks
- inability to experience pleasure
- shaking, nausea & palpitations

Why Not Use MA

- **MA can be toxic.** Every batch is tainted with toxic chemicals. Even when you are buying from a familiar supplier, it is difficult to know the strength of the drug or what dangerous drugs it has been cut with.
- **MA can affect your physical health.** Railing or snorting increases chances of damaging the inside of the nose or of infection.
- **Injecting MA is very risky.** Sharing needles can spread HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C.
- **MA affects your body.** MA pushes your body faster and faster. Driving while taking MA is always dangerous.
- **MA is addictive.** MA affects your self control and can cause aggressive and even violent behavior.
- **MA is dangerous.** An overdose can result in heart failure and withdrawal symptoms can be severe.
- **MA use is associated with criminal activity,** including theft, assault and illegal production.
- **MA is illegal.** Possession can result in criminal charges.
- **Not everyone is using MA.** See facts about high school use.

If someone you know uses MA, encourage them to stop and/or get help. The longer they ignore the facts, the more chances they take with their life.

**Every new drug, or every new form of an old drug, is a reminder
that the supply of addictive substances is inexhaustible.
Therefore addiction prevention must be a priority - get the facts.**

**For confidential assistance
Brown Crawshaw 1.800.668.2055
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