

may be able to save their life.

HOW CAN YOU TELL IF SOMEONE HAS OVERDOSED?

The signs of amphetamine overdose include:

- Getting headaches and chest pains
- Breathing very fast
- Getting hot and sweaty
- Getting panicky and shaky
- Getting agitated, anxious and paranoid

If you think a person has overdosed:

- Stay calm and try to calm them down
- Dial triple zero (000) and ask for an ambulance, or
- Get them to a doctor straight away
- Tell the ambulance officer exactly what they have been using

AMPHETAMINE PSYCHOSIS

Amphetamine psychosis can happen to people who are using heavily and regularly.

They may:

- See and hear things that aren't there
- Be very paranoid (suspicious)
- Think that 'weird things' are happening to them

- Get angry and aggressive very quickly
- They may not see that using amphetamines is causing these problems. They may think they are going mad.

People who get amphetamine psychosis need help from a mental health professional, as well as help with their drug use.

HELP FOR AMPHETAMINE USERS

If a person is concerned about their amphetamine use, then they need to be encouraged to get help from their local

Aboriginal Health Worker, doctor or a drug and alcohol service.

Families and friends who are worried about someone who is using amphetamines can also get support and information from these places.

This pamphlet has been produced at the Aboriginal Drug & Alcohol Council (SA) Inc. (ADAC) as part of the Resource Package about Illicit Drugs for Indigenous Workers. All the information in the pamphlet is believed to be accurate at February 2003. As ADAC has no control over the way that this pamphlet will be used or by whom, we disclaim any responsibility for the outcomes of training or interventions which rely on or make use of this material.



**ABORIGINAL
DRUG AND ALCOHOL
COUNCIL (SA) INC.**



**INDIGENOUS
SUBSTANCE MISUSE
HEALTH PROMOTION UNIT.**

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**AMPHETAMINES
AND METH
AMPHETAMINES**

**Important things
to know!**

AMPHETAMINES AND METH-AMPHETAMINES

Important things to know about amphetamines

AMPHETAMINES AND METH-AMPHETAMINES

WHAT IS IT?

Amphetamines and meth-amphetamines are man-made drugs. They speed up the way the body works.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Amphetamines can look like dirty coloured powder or crystals. Meth-amphetamine looks like clumpy sugar crystals or a waxy paste and is sold in 'points'. Both have the same effects.

HOW IT IS USED?

Both amphetamine and meth-amphetamine can be injected. Other forms of amphetamines can be swallowed, snorted or smoked.

WHO USES IT AND WHY?

People use drugs for many different reasons. Frustration, boredom, difficulties and problems with other people, curiosity and because it makes a person feel good. Some people may use it a few times and then decide they don't like it. Other people use amphetamines occasionally, say at weekends. Some people find they have to use it every day: they come to feel dependent on amphetamines. Each way of using may have its own problems. First time users may not know how much is safe to take and may overdose. Heavy users run a greater risk of physical and mental health problems.

WHAT EFFECTS DOES IT HAVE?

Amphetamines can affect different people in different ways. Generally though, the person will feel like they have lots of confidence and energy and are able to do anything. They may talk a lot more and seem tense, fidgety and twitchy.

These effects may last for several hours. Afterwards, the person will usually get the 'amphetamine hangover' and feel exhausted, and have no energy. They may not be able to sleep well. They may feel depressed and may not want to use again. These feelings can last 1-3 days.

LONG TERM USE

Health: People using for a long time may get thin and run down because they can't sleep well, may not eat and get restless. People injecting amphetamines may develop problems with their veins. If they are sharing injecting equipment, they run the risk of getting blood borne viruses, especially hepatitis C.

Mental and emotional problems: Amphetamines can make a person see and hear things that aren't there. They can get very suspicious and angry and think that weird things are happening to them. People having these thoughts need to take a break from amphetamines because they risk developing amphetamine psychosis. People who get amphetamine psychosis have hallucinations and delusions and may get very angry and aggressive. These people need help from a mental health professional.

Family and community problems: A person using amphetamines can cause problems for the people around them because of the way it affects their moods. Money may become a problem. Relationships can be damaged.

The law: Amphetamines are illegal and expensive.

People risk trouble with the law for possessing it, using it or dealing it.

Needing it all the time: People who use amphetamines regularly and heavily may find they need to use more and more of it to get the same effect. They can get to the point where they feel that they need it to be able to do anything at all. They become dependent on amphetamines, and feel that it is the most important thing in their life.

Coming off amphetamines: Anyone using amphetamines will usually get the 'amphetamine hangover' after they use. Regular, heavy users who stop using will have withdrawals and feel cranky, upset and tired and not interested in anything. They will want to use again. These feelings can last 1-8 weeks or longer.

OVERDOSE AND MIXING DRUGS

Overdose from amphetamines can happen if a person uses too much. If a person who has used gets chest pains, breathes faster, feels agitated, shaky, hot and sweaty, they need to get medical attention straight away.

Mixing amphetamines with other drugs, especially alcohol, can lead to further problems for the user.

AMPHETAMINES AND PREGNANCY

Amphetamines can harm an unborn baby. The baby may be born too early or may be small and grow slowly when it is born.

KEEPING AMPHETAMINE USERS SAFE OVERDOSE

If someone you know uses amphetamines they may overdose. If you know what the signs of overdose are and what to do if it happens, you