What is crystal methamphetamine?

Crystal methamphetamine is a colorless, odorless form of d-methamphetamine, a powerful and highly addictive synthetic (man-made) stimulant. Crystal methamphetamine typically resembles small fragments of glass or shiny blue-white “rocks” of various sizes. Like powdered methamphetamine (another form of d-methamphetamine), crystal methamphetamine is abused because of the long-lasting euphoric effects it produces. Crystal methamphetamine, however, typically has a higher purity level and may produce even longer-lasting and more intense physiological effects than the powdered form of the drug.

How is it abused?

Crystal methamphetamine typically is smoked using glass pipes similar to pipes used to smoke crack cocaine. Crystal methamphetamine also may be injected. A user who smokes or injects the drug immediately experiences an intense sensation followed by a high that may last 12 hours or more.

Who uses crystal methamphetamine?

Crystal methamphetamine is used by individuals of all ages and is increasingly gaining in popularity as a club drug. It is difficult to determine how many individuals in the United States use crystal methamphetamine because most illicit drug use surveys do not distinguish between crystal methamphetamine and powdered methamphetamine. Those surveys that do draw such a distinction reveal that use of crystal methamphetamine is prevalent. According to the University of Michigan’s Monitoring the Future Survey, nearly 5 percent of high school seniors in the United States used crystal methamphetamine at least once in their lifetime and 3 percent used the drug in the past year.

What are the risks?

Crystal methamphetamine use is associated with numerous serious physical problems. The drug can cause rapid heart rate, increased blood pressure, and damage to the small blood vessels in the brain—which can lead to stroke. Chronic use of the drug can result in inflammation of the heart lining. Overdoses can cause hyperthermia (elevated body temperature), convulsions, and death.

Individuals who use crystal methamphetamine also may have episodes of violent behavior, paranoia, anxiety, confusion, and insomnia. The drug can produce psychotic symptoms that persist for months or years after an individual has stopped using the drug.

Crystal methamphetamine users who inject the drug expose themselves to additional risks, including contracting HIV (human immunodeficiency virus), hepatitis B and C, and other blood-borne viruses. Chronic users who inject methamphetamine also risk scarred or collapsed veins, infections of the heart lining and valves, abscesses, pneumonia, tuberculosis, and liver or kidney disease.

What is it called?

The most common names for crystal methamphetamine are ice and glass. (Please see the Street Terms text box below for additional names.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Terms for Crystal Methamphetamine</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Batu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cristy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crystal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crystal glass</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hanyak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiropon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot ice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaksonjae</td>
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<tr>
<td>L.A. glass</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Is crystal methamphetamine illegal?

Yes, crystal methamphetamine is illegal. Crystal methamphetamine is a Schedule II substance under the Controlled Substances Act. Schedule II drugs, which include cocaine and PCP, have a high potential for abuse. Abuse of these drugs may lead to severe psychological or physical dependence.

Check out Fast Facts on:

- Crack cocaine
- Foxy
- GHB and analogs
- Heroin
- Inhalants
- Jimsonweed
- Ketamine
- Khat
- LSD
- Marijuana
- MDMA
- Methadone
- Methamphetamine
- OxyContin
- PCP
- Powdered cocaine
- Prescription drugs
- Psilocybin
- Ritalin
- Rohypnol
- Salvia divinorum
- Steroids
- Yaba

Other products of interest:

- Huffing—The Abuse of Inhalants
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Cocaine & Crack

Do you know?
- Cocaine and crack are powerful stimulants (drugs that increase energy and alertness).
- Cocaine and crack are sometimes confused as two different drugs when in fact they are the same drug in different forms.
- Cocaine is also known as coke, snow, blow and other names. Crack can be called rock.
- Cocaine and crack come from the leaves of the coca bush.
- Cocaine is an odorless, white crystal powder. Crack is a rock-like form of cocaine made from cocaine powder, baking soda and/or ammonia.
- Cocaine can be smoked, snorted or injected. When snorted or injected, effects last 30 to 40 minutes. Crack is usually smoked, and its effects last about 10 to 15 minutes.

