

Cocaine Addiction & Cocaine Treatment

Cocaine has been an abused substance for nearly 100 years. Derived from the pure chemical, cocaine hydrochloride, it is a powerfully addictive substance. The powdered, hydrochloride salt form of cocaine can be snorted or dissolved in water and injected. Cocaine has evolved in form over the years and has not only increased in purity, but has also become available in "crack" form. Crack is cocaine that has not been neutralized by an acid and comes as a rock crystal that can be heated and its vapors smoked. The term "crack" is used because of the crackling sound heard as the drug is heated. Cocaine is a highly illegal substance and one cannot legally manufacture, distribute or possess the drug.

Some street terms for cocaine are:

Blow, Crack, Freebase, Nose Candy, Rock, Snow, C, Charlie, White Lady, Aspirin, Yeyo

Effects of Cocaine

The effects of cocaine appear almost immediately after a dose and disappear within a few minutes or hours, dependent upon how the drug is administered. The high is more intense, however shorter-lasting when the absorption is faster. Taken in amounts up to 100 mg, cocaine makes users feel euphoric, energetic, talkative and mentally alert. It will temporarily decrease the need for food and sleep. It also causes constricted blood vessels, dilated pupils, increased temperature, heart rate and blood pressure. Use can lead to bizarre, erratic and even violent behaviors, and users may experience tremors, vertigo, muscle twitches and/or a toxic reaction resembling amphetamine poisoning. In very rare instances, sudden death can occur upon the first use of cocaine or shortly thereafter. Cocaine can cause cardiac arrest or seizures followed by respiratory arrest and can lead to death.

Lasting/Long-Term Effects

The stimulant and addictive effects of cocaine are a result of the drug's ability to inhibit the reabsorption of dopamine, which is released as part of the brain's reward system, by nerve cells. An addict may think they can control their use; however it is difficult to predict or control the extent to which one will continue to want or use the drug. Over time a tolerance to cocaine can develop, causing users to increase their doses to intensify and prolong the euphoric effects. Though tolerance can build up, sensitization to the anesthetic and convulsant effects of the drug do not. This can cause death to the user even when taking an extremely low dose. Cocaine can also lead to full-blown paranoid psychosis, in which the user loses complete touch with reality and experiences auditory hallucinations. Long time snorting of cocaine causes nose cartilage to dissolve.