



LONG-TERM EFFECTS

People who use meth long-term may exhibit symptoms that include anxiety, confusion, insomnia, mood swings and aggressive behavior. They can also have psychotic symptoms (thoughts and behaviors that are not real), which might last for a long time, even after they stop using methamphetamine.

LONG TERM EFFECTS

- Addiction
- Psychosis
 - Paranoia
 - Hallucinations
 - Repetitive motor activity
- Changes in brain structure and function
- Deficits in thinking and motor skills
- Increased distractibility
- Memory loss
- Aggressive or violent behavior
- Mood disturbances
- Severe dental problems
- Weight loss

SHORT-TERM EFFECTS

Meth has long-lasting and harmful effects on the central nervous system. This brings about negative short-term effects like intense mood swings, confusion and violent behavior.

SHORT TERM EFFECTS

- Increased attention and decreased fatigue
- Increased activity and wakefulness
- Decreased appetite
- Euphoria
- Increased respiration
- Rapid/irregular heartbeat
- Hyperthermia

STRESS AND METH PSYCHOSIS

Research has found that stress can trigger a sudden return of methamphetamine psychosis (losing touch with reality) in individuals who have used meth and have had psychosis before. These issues are linked to big changes in the brain, including dopamine system changes that lead to slow movement and difficulty learning.

Studies have also shown that specific parts of the brain associated with emotions and memory are seriously affected. This may explain why individuals have trouble with their feelings and thinking capabilities.

HELP IS AVAILABLE

If you or someone you know is struggling with addiction, there are many resources including the substance abuse national hotline that is free, confidential, and available 24/7, 365 days a year.

1-800-662-HELP (4357) or

TTY: 1-800-487-4889.

This service provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations.

Also send your zip code via text message:

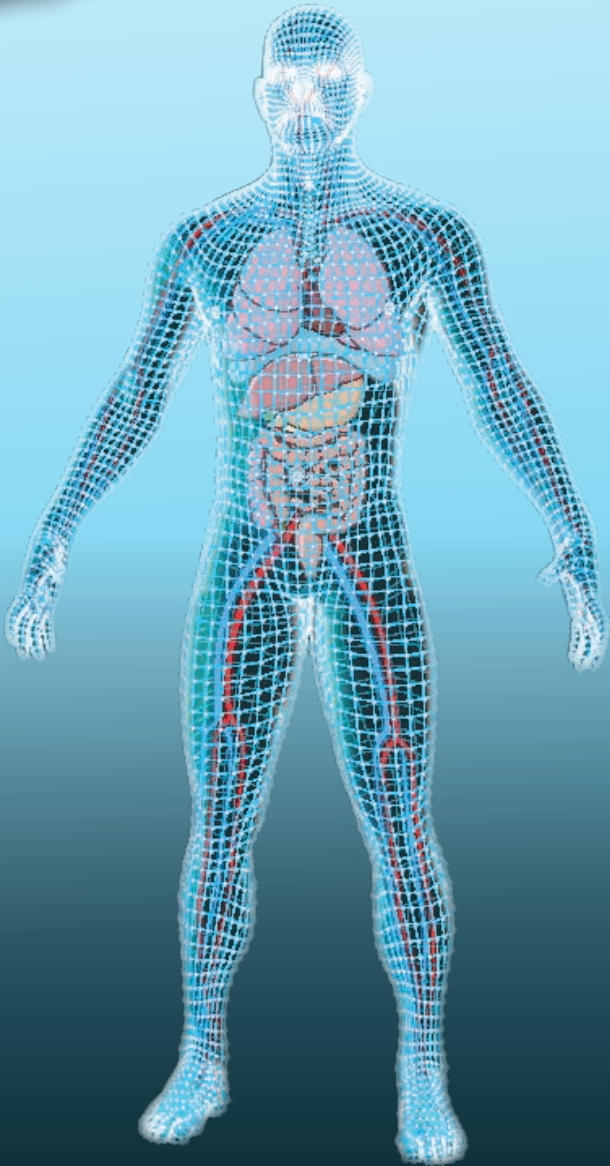
435748 (HELP4U) to find help near you.

in the know

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METHAMPHETAMINE

HOW IT AFFECTS THE BODY



WHAT IS METHAMPHETAMINE?

