

Frequently asked questions: Students

What is methamphetamine?

Methamphetamine is an amphetamine-type stimulant. Stimulants speed up the function of the brain and central nervous system. Methamphetamine comes in three different forms:

- powder or pills (speed) that can be swallowed, snorted or injected
- a thick, oily substance (base) that can be swallowed or injected
- crystals or coarse, crystal-like powder (ice) that can be smoked or injected.

Are a lot of students using methamphetamine?

Most school students do not use meth/amphetamine, including crystal methamphetamine (ice). The Australian School Students Alcohol and Drug Survey (ASSAD) - which surveys alcohol and drug use among 12 to 17 year old students - shows that use of Amphetamine Type Stimulants (ATS) has in fact, been decreasing over time. The latest Western Australian results demonstrate a downward trend in the percentage of students who reported ever using ATS – from 16.5% in 2002 to 5.2% currently.

For more information, see: [Fact Sheet 3: Putting methamphetamine into perspective.](#)

How might I be affected if I use methamphetamine?

As with any drug, the effects of methamphetamine vary from person to person and can depend on:

- how much is used
- mood
- body size such as weight and height
- overall health



- previous experience with this drug
- whether it is used on its own or in combination with other drugs
- purity and potency – which relates to the form of methamphetamine used, eg: speed or ice.

If you use methamphetamine, you could experience a combination of physical effects such as:

- increased heart rate and blood pressure
- difficulty sleeping
- restlessness
- headaches and dizziness

You might also experience a number of psychological effects such as:

- feeling confident, alert and energised
- being talkative
- feeling anxious or panicky
- feeling agitated, aggressive or being hostile

The longer you use methamphetamine the greater your risk of harm of experiencing negative effects such as:

- insomnia
- tolerance and dependence
- dental problems
- depression, anxiety and mood swings
- relationship breakdown
- periods of psychosis.

The purity of methamphetamine varies depending on what form of the drug is used. The higher purity of the crystal version of this drug – known as Ice - means that it is more concentrated and powerful in effect than when methamphetamine is used in the form of speed or base.



Using ice puts greater strain on the body and increases the risks of harm that may be experienced. It also leads to a more intense “comedown” after use – feeling physically and emotionally drained – often described as a “crash”. People have been known to experience serious mental and physical health difficulties after having used a lot of ice.

For more information on the effects of methamphetamine click on [Fact Sheet 2: About Ice](#)

Why do some people use methamphetamine?

The majority of people do not use illicit drugs, including methamphetamine. Those who do use them, will use them for a lot of different reasons. Some of these reasons might be:

- to experiment and satisfy curiosity
- to socialise
- to feel more confident
- to feel like they have more energy
- to do something that feels exciting
- to alleviate boredom
- to fit in because their friends are using it
- to feel less stressed
- to escape problems

As with any drug, the effects that people experience can be different and some people may have reactions to methamphetamine that are unpleasant or harmful, even when small amounts are used. Risks of harm are increased too because methamphetamine is an illegal drug and may be “cut” or mixed with other substances. This means that it is difficult to tell what the drug contains which increases the risk of unpredictable harmful effects.

The initial effects of drug use are short lasting where the problems that drug use can generate can last a lot longer. If you are struggling with stressful problems, feel that your confidence is low or are concerned about your own or someone else’s drug use, speak to someone you trust that can support you.



For more information about services that can provide you with the help you need, click on the [Who can help?](#) tab.

Where can I get more information?

Getting accurate information about methamphetamine and other drugs is very important. This means that you can be well informed and not relying on what you hear in the media or on what your friends might tell you they think is true. These sites are reliable and accurate and based in Australia.

Drug Aware

<http://drugaware.com.au/>

This is a Western Australian site that has reliable information on all types of drugs including methamphetamine.

Australian Drug Foundation

<http://www.adf.org.au/>

This site has reliable information on all types of drugs including methamphetamine

National Cannabis Information and Prevention Centre

<https://ncpic.org.au/>

This site gives you information about cannabis and where to get help for you own or others problems with this drug.

For other useful weblinks [click here](#)



Where can I get more help?

