

# CRYSTAL-D-METHAMPHETAMINE HYDROCHLORIDE



## WHAT IS IT?

Crystal d-methamphetamine hydrochloride - or 'Crystal', as it is more generally known - is a powerful, addictive, synthetic, stimulant drug. Crystal often appears as large, transparent, 'sheet-like' crystals, and may also be artificially coloured, often pink, blue, or green. It is also known on the street as 'Meth' and less commonly, as 'Ice'.

## WHO USES IT?

People who use Crystal come from a variety of backgrounds, and use it for a variety of reasons. Crystal is often used recreationally as a 'party drug', or to heighten and extend sexual pleasure. Some people also use Crystal to help them stay awake for extended periods of time

## WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF CRYSTAL?

The effects of any drug (including Crystal) vary from person to person, depending on factors including:

- The individual's size, weight, and health;
- How much and how the drug is taken;
- Whether the person taking the drug has a tolerance to it from using it previously;
- Whether other drugs are taken with Crystal.

Environmental factors, such as whether the person taking the drug is alone, with others, or at a party, can also affect the experience of taking the drug.

Crystal is a potent stimulant drug that speeds up the activity of the central nervous system.

Although few deaths have been reported in Australia as a direct result of using crystal, it is considered more addictive, and is associated with more significant physical, psychological, emotional and social harm than other types of amphetamines.

'Amphetamine psychosis', which Crystal users may suffer at any time they take the drug, has symptoms resembling those of paranoid schizophrenia. Once a person using Crystal has experienced 'amphetamine psychosis' they are likely to continue experiencing these symptoms again every time they

## HOW IS IT USED?

Like other methamphetamines, Crystal is usually smoked, swallowed, snorted, or injected. In rare cases it has also been inserted anally. Smoking or injecting Crystal produces a particularly rapid onset of the drug's effects. Smoking or inhaling crystal has become more common in Australia in recent times. The glass pipe used for smoking Crystal has recently been prohibited for sale within Victoria.

use the drug. The use of very high doses of Crystal can cause permanent damage to blood vessels in the brain and, in extreme cases, death.

Other common physical effects of Crystal use include:

- Dry mouth;
- Severe headache;
- Excessive sweating;
- Increased blood pressure;
- Rapid and irregular heartbeat;
- Burnt, dry, or cut lips;
- Blurred vision; and;
- Increased breathing rate;
- Nausea;
- Dizziness;
- Increased body temperature;
- Dilated pupils;
- Tremors of the hands and fingers.

Crystal use can also affect a person's behaviour by causing:

- An increase in physical activity;
- Restlessness and anxiety;
- Aggression, hostility, and violence.
- An elevated mood;
- Chronic insomnia;

Paranoia or panic attacks associated with hallucinations; Euphoria and well-being, talkativeness, and repeating simple acts or tasks; and,

Abrupt shifts in thought and speech, which can make someone using crystal difficult to comprehend. Longer-term use of crystal may result in:

- Severe depression;
- Convulsions;
- Dental problems;
- Heart-related complication
- Decreased appetite, leading to possible malnutrition and rapid weight loss, and;
- Heart-related complications (heart attack and heart failure have been associated with chronic use).
- Paranoia;
- Hallucinations;
- Lung and kidney disorders, which can prove fatal;

## METHAMPHETAMINES AND OTHER DRUGS

The effects of using a combination of drugs are often difficult to predict. Depressant drugs (drugs that slow down or depress the activity of the central nervous system) such as alcohol or benzodiazepines, are sometimes used as an attempt to counteract the stimulant effects of Crystal. However, the use of several drugs in this way may lead to regular or dependent use of a variety of drugs.

## CRYSTAL & SEX

Crystal use can increase a person's need and urgency for sex. This, and other effects of Crystal use, can make it easier to be reckless and forget to use condoms and water-based lube where advisable.

Sometimes crystal use can cause erectile dysfunction (also known as 'crystal dick') which may lead people to decide to be the receptive partner ('bottom') in anal fucking. It is very important to keep a good supply of condoms and water-based lube for the situations where this might occur.

The use of Crystal also allows a person to have sex for much longer periods of time than usual. This often results in tears, chafing, and other trauma to the penis, rectum, or vagina, which can dramatically increase the possibility of transmission of HIV and other STI's.

If you are fucking for a long period of time it is important to use additional lube to protect both the body and the condom from tearing.

## CRYSTAL, HEPATITIS, & HIV

Smoking crystal may result in heat burns and cuts to the lips, which increase the risk of transmission of blood-borne viruses such as Hepatitis C. Cover the pipe with some plastic tape after each use to avoid transmission, or don't share a pipe.

Injecting crystal places the user at increased risk of Hepatitis C infection, particularly if needles, syringes, and any other injecting equipment (for example spoons, filters, tourniquets) are shared. Clean and new injecting equipment should be used each time. Injecting drugs carries a risk of HIV transmission if needles and syringes are shared or re-used.

## TOLERANCE AND DEPENDENCE

Many users have described crystal as a very 'more-ish' drug. Users are encouraged to only buy or carry small amounts of Crystal as this can help to protect them from accidentally overdosing. Crystal is known to be a drug upon which it is easy to become physically and/or psychologically dependent.

People who are psychologically dependent on Crystal crave the drug and find that using it becomes far more important than other activities in their life.

Physical dependence occurs when a person's body adapts to the presence of the drug and they become increasingly used to functioning with the drug in their system.

Because regular users can quickly develop a tolerance to Crystal, greater doses are needed to achieve the desired effects. The extreme exhaustion that can follow a methamphetamine 'binge' (ie a sustained use of methamphetamines) can also create an over-powering desire to use even more of the drug as a 'pick-me-up'.

## TREATMENT

It has been reported that people are less likely to seek professional help for dependence problems with Crystal and other methamphetamines than with other drugs. Research is currently being conducted into the most appropriate treatment models for Crystal and other methamphetamine users in Australia. Possible treatments include both psychosocial and behavioural approaches specific to methamphetamine users.

## WITHDRAWAL

Some people experience withdrawal symptoms once they have stopped using Crystal. These symptoms may include:

- Severe depression;
- Long periods of sleep;
- Decreased energy;
- Anxiety; and,
- Apathy;
- Disorientation;
- Agitation;
- Limited ability to experience pleasure.

People who take crystal have reported that the depression experienced after they use the drug is not like coming down from other drugs. They report an inability to cope, extreme depression, and disruption to sleeping patterns which, in turn, affects their ability to work and function. If you need help coming down (or coming off it altogether) you can contact Direct Line 1800 888 236.

## METHAMPHETAMINES AND DRIVING

It is unsafe to drive after using Crystal.

Drivers under its influence are more likely to take risks. The severe tiredness often experienced when the effects of Crystal wear off can create a further driving risk.

It is illegal to drive while under the influence of any drug (including Crystal).

Breaking this law carries penalties, including disqualification from driving, fines, and/or imprisonment.

For further information and/or support please telephone RhED on 03 9534 8166.



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