



Crystal Methamphetamine

Crystal Methamphetamine is an illegal drug that is being used more and more in the North, with the first stories about it being heard in 2006 in Iqaluit and Kuujjuaq. Crystal Methamphetamine is becoming popular because it is relatively inexpensive and provides a long-term “high,” but it also is dangerous to use.

What is Crystal Meth?

Crystal Methamphetamine (Crystal Meth) is also known as: chalk, crystal, white lady, tweak, glass, ice, speed, crissy, crank, tina, go-fast, and gib. It is a very powerful stimulant and highly addictive.

Crystal Methamphetamine is a crystalline powder that is sometimes prepared and sold as rock-like chunks. It may be white, yellow, brown or pink. The drug is eaten or snorted to create a short “high,” but most people smoke it or inject it into their body through a needle, for a longer high that can last from several hours up to a day.

How is it Made?

Crystal Meth can be made from harmful ingredients such as drain cleaner, battery acid, and lantern fuel. It also contains over-the-counter cold medications. It contains dangerous chemicals such as:

- Red phosphorous – used to make matches, fertilizer and pesticides.
- Hydrochloric acid – a very strong acid that can burn and dissolve skin.



- Anhydrous ammonia – can severely burn skin and the gas can cause lung damage and death.

Meth is often made in big labs, mixing and “cooking” all of the chemicals needed. This is dangerous: the flammable chemicals and liquids can cause fires or explosions.

Why do People use Crystal Methamphetamine?

- It can be made cheaply from household chemicals and it is very cheap to buy.
- Meth causes great happiness and pleasure, keeps you awake, gives you high energy, and makes you want to eat less.
- The “rush” lasts a lot longer than cocaine. Because the drug is so addictive, many people who start using it cannot quit.

What are the Negative Effects?

Crystal Methamphetamine causes the heart to beat faster, blood pressure to rise and body temperature

If you know someone who is using drugs, encourage them to get help before they harm their health.

to increase. The user may have uncontrolled, repetitive movements and is likely to get mad easily and fight with others.

Other short-term effects include:

- Extreme spikes in body temperature that can cause brain damage or death.
- Convulsions and hallucinations.
- Trouble sleeping, anxiety and feeling of panic.
- Feelings of isolation, moodiness and depression.
- Cracked lips.
- Itching/welts on skin.

Long-term effects can include:

- Extreme weight loss.
- Decayed teeth.
- Memory loss.
- Difficulty completing tasks.
- Slowed reaction times.
- Mental confusion.
- Thinking others are “out to get you.”

Treatment and Recovery

Experts say that Crystal Meth is one of the most addictive street drugs and one of the hardest addictions to treat. Addictions counsellors say that 92 per cent of those treated take the drug again.



Withdrawal symptoms, especially the depression and physical agony, are reported to be worse than heroin and cocaine. Often addicts will drop out of recovery programs because of these symptoms. Because the drug releases so much dopamine (the “feel good” chemical in the brain), when the

users come down from the high, they become very depressed and are unable to be happy because the drug stops their brain from producing more dopamine.

What Can We Do About Crystal Meth in Our Communities?

There is no safe way to take Crystal Meth. The dangers are just too great.

We all need to be aware of the effects of the drug and to warn people not to make it, sell it or use it.

If you know someone who is using drugs, encourage them to get help before they harm their health. We need to change the way users think and feel and show them better ways to deal with stress and have fun.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

There are alcohol and drug awareness programs, as well as wellness centres, in several Inuit communities. Talk to professionals at the alcohol and drug awareness program or wellness centre in your area for more resources on drugs, their effects and possible treatments.



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Telephone: 1-877-602-4445

E-mail: inuit@naho.ca

Web site: www.naho.ca/inuit/e/resources/

OTHER RESOURCES:

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse: you can search on this Web site for agencies and organizations in your territory or province that work on alcohol and drug prevention and awareness. Telephone: (613) 235-4048
Web site: www.ccsa.ca