If you would like to talk to someone about a problem you, a family member or friend are experiencing related to drugs, there are some really good help and support lines where you can talk to someone on the phone or chat online. No matter how big a problem seems, confiding in a trusted adult can really help. Don't be on your own. We are all human and can all have problems. Talk to your parents, a teacher or another staff member at your school who will also support you in getting the help you need.

Here are some links to help and support lines. [Getting help](#) and [Weblinks](#) provides additional support and information.

Drug Aware

<http://drugaware.com.au/>

This is a Western Australian site that has reliable information on all types of drugs including methamphetamine.

Alcohol and Drug Support Line

<http://www.dao.health.wa.gov.au/Gettinghelp/24HourAlcoholAndDrugSupportLines/AlcoholAndDrugSupportLine.aspx>

9442 5000 or 1800 198 024 (country callers), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

The Alcohol and Drug Support Line is a confidential, non-judgmental telephone counselling, information and referral service for anyone seeking help for their own or another person's alcohol or drug use. The counsellor who answers your call can listen to what is going on for you and provide you with information about drug use. They will also talk about who can help you and refer you to local services that can give you support.



Kids Helpline

<http://www.kidshelpline.com.au/grownups/news-research/hot-topics/alcohol-and-other-drugs.php>

1800 55 1899, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

The counsellors on this helpline talk with more than 5,500 kids each week and can help with all sorts of problems, big and small. You can contact Kids Helpline via phone or email. If your problem is urgent, or if you need to speak to someone straight away, call the helpline.

You don't need to tell the counsellor your name and the information you discuss will remain confidential, unless the counsellor feels that your life or another person's life is in danger.

Beyond Blue

www.beyondblue.org.au

1300 22 4636, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Support for depression, anxiety and related disorders.

Lifeline

<https://www.lifeline.org.au/>

131114, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Confidential telephone counselling

Is it ok to ask for help?

One of the most important things to learn about how to help ourselves when we are struggling or worried is to allow ourselves to ask for help. Asking for help is not



easy. Sometimes even though we know we need to confide in someone to help us deal with a problem, we avoid talking about it because we are afraid that no-one can help, worried about what might happen or change, concerned about upsetting others, or embarrassed that we have a problem in the first place. Other times we feel that we need to be resourceful and solve our problems by ourselves. When our problem is with drug use, for some reason we can feel even more worried about confiding in anyone.

If you are using a drug that is illegal, like cannabis or methamphetamine, or you are drinking but you are underage, asking for help might seem even harder. Maybe you are worried about getting into trouble with your parents, at school, with the law, or just concerned that people won't understand and will react or judge you. Maybe it is someone else's drug use you are worried about.

When we do pluck up the courage and ask for help though, more times than not, the guidance and support that we need will be offered and we can talk things through and then things can start to get better.

So, find out who you can talk to at school. Also, there are some really good help and support lines where you can talk to someone on the phone or chat online. If you click on the [Who can help?](#) tab, you will find links to lots of help lines that can give great information as well as advice and support. The people you will talk to have the experience and knowledge to point you in the right direction to get the help you need.

What to do in an emergency

If you are worried that you or someone else may be at immediate risk due to having used methamphetamine – and/or other drugs – call Triple Zero (000). Generally, paramedics will not involve the police unless they feel threatened by someone's behaviour, consider others



to be under threat, if a crime has been committed or if someone dies. Don't wait until it is too late, call for help straight away.

Who should I talk to when I need help?

When you have a problem, sometimes it might feel easier to talk to a friend or a brother or sister rather than to your parents, a teacher, or other adult. The truth is though that sometimes you need the experience and greater knowledge and expertise that can only be provided by talking to a trusted adult like one of your parents, a teacher, other school staff member or a professional drug support worker.

School staff and other professionals are bound by confidentiality which means that what you talk about with them will stay between you. They will let you know if and when they need to share information about your situation with others and this will only be to make sure you get the best help possible. The only exception to this is if they were to be extremely worried about you or someone connected to you. In this case, they may have to involve someone else without discussing it just to keep everyone safe. Don't be afraid to ask about confidentiality as school staff and health professionals will be open about this and explain everything to you upfront. All they want to do is to make sure they give you the help you need.

No matter how big a problem seems, confiding in a trusted adult can really help. Don't be on your own. We are all human and can all have problems and the best way to get through our problems is to ask for help.

Where else can I get help?

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