

**Methamphetamine (also called meth, crystal, ice, or speed) is a powerful stimulant. It usually comes as white crystals that look like glass or a white powder. Meth can be swallowed, snorted, inhaled, smoked, or injected.**

## What are the effects?

Depending on how it is used, the effects of meth can start within minutes and last for six to 12 hours. Aftereffects (often called a “crash”) may last longer.

Short-term effects include increased wakefulness, confidence, energy, and sex drive; decreased appetite; and, if smoked or injected, immediate and intense euphoria.



## What are the health risks?

Risks from meth vary depending on how much, how often, and how it is used.

### Short-term risks include:

- Overamping (“meth overdose”), which can cause rapid or irregular heartbeat, overheating, high blood pressure, psychosis, seizure, and stroke
  - The risk of overamping is higher when it is hot out (when the temperature is 75 degrees F or higher).



- Soft tissue infection and other harms (if injected)

### Long-term risks include:

- Physical dependence (needing to keep using meth to feel its effects)
- Aggression, anxiety, confusion, delusions, depression, hallucinations, insomnia, mood disorders, paranoia, and other mental health conditions
- Psychosis (even when no longer using meth)
  - Heavy drinking and stress increase the risk for psychosis for people who have experienced meth-related psychosis before.
- Cognitive impairment, such as memory loss or slower reaction time
- Tooth decay and gum disease (“meth mouth”)



## How can I reduce my risk of harm?

- Go slow by taking small amounts, especially when using from a new supply.
- Do not use alone or in unsafe or unfamiliar areas. Before using, ask someone you trust to check on you regularly, or call the Never Use Alone hotline at 877-696-1996 or SafeSpot overdose prevention hotline at 800-972-0590.

- Avoid using meth with other drugs, including alcohol.
- If injecting, always use a new, sterile syringe and needle to reduce the risk of infection and spreading blood-borne diseases such as HIV and hepatitis C.
- If snorting, crush meth finely with a clean tool and alternate nostrils to reduce nasal damage.
- Take your meth to one of the NYC Health Department's drug-checking locations to have it tested for harmful ingredients or other drugs you do not plan on using. For more information, visit [nyc.gov/alcoholanddrugs](https://nyc.gov/alcoholanddrugs) or email [drugchecking@health.nyc.gov](mailto:drugchecking@health.nyc.gov).



If possible, turn their head or body to the side in case they vomit. **Do not** put anything in their mouth or try to hold them down.

People who use meth may also use other drugs, such as opioids. Always carry naloxone — a medication that can reverse an opioid overdose — in case you encounter someone who may be experiencing an opioid overdose.



## Is there treatment for meth use?

There are currently no approved medications to treat meth use. However, behavioral therapy can be an effective form of treatment to help support long-term change and recovery. To find a substance use disorder treatment program, visit [bit.ly/oasas-treatment-provider](https://bit.ly/oasas-treatment-provider).

Contact 988 for free, confidential crisis counseling, mental health and substance use support, and referrals to care. Call or text 988 or chat at [nyc.gov/988](https://nyc.gov/988). Text and chat services are available in English and Spanish, and counselors are available by phone 24/7 in more than 200 languages.

## How do I respond to someone who is overamping?

If you think someone is overamping:

- Stay calm, move them to a cool, quiet space, and get medical help right away.
- Call **911** if they are seizing, unresponsive, or showing signs of heart attack or stroke. Gently hold the back of their head to prevent injury.



For more information, visit [nyc.gov/alcoholanddrugs](https://nyc.gov/alcoholanddrugs) or scan the QR code.

