

Methamphetamine Fact Sheet

*Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse**

Methamphetamine is...

- o A powerfully addictive stimulant that acts on the pleasure circuit in the brain by altering the levels of certain neurotransmitters present in the synapse.
- o Sometimes referred to as "speed," "meth," and "chalk." In its smoked form it is often referred to as "ice," "crystal," "crank," and "glass."
- o A substance that comes in many forms and can be smoked, snorted, injected or orally ingested.
- o A white, odorless, bitter tasting crystalline powder that can be easily dissolved in water or alcohol.

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Populations using methamphetamine...

- o Traditionally associated with bikers and white, male, blue-collar workers, is now being used by diverse groups in all regions of the country.
- o Use is increasing among men who have sex with men and use other drugs, making this population more vulnerable to contracting and spreading sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS.
- o Young adults who attend "raves" or private clubs also are increasingly using methamphetamine.
- o Includes notable increases among homeless and runaway youth.
- o Increasing use of methamphetamine is reported among male and female commercial sex workers who also trade sex for drugs. Use is increasing among members of motorcycle gangs. Also, people in occupations (such as long haul truckers) that demand long hours, mental alertness, and physical endurance, have been using this drug at increased rates.

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Methamphetamine use...

- o There is evidence that more people are using methamphetamine intravenous injections. This drug puts the user at higher increased risk for engaging in behaviors (both sexual and non-sexual) that could increase his or her chance of contracting HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, and other infectious diseases.

Methamphetamine is often being used in dangerous combination with other substances, including cocaine/crack, marijuana, heroin, and alcohol.

- o The majority of methamphetamine used in Arizona is produced in mega-labs in Mexico and smuggled into the United States. This meth is of a higher "purity" than that historically produced in clandestine labs in the southwest.
- o Methamphetamine is often being used in dangerous combination with other substances, including: cocaine/crack, marijuana, heroin, and alcohol.

You can identify methamphetamine users by...

- o Signs of agitation, excited speech, decreased appetites, and increased physical activity levels. Other common symptoms include: dilated pupils, high blood pressure, irregular heartbeat, chest pain, shortness of breath, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, and elevated body temperature.
- o Occasional episodes of sudden and violent behavior, intense paranoia, visual and auditory hallucinations, and bouts of insomnia.
- o Severe dental decay and sores on the skin as a result of scratching "crank bugs."

