

Meth Addiction (Methamphetamines) & Meth Addiction Treatment:

Methamphetamine is a highly addictive synthetic drug containing potent central nervous system stimulant properties. Methamphetamine can be swallowed in pill form, sniffed as a powder, injected intravenously or intra-muscularly or smoked. It is a highly addictive and habit forming narcotic with high abuse potential.

Street terms for Methamphetamines are:

Speed, Meth, Ice, Crystal, Chalk, Crank, Tweak, Uppers, Crunk, Glass, and Zoom

Effects of Methamphetamines

Methamphetamine increases dopamine and adrenaline production allowing for a large amount of both to flood the central nervous system and brain, producing a dramatic stimulant effect and causing increased wakefulness and physical activity, as well as decreased appetite. This "high" comes from the dopamine and adrenaline entering areas of the brain that regulate feelings of pleasure. Smoking or injecting methamphetamine supplies the user with a brief rush, or intense sensation, while oral ingestion or snorting can produce a longer lasting high, that can last for as long as half a day. High doses of methamphetamine are toxic, and not only raise body temperature to dangerous and sometimes lethal levels, but also can cause convulsions.

Lasting/Long-Term Effects

The human body very quickly develops a tolerance to methamphetamine and as a result, much more must be taken to produce the same initial effects. Not only does the user become addicted to methamphetamine, but it also can cause functional and molecular changes to the brain. Use can lead to violent behavior, anxiety, confusion and insomnia, as well as psychotic problems including paranoia, auditory hallucinations, and delusions, homicidal and suicidal thoughts. Delusions can manifest into "formication", in which users believe that there are insects crawling on their skin.

When ending methamphetamine use, there are a variety of withdrawal symptoms that occur. Users may experience depression, anxiety, fatigue, paranoia, aggression, and intense cravings for the drug. Research has reported that as much as 50 percent of the brain's dopamine-producing cells can be damaged after prolonged exposure to relatively low levels of methamphetamine. Serotonin-containing nerve cells could be damaged even more extensively, and the toxicity of the drug can lead to psychosis.