Long-term Effects
After heavy use over a long period of time, a person may experience:
- chapped skin under the nose and damage inside the nose if snorted
- throat or lung irritations when smoked
- headaches
- problems experiencing pleasure without the drug
- sexual dysfunction in men (not able to have sexual intercourse)
- memory, attention and behaviour problems
- weight and appetite loss, eating disorders
- tooth decay
- weakened immune system (the body has a hard time fighting infections)
- seizures, heart problems or stroke
- intense depression (sadness), paranoia (feeling scared or suspicious for no reason) and hallucinations (hearing and seeing things that aren't really there)

Short-term Effects
While using a person may experience:
- enlarged pupils, dry mouth, stuffy nose
- feelings of euphoria (pleasure, well-being, confidence and power)
- more energy, alertness, less of a need to eat and sleep
- increased heart rate, blood pressure and breathing

High doses may cause such effects as:
- anxiety, unpredictable or violent behaviour, hearing or seeing things that aren't really there, blurred vision, headache, chest pain, muscle spasms, nausea and fever

Single high doses have been known to:
- contribute to seizures or death from stroke, heart attack or breathing problems

The Danger of Smoking Cocaine
Users of cocaine will become addicted more quickly if they smoke it as opposed to snorting it. That's because when cocaine is smoked, very high doses of the drug get to the brain quickly, which gives the user an immediate and very intense high.

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Tolerance and Dependence

- Regular users of cocaine and crack can rapidly develop a powerful psychological dependence (they feel they need it) and a physical dependence (the body needs it).
- Tolerance (the need for more of the drug to get the desired effect) occurs in some people but not in others.

Withdrawal Symptoms

- These can include excessive sleep, depression, anxiety, hunger, irritability and intense cravings.

Other Risks

- Cocaine and crack are illegal substances. Legal problems can result from having, using, making or selling cocaine or crack.
- Cocaine and crack are expensive street drugs. Financial problems can result from using these drugs.
- Cocaine or crack use during pregnancy increases risks of:
  - the baby dying before the due date
  - premature birth with low birth weights
  - stroke and brain damage prior to birth
  - irritability, sleep and feeding problems
- Infants being breast fed by mothers using cocaine or crack can suffer seizures.
- People can put themselves in risky situations when on this drug (driving while impaired, having unprotected sex, taking unsafe actions which could cause injury).
- Sharing pipes or needles can lead to infections such as HIV and hepatitis.
- Cocaine or crack are often mixed or diluted with other substances, and some of them are poisonous.
- Dangerous or fatal allergic reactions can occur if the user is allergic.

Mental Health

- Substance use and mental health problems often can occur together.
- Substance use may increase the risk of mental health problems.
- People with mental health problems are at higher risk of developing substance abuse problems.
  - Sometimes they use alcohol and other drugs to give themselves a break from mental health symptoms.
  - For most people, though, alcohol and other substance use only covers up the symptoms and may make them worse.

REMEmber: A person’s experience with any drug can vary. Here are a few of the many things that may affect the experience: the amount and strength of the drug taken, the setting, a person’s mood and expectations before taking the drug, gender, overall health, past experience with that drug and whether more than one drug is being used at the same time. Using alcohol and other drugs at the same time can be dangerous.

Sources and For More Information

Buzzed, Duke University Medical Centre, 1998.
Canadian Health Network Website: www.canadian-health-network.ca
Cocaine and Crack Information (brochure), Vancouver Island Health Authority.
Cocaine and Crack: The ABCs, AADAC, 1999.
National Institute on Drug Abuse Website: www.nida.nih.gov
Stimulants and Mental Health (brochure), VIHA.

For more information or for help with a drug or alcohol problem: Contact your local Addictions Foundation of Manitoba (AFM) office or visit the website at www.afm.mb.ca. AFM offers a broad range of prevention and rehabilitation services, including harm reduction and abstinence-based programs for alcohol, other drugs and gambling.

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Cannabis

Do you know?

