

What is Methamphetamine?¹

Methamphetamine, aka meth, is a powerful, highly addictive stimulant drug that dramatically affects the central nervous system.

Meth usually comes in several forms, including powder, crystal (commonly referred to as 'crystal meth' or 'ice'), rocks and tablets (commonly referred to as "yaba" or "crazy pills" in Thai).

Meth can be taken by swallowing, snorting, smoking or injecting with an IV-syringe.



Meth – A Man-Made Menace¹

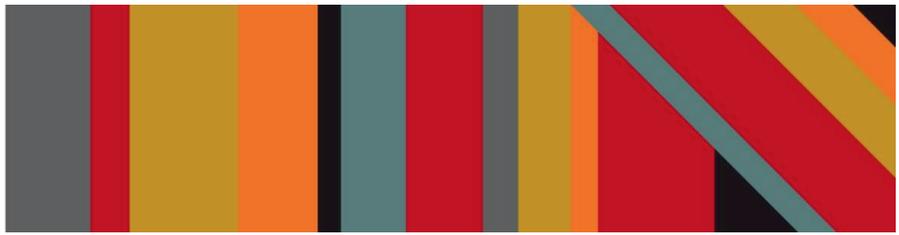
Unlike drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, which are derived from plants, meth can be manufactured using a variety of store bought chemicals.

The most common ingredient in meth is pseudoephedrine or ephedrine, commonly found in cold medicine. Through a cooking process the pseudoephedrine or ephedrine is chemically changed into meth. The ingredients that are used in the process of making meth can include: ether, paint thinner, Freon®, acetone, anhydrous ammonia, iodine crystals, red phosphorus, drain cleaner, battery acid, and lithium (taken from inside batteries).

Meth is often manufactured or "cooked" in very crude laboratories. Many of these labs are not sophisticated operations and do not require sophisticated chemistry equipment. And the people who cook the meth usually do not have any chemistry training. Cooking meth is relatively simple, but highly dangerous and toxic.



Prevention. Treatment. Enforcement.



How Does Meth Affect A User?^{1,2}

Short Term

- Increased energy
- Enhanced mood
- Increased alertness
- Decrease in appetite
- Dry mouth, jaw clenching
- Increased sexuality
- Intense euphoric “rush”
- Elevated body temperature (can be fatal)
- Convulsions

Long Term

- Tolerance/Addiction
- Irritability/Anxiety
- Fatigue/Sleeplessness
- Headaches
- Aggression/Violent Rages
- Depression/Mood Disturbances
- Paranoia/Hallucinations
- Delusions
- Hepatitis C/HIV
- Homicidal/Suicidal Thoughts

“**Meth Mouth**” is a phenomenon that is caused by a decrease in saliva around the teeth due to the drug, as well as increased use of sugary drinks, neglected personal hygiene, and the grinding or clenching teeth.

Is Meth a Prescription Drug?²

Methamphetamine can be prescribed by a doctor to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, narcolepsy, weight loss and other conditions, although it is rarely used medically, and only at doses much lower than those typically abused. It is classified as a Schedule II drug, meaning it has high potential for abuse and is available only through a prescription that cannot be refilled.



How Does Meth Affect Everyone Else?¹

The toxic chemicals used in the meth manufacturing process take a toll on the environment. Every pound of meth made can generate up to five pounds of toxic waste that may seep into the soil and groundwater.

The manufacturing process also generates toxic fumes. These fumes can severely harm anyone exposed to them. Meth labs also generate highly explosive gases.

Meth has a very serious impact on children. Many children are rescued from homes with meth labs or meth using parents. Meth, chemicals, and syringes are all within reach of children. Parents high on meth may neglect their children. And the mental, physical, and emotional consequences for these Drug Endangered Children are often severe. Millions of tax dollars are spent each year to clean up meth labs, to care for Drug Endangered Children, and to pay for law enforcement to deal with the meth problem.

Sources: ¹www.justice.gov/archive/old/methawareness ²www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/methamphetamine
Photos courtesy of: Dept of Justice; DEA; Multnomah County (Oregon) Sheriff's Dept; Sharlee Shirley, RDH, MPH

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