



**METH**  
METHAMPHETAMINE  
**ALERT**



**METH**  
**KILLS**



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METHAMPHETAMINE  
**ALERT**

Methamphetamine use and production is a growing problem, particularly in rural areas. Meth is a dangerous and powerfully addictive drug that stimulates the central nervous system. Its popularity is on the rise because most of the ingredients used to make it can be purchased in local stores.

The drug is "cooked" in homemade labs and is highly addictive and deadly. Meth causes health problems not just for users but also for others who are exposed to the chemicals by living in or near current or former meth labs. Labs are frequently abandoned and are potentially explosive when toxic chemicals are left behind. This brochure will alert you to the growing methamphetamine problem in Pennsylvania and provide you with information on this deadly drug.



*Methamphetamine  
Crystals*



# Questions & Answers on METH METHAMPHETAMINE

## What is methamphetamine?

Meth is a man-made drug which stimulates the brain's central nervous system. Because it is relatively inexpensive and easily accessible, meth is becoming more popular among high school students. Meth is usually smoked. However it can also be snorted or injected with a needle. Other street names include Crystal, Ice, or Crank.

## Is methamphetamine addictive?

Yes, extremely. The binge-and-crash cycle that the drug creates can lead to addiction after only a one-time use. Severe exhaustion, depression, and a strong craving for more of the drug accompany the crash. The body's tolerance to methamphetamine builds quickly, which means that frequent users must take more and more to get the same effect.

## Who uses methamphetamine?

In the past, the typical user was an adult male with a lower than average income. Today, individuals of every age and economic status are using the drug. Methamphetamine is very popular with high school students as it is easily accessible and is relatively inexpensive.

## What does meth look like?

Meth is a crystal-like powdered substance that sometimes comes in large rock-like chunks. When the powder flakes off the rock, the shards look like glass, which is another nickname for meth. Meth is usually white or slightly yellow, depending on the purity.

## How is meth produced?

The most common chemicals used to start the meth-making process are over-the-counter cold and asthma medicines which contain ephedrine or pseudoephedrine as decongestants or stimulants. It can be produced in as few as six to eight hours using apparatus and cookware that can be quickly dismantled and sorted or relocated to prevent detection.

## What are meth labs?

Meth can be "cooked" in homes, boats, cars, motels and storage spaces. Labs are frequently abandoned and the potentially explosive and toxic chemicals are left behind. Chemicals may also be burned or dumped in woods, streams and along roads. The fumes and vapors associated with cooking meth can be toxic and hazardous to children, adults and the environment.



## What are the risks of using meth?

Meth is associated with many serious health problems. The drug increases body temperature and causes rapid heart beat, increased blood pressure and damage to the small blood vessels in the brain. Users suffer permanent damage as brain cells are left with altered nerve endings that do not re-grow. Damage to the brain puts users at higher risk of stroke, even years after quitting meth.

## What are the warning signs to watch for if someone is using methamphetamine?

- Loss of appetite – rapid weight loss
- High energy level or restlessness
- Insomnia, paranoia, dry mouth
- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Stealing and borrowing money from work, home, or friends
- Abrupt temper outbursts
- Deterioration in personal appearance and hygiene
- Sores on skin
- Declining performance at school, work, or home
- Hallucinations
- Unusual mood changes

## How can you fight meth use and production?

- Talk about the dangers of meth with your friends, neighbors and children. For help, visit the Partnership for a Drug Free America at [www.drugfree.org/parent](http://www.drugfree.org/parent).
- Work with local police to set up a Block Watch Program in your neighborhood.
- If you suspect a meth lab in your area, contact your local police or sheriff's department.
- Check out "Methamphetamine: Facts Everyone Should Know" at [www.attorneygeneral.gov](http://www.attorneygeneral.gov).

### Disclaimer:

It is important to note that this information may have changed since this piece was printed.

Skin becomes dry and gray. Many users experience the sensation of bugs crawling under their skin. The toxic chemicals cause a terrible body odor.

Brain damage can last for years, even after drug use is stopped. Additional side effects are anxiety, paranoia, increased aggression and instability, dizziness, hallucinations, seizures and memory loss.

Teeth rot and gums become black.

Increased risk of heart attack and stroke.

Liver, intestine and stomach can bleed internally.

Loss of appetite, resulting in extreme weight loss and malnutrition.

Loss of weight and muscle tissue may cause kidneys to fail. Transplant may become necessary.

Bones become brittle and break more easily.

# METH KILLS

# METH DESTROYS YOUR BODY