

## Meth, a resurgence

Have you heard about the recent increase in the use of Methamphetamine? Nationwide “Meth” has been making a comeback. Recently South Dakota launched a controversial slogan; “[Meth. We’re on It](#)”



This campaign employed a provocative play on words; “We’re on it” meaning we are addressing this crisis or we are on it meaning we are using this drug. The crusade set out to call attention to the resurgence of Methamphetamine’s deadly rise and in this quest, the campaign was successful, receiving nationwide attention.



The New York Times reported, “The scourge of crystal meth, with its exploding labs and ruinous effect on teeth and skin, has been all but forgotten amid national concern over [the opioid crisis](#). But 12 years after Congress took aggressive action to curtail it, meth has returned with a vengeance” Online: [Meth, the Forgotten Killer, Is Back. And It’s Everywhere.](#)

**Maine is no exception to this resurgence.** This past month News Center Maine and WGME Channel 13 both aired stories on the increasing threat of this highly addictive and dangerous drug. [Crystal Meth is on the rise in Maine](#) and [Meth Use on the Rise in Maine](#)



Methamphetamine is a highly addictive stimulant that affects the central nervous system. “The consequences of methamphetamine misuse are terrible for the individual—psychologically, medically, and socially. Using the drug can cause memory loss, aggression, psychotic behavior, damage to the cardiovascular system, malnutrition, and severe dental problems” Online: [NIH-Methamphetamine](#)

“These dangers associated with methamphetamine abuse are frightening and unparalleled. According to the Drug Abuse Warning Network, almost 500,000 drug-related emergency department episodes have been recorded annually, with meth-related hospital admissions increasing by 366% during the last ten years alone. **Some students may justify the use of small doses of methamphetamine, falsely believing**

**that they can experience the euphoric effects of the drug without risks.** However, even taking small amounts of methamphetamine can result in [severe] negative consequences... with the most terrifying result; unexpected and sudden risk of death, which can occur without any sign or warning. While overdose may induce warning signs with other drugs, individuals who abuse methamphetamine may suffer a fatal heart attack or stroke at any time and with little indication” Online: [Meth at the University: Who Uses It and Why?](#)

*“One of the first symptoms of meth abuse is a sudden loss of interest in areas of life that were once important to the person. Hobbies, relationships, [academic goals] and career goals will all begin to take a back seat to getting and using meth. Initially, many people will attempt to hide their drug use, but the longer someone uses meth, the more prominent it becomes in their lives. Methamphetamine chemically alters how a [person] thinks and feels, which can make what was once a recreational drug activity a major life priority... Meth is more dangerous than other [stimulants](#) because a larger percentage of the drug remains unchanged in the body and stays present in the brain longer. The drug is toxic to nerve terminals in the brain and meth can destroy the brain cell synapses where dopamine is released, causing mood disturbances and dependence on the drug. Prolonged meth use changes the brain chemistry of [a person], destroying the wiring in the brain’s pleasure center, and makes it increasingly difficult to experience any sort of pleasure without the drug... The effects of meth can last anywhere from 8 to 24 hours, which is a relatively long time compared to other substances. [Individuals using Meth] will often stay awake for several days straight if they engage in binge use.*

*“Tweaking”– a period of [anxiety](#) and [insomnia](#) that can last for 3 to 15 days, occurs at the end of a drug binge when a person using meth can’t achieve a rush or high any longer. Tweaking can cause psychological side effects, such as paranoia, irritability, and confusion due to the desperation to use again. Tweaking from meth can also cause people to experience hallucinations and become prone to violent behavior.*

*Another sign that someone is using meth is the crash phase. During this period, the body is deprived of the dopamine that meth was previously supplying and causes extreme exhaustion. A crash can last anywhere from 1 to 3 days and is characterized by long periods of sleep, intense drug cravings, and depression”* To read this article in its entirety [Symptoms and Warning Signs of Meth Abuse](#)

The DEA lists common street names for the drug. “These are as follows; Batu, Bikers Coffee, Black Beauties, Chalk, Chicken Feed, Crank, Crystal, Glass, Go-Fast, Hiropon, Ice, Meth, Methlies Quick, Poor Man’s Cocaine, Shabu, Shards, Speed, Stove Top, Tina, Trash, Tweak, Uppers, Ventana, Vidrio, Yaba, and Yellow Bam

Methamphetamine can come in pill or powder form. Crystal meth resembles glass fragments or shiny blue-white “rocks” of various sizes.

Meth can be swallowed, snorted, injected, or smoked. To intensify the effects, users may take higher doses of the drug, take it more frequently, or change their method of intake”

Online: [DEA Fact Sheet Methamphetamine](#)

<p><b>Methamphetamine</b> - often called "meth"- is an addictive stimulant that users smoke, snort, inject or swallow. It effects the <b>brain and the nervous system</b>.</p> <p>Street names for methamphetamine include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Meth</b></li> <li>• <b>Speed</b></li> <li>• <b>Ice</b></li> <li>• <b>Crank</b></li> <li>• <b>Crystal</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Some of the signs of Meth use include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not sleeping for long periods of time</li> <li>• Extreme weight loss</li> <li>• Dramatic mood swings</li> <li>• Increased heart rate, blood pressure and breathing</li> <li>• Hallucinations</li> <li>• Paranoia or excessive panic</li> <li>• Nervous Activity</li> <li>• Irritable, aggressive, even violent behavior</li> <li>• Open sores caused by picking at the skin</li> </ul>
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Infographic- Online: [Methamphetamine in Maine](#)

NIH National Institute Drug Abuse created a 2:40 minute video to demonstrate the brains response to Methamphetamine: [The Reward Circuit: How the Brain Responds to Methamphetamine](#)



DEA website

**For more information, comments on this collection of readings or suggestions for future newsletters, contact:**

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