Methamphetamine, known as meth or crystal meth, is a powerful, highly addictive stimulant that affects the central nervous system. It takes the form of a white, odorless, bitter-tasting crystalline powder that easily dissolves in water or alcohol. Methamphetamine was developed early in the 20th century from its parent drug, amphetamine.

HOW DOES METH LEAD TO ADDICTION?

The exact ways that methamphetamine produces euphoria (the pleasurable high) are still poorly understood. But along with euphoria, methamphetamine use releases very high levels of the neurotransmitter dopamine in the reward circuit, which “teaches” the brain to repeat the pleasurable activity of taking the drug. Dopamine’s release in the reward circuit is a defining feature of addictive drugs. The elevated release of dopamine produced by methamphetamine is also thought to contribute to the drug’s damaging effects on the brain.



METH AND PREGNANCY

Our knowledge of the effects of methamphetamine use during pregnancy is limited because studies of this issue have used small samples and did not account for other possible drug use besides methamphetamine in research samples. But the available research indicates increased rates of premature delivery and various effects on babies prenatally exposed to methamphetamine, including small size, lethargy, and heart and brain abnormalities.

A large study examined infants and children born to mothers who used methamphetamine. In infancy, they were more likely to show decreased arousal, increased stress, and poor quality of movement. By ages 1 and 2, toddlers showed delayed motor development. Preschool and school-age children had subtle but significant attention problems and were more likely to have cognitive and behavioral issues in school related to difficulties with self-control.

METH AND TEETH

Cracked Teeth

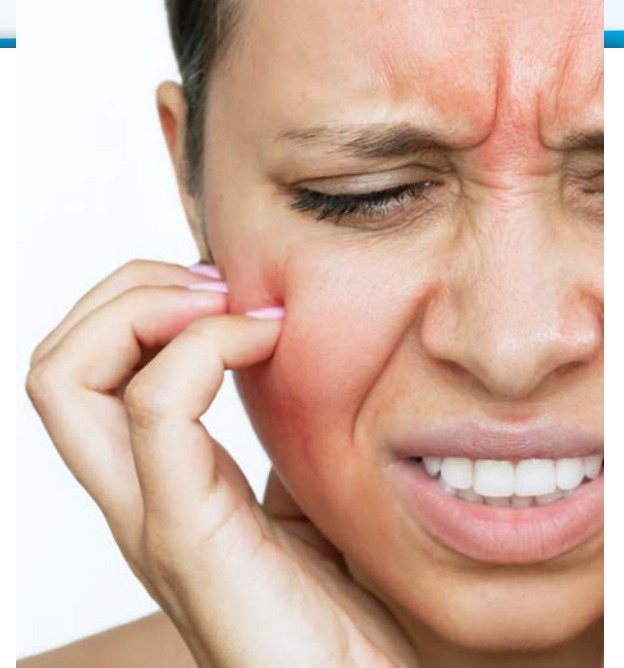
Methamphetamine can make the user feel anxious, hyper, or nervous, so they will clench or grind their teeth. You may see severe wear patterns on their teeth. Sometimes even biting or chewing soft foods, like mashed potatoes will cause their teeth to break.

Tooth Decay

Meth use leads people to crave beverages high in sugar mainly because they experience dry mouth. The bacteria that feed on the sugars in the mouth will secrete acid, which can lead to more tooth destruction. Tooth decay will start at the gum line, and eventually spread through out the tooth. The front teeth are usually destroyed first.

Gum Disease

Those who use methamphetamine do not seek out regular dental treatment. Lack of oral health care can contribute to the destruction of the bone that supports the teeth. Teeth and gums need blood to stay healthy. Methamphetamines cause the vessels that supply blood to oral tissues to shrink in size. A reduction in blood flow will cause the tissues to break down. Over time the blood flow can not recover and the tissue will die.



METH AND SKIN

Face sores are a visible side effect of using methamphetamine. They typically happen because meth makes a person scratch and pick at their skin, but they can also result from the drug’s toxic effects. The sores can take weeks or months to heal and often leave scars.

METH AND THE HEART

As a powerful stimulant, methamphetamine, even in small doses, can increase wakefulness and physical activity and decrease appetite. Methamphetamine can also cause a variety of heart problems, including rapid heart rate, irregular heartbeat, and increased blood pressure. Hyperthermia (elevated body temperature) and convulsions may occur with methamphetamine overdose and, if not treated immediately, can result in death.