



Substance Use

Meth, cocaine and other stimulants

Do I have a problem - what is drug addiction?

It affects a person's brain and behavior, and leads to an inability to limit or moderate the use of a drug or medication. When you're addicted, you may continue using the substance despite the harm and consequences it causes. Addiction can start with experimental use of a substance in social situations, which may become more frequent, or if you are abusing a prescribed medication. As time passes, you may need larger doses of the drug to get high or reduce pain. Soon you may need the drug just to feel normal. As your drug use increases, it's difficult to go without the drug and attempts to stop may cause intense cravings and make you feel physically ill (withdrawal symptoms).

What are meth, cocaine, and other stimulants and how do they affect you?

Stimulants include amphetamines, meth (methamphetamine), cocaine, methylphenidate (e.g. Ritalin, Concerta) and amphetamine-dextroamphetamine (e.g. Adderall, Adderall XR). They are often used and misused in search of a "high," or to boost energy, to improve performance at work, or to lose weight or control appetite.

Signs and symptoms of use and dependence include:

- Feeling of exhilaration and excess confidence
- Increased alertness, energy and restlessness
- Behavior changes, aggression, impaired judgment
- Rapid or rambling speech
- Dilated pupils
- Confusion, delusions and hallucinations
- Irritability, anxiety, insomnia, or paranoia
- Changes in heart rate, blood pressure and temperature
- Nausea or vomiting with weight loss
- Nasal congestion and damage to mucous membrane
- Mouth sores, gum disease and tooth decay
- Depression as the drug wears off

Complications of dependency include:

- Multiple short-term and long-term mental and physical health problems
- Psychosis, seizures, overdose, or death
- Physical changes to some nerve cells (neurons) in your brain
- Getting an infectious disease
- Engaging in dangerous behavior
- Marital and family problems
- Failing to fulfill obligations or put others at risk at work or home
- Legal issues and financial problems

Where can you turn for support?

In addition to a health care professional, you can seek support from a trusted friend, colleague or family member. Your union or HR rep can provide referrals, including financial resources. National and local resources are available to both the individual and to those offering support, and include:

- SAMHSA Substance Use Treatment Locator – <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-treatment> – 1-800-662-4357
- Entertainment Industry Therapist Finder – btshelp.org/findatherapist

You can find links to self diagnostic tools at btshelp.org/substanceuse