

Safety Tips For

**People Who Use
Stimulants**

Stimulants are drugs such as cocaine, crack, methamphetamine and amphetamines. They speed up the body's nervous and cardiovascular systems and can cause reactions that range from uncomfortable to life-threatening. If you use stimulants, there are ways to help keep yourself safer.

Overramping is a negative reaction to using stimulants. While different from overdosing, overramping can also be life-threatening.

Signs and symptoms of overramping include:

Physical	Mental
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Severe teeth grinding• Insomnia• Severe headache• Fast heart rate or high blood pressure• Chest pain or shortness of breath• Nausea or vomiting• High body temperature• Heavy sweating, often with chills• Tremors• Muscle stiffness or feeling paralyzed• Convulsions or seizures• Stroke• Heart attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhanced sensory awareness• Agitation, restlessness or irritability• Increased suspiciousness• Increased aggressiveness• Extreme anxiety or panic• Extreme agitation• Extreme paranoia• Hallucinations



2

Tips to prevent overamping:

- Stay hydrated by drinking water.
- Replenish electrolytes by drinking a sports drink or eating a banana.
- Try to get a good amount of sleep and eat nutritious foods before and after using stimulants.
- Find a health care provider you trust and be honest about your stimulant use. Ask your provider to examine your heart. Having high blood pressure, an irregular heartbeat or other heart diseases can increase your risk of heart attack, especially if you use stimulants.
 - For help finding a provider, call **311** or 844-NYC-4NYC (844-692-4692).



What to do if someone is overamping on stimulants:

- Seek medical help, especially if the person is having chest pain.
- If the person looks like they are overheating (for example, if they are sweating heavily, or their skin is flushed or hot to the touch), help them find a calm, quiet place to lie down.
- If the person is having a seizure, move objects away from them that could cause injury.

4

Speedballing:

- A speedball is a mixture of heroin with cocaine or meth.
- Speedballing increases the risk of opioid overdose.
 - The high from a speedball can mask the effects of each drug, which might make people want to use more than they originally planned.
 - Speedballing also puts stress on the body to process both drugs at the same time.
- Some people believe that using an opioid, such as heroin, with a stimulant will balance out the effects of each drug. This is not true. Opioids and stimulants do not balance each other out and can increase the risk of overdose.

The risk of opioid overdose when using stimulants:

- An opioid overdose occurs when a person takes enough opioids to slow down their breathing and cause their heart to stop.
 - Some examples of opioids include heroin, fentanyl and painkillers (such as OxyContin, Percocet and Vicodin).
- Fentanyl, an opioid up to 50 times stronger than heroin, has been found in cocaine, crack, meth and pills bought on the street and online.
 - This means that people who use stimulants might be at risk of an opioid overdose even if they are not planning to take opioids.

Tips to prevent overdose:

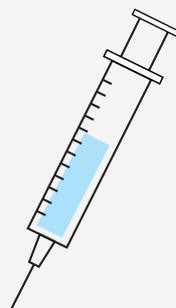
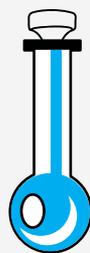
- Test your drugs. Fentanyl test strips can tell you if the drugs you plan to use contain fentanyl.
- Avoid mixing drugs. Using different drugs together, including alcohol and some prescription drugs, may increase your risk of overdose or other negative health effects. If you use more than one drug, go slowly by taking small amounts.
- Carry naloxone. Naloxone is a safe and effective medication that can reverse the effects of an overdose caused by heroin or other opioids, including fentanyl. Avoid using drugs alone or have someone check on you regularly.
- To find out where you can get fentanyl test strips and naloxone, see Resources on Page 8.



6

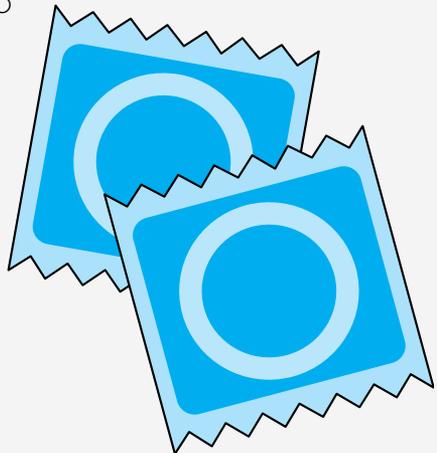
Safer equipment for using stimulants:

- Syringe service programs (SSPs) provide safer drug use equipment and other harm reduction services to people who use drugs, including kits for safer smoking, sniffing and injecting.
- Safer smoking kits often include glass stems, rubber mouthpieces, brass screens, lip balm and disinfectant wipes.
 - Using your own glass stem reduces the risk of getting or passing hepatitis C.
 - Using rubber mouthpieces and keeping your lips hydrated with lip balm helps you avoid burns and cuts.
 - Using brass screens lowers the risk of lung issues by reducing the amount of debris that is inhaled.
- Safer sniffing kits often include disposable straws, plastic cards, plastic razors and plastic scooping spoons.
 - Using your own disposable straws and scooping spoons reduces the risk of getting or passing hepatitis C.
- Safer injecting kits often include sterile syringes, rinse water, cookers, cottons and a tie.
 - Using sterile syringes and your own rinse water, cookers, cottons and ties reduces the risk of getting or passing HIV and hepatitis C to others.
- To learn more about SSPs, see Resources on Page 8.



How to engage in safer sex while using stimulants:

- Before having sex while using stimulants, let someone you trust know where you will be as a precaution.
- Know your sexual boundaries and tell them to your partners before using drugs and having sex. Using stimulants or other drugs may affect your ability to consent.
- Keep track of the stimulants you are using, how much you are using and when you used them.
- Condoms help prevent sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy. Use plenty of water- or silicone-based lubricant while having anal, vaginal or front sex. If you are having group sex, remember to change condoms when you change partners.
- Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a safe and effective daily pill that can greatly reduce your risk of HIV infection.
- People living with HIV who maintain an undetectable viral load cannot transmit the virus through sex. This is referred to as “undetectable equals untransmittable,” or “U=U.”



Resources:

- 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. Counselors are available 24/7 in more than 200 languages.
- Visit nyc.gov/alcoholanddrugs to learn more about drug use services, including fentanyl test strips, naloxone and SSPs, in New York City (NYC)
- Visit nyc.gov/health and search for **hepatitis C** to find a provider who can test for hepatitis C at low or no cost.
- Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is an emergency medication for people who do not have HIV and might have been exposed to the virus. If you think you were exposed to HIV, call the 24/7 NYC PEP hotline at 844-3-PEP NYC (844-373-7692). You can also visit nyc.gov/health and search for **HIV PEP** to find the clinic closest to you.
- No- or low-cost HIV tests and PrEP and PEP services are available for anyone age 12 and older at any of the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Sexual Health Clinics, regardless of immigration status.
- If you are not comfortable discussing your sexuality or drug use with your provider, call **311** or visit nyc.gov/health/map to find LGBTQ-knowledgeable providers.

