Crystal Meth

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.) Street Terms for Crystal Methamphetamine Batu
Blade
Cristy
Crystal glass
Hanyak
Hiropon Hot ice
Kaksonjae
L.A. glass
L.A. ice
Quartz
Shabu Shards
Stove top
Super ice
Tina
Ventana
Vidrio

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.