



# The Resurgence of Methamphetamine in Maine

*Substance Misuse Prevention Newsletter: A Collection of Readings*

November/December 2020  
Volume 3, Issue 3

## Consequences of Use

Methamphetamine use can have a devastating impact on both physical and mental health. The National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIH] (2019) explains that those who use Meth for long periods of time can have profound and debilitating symptoms. Some symptoms, particularly symptoms of psychosis, may persist for months or even years after they stop using. Some of these symptoms may include the following:

- Psychosis, including:
  - paranoia
  - hallucinations
  - repetitive motor activity
- Changes in brain structure and function
- Deficits in thinking and motor skills
- Increased distractibility
- Memory loss
- Aggressive or violent behavior
- Mood disturbances
- Severe dental problems
- Weight loss"

---

University Health and Counseling Services

## Rising Numbers

According to the Maine CDC, there was a 63% increase in investigations relating to the distribution of Methamphetamine between 2018 and 2019. Furthermore, Methamphetamine related deaths have doubled since 2018. The Maine CDC saw about 26 deaths in 2018 compared to 47 Methamphetamine related deaths in 2019. Not only is Meth becoming more predominant within our communities, but it is also becoming more potent, which increases the likelihood of lethality in those who use it (Bangor Daily News, 2020).

### **Maine CDC's Substance Use Trends Report for 2020:**

<https://www.maine.gov/health/documents/2020/SEOW%20EpiProfile%202020%2010.19.20.pdf>

### **NPR's, Maine Calling Episode that Explores the Uptick in Methamphetamine Use in Maine:**

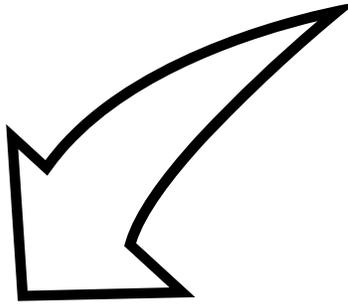
<https://www.maine.gov/health/documents/2020/SEOW%20EpiProfile%202020%2010.19.20.pdf>

### **Story By Bangor Daily News:**

<https://bangordailynews.com/2020/01/21/news/i-put-my-body-through-so-much-maines-growing-meth-addiction-scourge-and-how-some-find-recovery/>

## Terminology

Often those who use Methamphetamine will use words such as Meth, Speed, Ice, Crank and Crystal to describe this substance.



## **Meth Fact Sheet: A Quick Guide on How to Identify Meth and Those who May be Using it**

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/population-health/prevention/community/meth/documents/MaineMethFactSheetNov2017.pdf>

### **Supplies & Materials Used to Make Meth**

- Camp Fuel
- Lithium Batteries
- Pseudoephedrine
- Muriatic Acid
- Instant Cold Pack
- Coffee Filters
- Starter Fluid
- Aluminum Foil
- Drain Cleaner
- Ephedrine

## **How to Spot Meth Use**

### **Signs & Symptoms**

- Insomnia
- Weight Loss
- Labile Mood
- Increase in heart rate, blood pressure and breathing
- Hallucinations
- Paranoia or Panic
- Feeling Nervous
- Irritable, Aggressive or Violent Behaviors
- Open Sores from Skin Picking

### **Structural and Functional Changes in the Brain**

Meth use has been implicated in both structural and functional dysfunction in the brain. Microglia cells are often affected, which consequently limits the brain's ability to ward off "infectious agents" and discard of damaged neurons (NIH, 2019). Over time this may also cause Meth to become more toxic to the brain due to alterations in protective mechanisms (i.e. microglia cells) (NIH, 2019). Additionally, Meth causes an increase in levels of dopamine. Abnormal levels of this neurotransmitter can wreak havoc on the brain's ability to function (NIH, n.d.). Alterations in dopamine systems may result in impaired verbal learning, motor skills and memory (NIH, 2019).

#### **Article by NIH about Consequences of Use:**

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/methamphetamine/what-are-long-term-effects-methamphetamine-misuse>

#### **NIH "Mind Matter" Videos and Methamphetamine Information:**

<https://teens.drugabuse.gov/teachers/mind-matters/methamphetamine>

**For Comments on this newsletter or suggestions for future articles please contact: Diane Geyer, LCPC, LADC, CCS, NCC~ Clinician and Coordinator of Clinical Substance Use Services at USM or Jillian Littlefield, RN and Graduate Assistant ~ Email: [diane.geyer@maine.edu](mailto:diane.geyer@maine.edu), [jillian.littlefield@maine.edu](mailto:jillian.littlefield@maine.edu)**