

Wisconsin Crime Prevention Practitioners Association

Emerging Drug Threats

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Methamphetamine

Amphetamines have been around for over a century and have been used to counter a variety of medical issues, however within the past 50 years people have taken this medication to a different level and found ways to abuse it. It is been on a rapid increase in the United States and is approaching the danger levels that we are seeing with the abuse of opiates.

What is meth

Amphetamines can be found in a variety of medications such as Adderall, Ritalin, and Concerta. However the drug can also be manufactured in homemade labs using the key ingredient of ephedrine and a variety of readily available products such as: lithium from batteries; brake cleaner; engine starter; rubbing alcohol and fertilizer.

It has many nicknames—*meth*, *crank*, *chalk*, *ice*, *glass* or *speed* being the most common.

How is it used

Meth can be smoked, snorted, injected or taken orally. The drug effects generally last from six to eight hours, but can last up to twenty-four hours.

Because the "high" from the drug both starts and fades quickly, people often take repeated doses in a "binge and crash" pattern. In some cases, people take methamphetamine in a form of bingeing known as a "run," giving up food and sleep while continuing to take the drug every few hours for up to several days.

Signs of use

Meth is a stimulant so the effects would correlate with that type of drug or medication. These effects can include: increased wakefulness and physical activity; decreased appetite; faster breathing; rapid/irregular heartbeat; increased blood pressure and body temperature.

What are the dangers

The dangers of meth are many. In part, meth abuse is so dangerous because this drug has an incredible ability to release dopamine in the brain, which creates intense feelings of pleasure. It also blocks the brain's natural ability to reabsorb dopamine, creating a lasting high. However, chronic meth abuse dramatically changes the way the brain functions, including reduced motor skills and impaired verbal learning. Longtime users generally have noticeable emotional and cognitive problems



