



METHAMPHETAMINE

Questions and Answers

March 2002

Q: What is methamphetamine?

A: Methamphetamine is a powerful central nervous system stimulant. It is a synthetic drug with a high potential for abuse and dependence. It is illegally produced and sold in pill form, capsules, powder and chunks.

Q: What are some street names for methamphetamine?

A: Some of the names include: "meth," "speed...crank," "chalk," "go-fast," "zip," and "cristy." The smokeable form of the drug can be called "ice," "crystal," "64glass," or "quartz."

Q: Where is meth manufactured and distributed?

A: It is domestically produced as well as imported from other countries.

Q: Why is meth use so prevalent in the Midwest?

A: This region's meth epidemic stems from two problems: steadily increasing importation of methamphetamine into the region by organized trafficking groups; and clandestine manufacturing of meth by hundreds of users/dealers in small "mom and pop" labs.

Q: Where are labs found?

A: Clandestine labs are found in rural, city and suburban residences; barns, garages and other outbuildings; back rooms of businesses; apartments; hotel and motel rooms; storage facilities; vacant buildings; and vehicles.

Q: What do I look for if I suspect a meth lab in my neighborhood?

A: Unusual, strong odors similar to that of fingernail polish remover or cat urine; renters who pay cash; large amounts of products such as cold medicines, antifreeze, drain cleaner, lantern fuel, coffee filters, batteries, duct tape, clear glass beakers and containers; and residences with windows blacked out and lots of nighttime traffic.

Q: Are teenagers using the drug?

A: The drug is becoming increasingly popular with persons 18 years and younger. Teenagers perceive meth as safer, longer lasting and easier to buy than cocaine.

Q: Why do people start using meth?

A: Some begin to initially heighten physical and mental performance; to work extra shifts; to lose weight; and to stay energized at "raves" or other social events.

Q: Is meth used in combination with other drugs?

A: Meth users are likely also to be users of alcohol, marijuana, and cocaine rather than users of drugs like heroin.

Q: How is meth administered?

A: It can be smoked, taken intranasally (snorted), injected intravenously or ingested orally.

Q: What are some signs that a person may be using the drug?

A: The person may exhibit anxiousness; nervousness; incessant talking; extreme moodiness and irritability; purposeless, repetitious behavior such as picking at skin or pulling out hair; sleep disturbances; false sense of confidence and power; aggressive or violent behavior; disinterest in previously enjoyed activities; and severe depression.

Q: Is there methamphetamine withdrawal?

A: Yes, the most common symptoms are: drug craving, extreme irritability, loss of energy, depression, fearfulness, excessive drowsiness or difficulty in sleeping, shaking, nausea, palpitations, sweating, hyperventilation, and increased appetite. Symptoms vary with the amount of damage done to the normal neurological system through meth use.

