

COCAINE

“Blow”, “Bump”, “Snow” are all names for the most powerfully addictive stimulant ever discovered- cocaine. In the U.S. an estimated 1.5 million people currently use cocaine. Where did it come from and what makes it so addictive?

In leaf form, native South American Inca societies chewed coca (the plant from which cocaine is made) for medical purposes as far back as 8,000 years ago. In the mid - 1800’s coca was developed into the product we now call cocaine. It was introduced as a type of medicine - in liquid form for toothaches, headaches, and general pain relief. It even became the main ingredient for the popular soda drink, Coca-Cola. In 1914, Congress passed a law to make non-medical cocaine use illegal. It dropped out of popularity quickly.



It wasn’t until the 1970’s that abuse of cocaine exploded. In disco dance clubs it was seen as rich, trendy, and fashionable to do cocaine. In ten years, the price of cocaine dropped dramatically and it’s negative consequences shown - damage to the nose, heart, brain and risk of overdose and death. In 1986 and 1988, Congress passed laws to make selling, possessing or distributing cocaine come with mandatory jail time.

EFFECTS & CONSEQUENCES

EFFECTS

- High-Blood Pressure
- Mood Disorders
- Dilated Pupils
- Sleeplessness
- Nosebleeds
- Loss of Appetite
- Weight Loss
- Memory Loss
- Lung Disease
- Heart Disease
- Attention Issues

CONSEQUENCES

- Tolerance
- Withdrawal
- Overdose
- Heart Attack
- Brain Damage
- Nose Collapse
- Infections
- Stroke
- Seizures

THERE IS NO “SAFE” LEVEL OF COCAINE USE. ADDICTION CAN HAPPEN IN JUST ONE USE, THE BRAIN’S REWARD SYSTEM IS QUICKLY ALTERED.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Go to www.intheknowzone.com for more information on substance abuse. Increase your knowledge using the information, statistics, images, and links. Test your understanding with a quick quiz.

**Don’t stay in the dark.
Get In the Know!**

in the know

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COCAINE

HARMFUL HIGH





THE HIGH OF COCAINE

Cocaine can be taken in a variety of ways, effecting how long a high lasts and how intense. The faster it is absorbed into the bloodstream, the more intense the high, but of shorter duration. Cocaine can be snorted through the nose, rubbed on the gums, injected into a vein (by mixing it with water and shooting up) or smoked as "crack." Snorting provides the slowest building high-usually lasting 15-30 minutes, while injection or smoking it makes a more intense high lasting about 5 minutes.

Small amounts of cocaine can make the user euphoric, talkative, energized and mentally alert. Increased self-confidence and ability to complete physical tasks leaves users wanting more. The high is so short-lived, it leads to users increasing how much they take in a short amount of time to make the high last - they are now binge using - which is very dangerous and potentially fatal.

BINGE USING

HOW IT AFFECTS THE BODY

Smaller amounts of cocaine cause the body to constrict the blood vessels and dilate the pupils. Users experience higher blood pressure and faster heartbeat, feeling sick to the stomach, restlessness and decreased appetite. In higher amounts muscle spasms, tremors, and seizures occur. Not to mention, the possibility of overdose. Overdosing on cocaine can cause a heart attack or stroke. First time users can die from overdose.

A QUICK PATH TO ADDICTION

Cocaine is addictive because it changes the way the brain functions in the long term. It changes the way the brain's reward circuit works. Flooding the brain with the chemical dopamine, (the brain's natural pleasure chemical) it blocks these chemicals from being absorbed. This leads to a buildup that gives the "rush". Leading users to come back again and again. This change causes the natural reward responses to eating and affection to change.



HEART ATTACK

There is no safe amount of cocaine use - just one "snort" may lead to addiction. Long term use of cocaine causes catastrophic damage to the human body. Snorting it leads to chronic nosebleeds, frequent runny nose, and trouble swallowing. Rubbing it on the gums leads to severe bowel decay from loss of blood flow. Injection puts one at high risk for contracting HIV and hepatitis. Finally, long-term users of cocaine become severely malnourished from not eating.

WITHDRAWAL

Cocaine withdrawal occurs in 3 stages - and is usually experienced by those that have not yet made the decision to quit. The first stage is the crash. The crash happens within 24 hours of a binge episode or heavy-repeated use. Symptoms in the crash stage include: lack of energy and motivation, increased hunger, irritability, anxiety, fatigue and extreme depression. The second stage is withdrawal. Withdrawal can last up to 10 weeks. Withdrawal from cocaine is usually non-life threatening, but if additional drugs or alcohol were used in conjunction with the cocaine - complications do occur.

Symptoms in the withdrawal stage are: trouble concentrating, low energy, changing moods, anxiety, paranoia, depression, and cravings. Finally, the third stage is extinction - lasting up to a 6 months. Symptoms for it are depression and cravings.

DEADLY CONSEQUENCES



BUYER BEWARE

On the street, cocaine is often "cut" with other drugs to make bigger amounts of sellable product and to increase drug dealers profits. Cocaine diluted with fentanyl is the deadliest of such combinations. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid, it doesn't even create the same effects as cocaine, but it is cheap and easy to get. It has been found in heroin, pills, cocaine, and other drugs with deadly consequences.

THERE ARE OPTIONS

Treatment for cocaine addiction focuses on behavior therapy including modifying negative emotions, behaviors and thoughts, providing motivational rewards for continued sobriety and finally providing support through therapeutic communities. Inpatient and outpatient programs are available to help individuals overcome cocaine addiction.

Death from cocaine is usually by cardiac arrest. Cocaine increases the heart rate and restricts blood flow at the same time - a deadly combination.