

Methamphetamine

Imagine a life where the need to use methamphetamines no longer drives you or those you care for.

Crystal meth is becoming the drug of choice for American youth,
EVEN MORE SO THAN COCAINE.

Stimulants are highly addictive, and methamphetamine is no exception. It's most commonly known as meth, crystal, ice, or glass. Odorless, with a white crystalline powdery appearance, meth can be smoked, snorted, injected, or taken orally.

Meth produces an intense euphoria that fades very quickly. Increased dopamine levels in the brain are released and cause a rush of pleasure. Because of this reaction, even short-term use can lead to addiction. Compulsive use becomes normal as the body develops a tolerance, requiring more meth to achieve the same highs.

METH EFFECTS

Our bodies react to what we put in them. Short-term effects of meth can include

insomnia, decreased appetite, increased physical activity, increased or irregular heart rate, and higher blood pressure. The long-term reactions to meth are more serious, including anxiety, weight loss, dental problems, violent behavior, sleeplessness, and mood changes. Many people experience psychotic symptoms too, such as paranoia, auditory and visual hallucinations, delusions, and memory loss.

SIGNS OF METH USE

If you are concerned about a loved one possibly having a meth addiction, look for the following:

- Changes in physical appearance, particularly skin or teeth
- Constant picking at skin or hair
- Decreased weight and appetite
- Rapid eye movement and erratic behavior
- Mood swings or outbursts
- Paranoia for no reason

TREATMENT

Though quitting methamphetamine use is difficult, it's not impossible. The first step is detoxification. Withdrawal symptoms are intense and may require medical attention, extra support, or a rehab center during this time. Relapse is very common, especially at this stage. Inpatient or outpatient drug treatment programs, a 12-step program, and individual or group therapy are all helpful treatment options. There are currently no medications for meth addiction; however, a doctor may

prescribe antidepressants to help with withdrawal and long-term symptoms.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ **Seek help immediately** - You need assistance to quit a meth addiction. Talk to your doctor and consider bringing a supportive friend or family member to appointments.
- ✓ **Remove drugs** - Destroy any drugs or paraphernalia in your home. Thoroughly clean and leave nothing behind that might tempt you.
- ✓ **Avoid triggers** - Your behaviors and habits will need to change to avoid drug use. Don't associate with people encouraging you to use drugs or frequently visit where you feel vulnerable.
- ✓ **Find peer support** - Consider joining Crystal Meth Anonymous or another support group to get the help you need.

KEEP IN MIND

A loved one suffering with a crystal meth addiction will only quit when they're ready. Show your support by listening to their fears about the drug and their behaviors. Express your concerns and connect them to a professional.

What positive steps can you take today to ensure a healthier, addiction-free life?