

# METHAMPHETAMINE



**Methamphetamine** is an amphetamine-type stimulant. These stimulants affect the activity of certain chemicals in the brain. Methamphetamine is commonly known as **meth** and when it has a crystal-like appearance, it is known as **ice**.

If someone close to you is using **meth** – you are probably worried and concerned – most people are and this is a normal reaction. Common feelings include shock, disbelief, grief, anger and fear.

## Common signs of methamphetamine use include:

Relationship problems

Changes to eating patterns leading to poor nutrition

Sleep disturbance

Mood swings

Explosive outbursts

Reduced interaction with family

Trouble with the police

Sudden change of friends

Unexplained need for money

Declining school/work performance

## Harms associated with methamphetamine use can include:

Malnutrition and weight loss

Reduced resistance to infection

Violent behaviour

Emotional disturbances

Periods of psychosis

Paranoia

Delusional thoughts and behaviour

Mood swings

Increased risk of stroke and heart attack

## Tips on how to talk to a friend or family member who is using meth

### 1. Get your facts

- Call the **Meth Helpline** on **1800 874 878** and talk to a counsellor confidentially to get accurate information about meth; the signs and symptoms and what treatment and support options may be available.
- They will help you to clarify exactly what your concerns are and assist you in planning the steps needed to address the problem.

### 2. Maintain open and honest communication

- Choose an appropriate time to talk free of distractions and when they are not intoxicated.
- Try to remain calm and stick to the point you wish to get across. Listen carefully without being judgemental.
- Be clear and honest about your feelings, let them know how their drug use is affecting you.
- Use "I" statements instead of "you" statements. For example, try "I'm really worried about" instead of "you should..."

### 3. Negotiate and set guidelines

- Talk through with your partner/others involved and make decisions about what you are and aren't prepared to accept.
- Allow your friend/family member to experience the consequences of their behaviour.
- Don't make ultimatums that you aren't prepared to enforce.

### 4. Support and encourage positive behaviour

- Encourage the person to develop supportive networks.
- Congratulate them when they achieve their goals.

### 5. Don't forget to look after yourself

- Family and friends can experience a range of emotions as a result of a someone else's drug use and can be in more crisis than the user themselves. It's important to find ways of coping with stress and to access information and support from services who understand.
- Call the Meth Helpline to talk to a professional counsellor about how to get help.

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## Overdose

**Overdose** occurs when the level of intoxication from the drug reaches a point where it begins to produce physical and/or psychological harm. Overdose from methamphetamine usually results from the drug's stimulating effects and can cause strokes, heart failure, seizures and death. Overdose with amphetamine-type stimulants is referred to as 'toxicity'.

**Signs of a stimulant overdose** (e.g. ecstasy, speed, cocaine, methamphetamine):

Hyperactivity/sweating

Raised temperature

Rapid breathing/  
feeling that you can't breathe

Chest pain/pounding heart

Convulsions

Paranoid, delusional, irritable,  
anxious or psychotic behaviour

Severe Headache

Shaking/trembling/spasms

Difficulty passing urine

Disorientation

- **If you think someone is having an overdose call an ambulance (000) immediately.**  
Remember, police will not attend overdoses unless there is a death or ambulance staff are threatened.
- **If you are concerned about someone's mental health** you can contact the Mental Health Emergency Response Line (MEHRL) on **1300 555 788** (Metro callers), **1800 676 822** (Peel callers free call) or **1800 552 002** (Rural callers free call).

## Information and Support

**If you require immediate help call the emergency line (dial 000 from anywhere in Australia) for assistance.**

### Meth Helpline

The Meth Helpline is a free confidential, non-judgemental counselling, information and referral service for anyone concerned about their own or another person's meth use.

The service is available 24/7 via phone. Access via email and Live Chat instant messenger is also available.

Phone: **1800 874 878**

Email: **alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au**

Live Chat: **drugaware.com.au**

The Meth Helpline offers free, professional drug counselling and support.

The counsellor who answers your call or message can:

- **Listen to what is going on for you**
- **Provide you with information about meth**
- **Provide emotional support**
- **Talk about treatment options**
- **Refer you to local services that can provide ongoing support**

We can also provide:

- **Interim support to individuals waiting for face to face counselling/treatment**
- **A free ongoing call back service to socially and geographically isolated clients**
- **Support to health professionals working with individuals and families impacted by meth use**

**METH  
HELPLINE  
1800 874 878**

Drug use problems can be complex and often vary from person to person. It is important to note that the information provided is to be used as a guide only and may not be suitable for your own situation. If you are unsure about whether the provided information is right for you please call the Meth Helpline on 1800 874 878 for free counselling or support.

There are a range of harmful amphetamine-type stimulants including methamphetamine, which is the main focus of this publication. Every reasonable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this resource at the time of publication.

Image reference: ChemCentre. © Mental Health Commission MHC00114