- Cannabis sativa is a plant that contains the drug THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol). It is a unique drug, with effects that include sedation (feeling calm), euphoria (a sense of well-being) and hallucinations. THC’s hallucinogenic effects change the way you think, see and hear things.
- Cannabis is used to produce three drug products:
  - Marijuana (pot, weed, grass, dope) consists of the dried leaves and flowers of the plant.
  - Hashish (hash) is made from the dried resin at the top of the plant. It is often brown or black and “chunky” looking.
  - Hash oil is made from hashish. A sticky oil, it can be brown, black, red or clear. It is often placed in small bottles or caps.
- The THC content in today’s cannabis products is higher than it was years ago, resulting in a much stronger drug.
- Cannabis products are typically smoked. They can also be eaten.
- After smoking, the effects of THC are felt within a few minutes and usually last from three to four hours. When eaten, the effects may take an hour or more to be felt. THC may continue to affect users the next day.
- THC is stored in fat cells, and the body gets rid of it slowly. As a result, THC may be in the body up to 30 days after stopping use and even longer for frequent users.
- Smoke from a marijuana cigarette contains numerous chemicals, some of which are also found in tobacco smoke and are known to cause cancer.

Is cannabis legal?

Cannabis is an illegal drug in Canada. It is against the law to produce, sell, use or process this substance. Legislation for decriminalization now being considered will still make possession illegal. However, the penalty for possession for personal use versus trafficking will be a fine rather than jail time.

Short-term Effects

While using a person may experience:
- red eyes & lowered skin temperature
- increased heart rate and blood pressure
- drowsiness, slowed speech
- slow reaction time and poor coordination
- concentration and memory problems
- feelings of extreme pleasure, giggling and laughter
- hearing, seeing and feeling things differently (music may seem more distinct, colours may seem brighter, emotions may seem more intense)
- a strong desire for food
- a feeling that time is going slowly or quickly
- a feeling of being separated from reality and seeing or hearing things that aren’t really there
- panicky feelings, or paranoia (feeling scared or suspicious for no reason)
- dizziness or fainting with large, repetitive doses

Continued on Back...
Long-term Effects
After heavy use over a long period of time, a person may experience:
- short-term memory problems
- difficulty learning and problem solving
- breathing problems, frequent cough, lung damage, increased risk of cancer
- immune system problems (the body is unable to fight off infections as easily)
- reproductive system problems, such as low sperm counts, impotence in men (the inability to have sexual intercourse), irregular menstrual cycles in women
- fearfulness and anxiety are common after high doses
- decreased motivation, low energy and loss of interest in life

Tolerance and Dependence
- People who use cannabis often and regularly can develop a tolerance, so more is needed to get the same effect.
- Users can become psychologically dependent (feel they need the drug).
- Recent research shows that physical dependence (the body needs the drug) can occur, especially with long term, heavy users.

Withdrawal Symptoms
- Physical withdrawal symptoms can include trouble sleeping, irritability, loss of appetite, restlessness, anxiety, sweating, chills and mild nausea.
- Symptoms are usually fairly mild and may last for up to a week. However, cravings can last longer.
- Overdosing on cannabis is unlikely as long as it has not been mixed with other drugs.

Other Risks
- The use of cannabis by young people may negatively affect the reproductive system (a decrease in sex hormones in boys and menstrual cycle disturbances in girls).
- Cannabis use may be harmful to a developing baby (low birth weight, pre-mature birth, possible learning disabilities).
- People with heart disease or high blood pressure may be at risk for further complications.
- In certain cases, cannabis use may trigger a psychotic episode (a condition in which the person does not know what is real and what is not real).
- People can put themselves in risky situations when on this drug (driving while impaired, having unprotected sex, taking unsafe actions which could cause injury).

REMEmber: A person's experience with any drug can vary. Here are a few of the many things that may affect the experience: the amount and strength of the drug taken, the setting, a person's mood and expectations before taking the drug, gender, overall health, past experience with that drug and whether more than one drug is being used at the same time. Using alcohol and other drugs at the same time can be dangerous.

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