

# Methamphetamine



**Methamphetamine** is an amphetamine-type stimulant. These stimulants affect the activity of certain chemicals in the brain. Methamphetamine is commonly known as **meth** and when it has a crystal-like appearance, it is known as **ice**.

If you have someone close to you using **methamphetamine**, no doubt you are worried and anxious – most people are and this is a normal reaction. Common feelings can include shock and disbelief, grief, anger and fear.

## Common signs of methamphetamine use include:

**Relationship problems**

**Changes to eating patterns leading to poor nutrition**

**Sleep disturbance**

**Mood swings**

**Explosive outbursts**

**Reduced interaction with family**

**Trouble with the police**

**Sudden change of friends**

**Unexplained need for money**

**Declining school/work performance**

## Harms associated with methamphetamine use can include:

**Malnutrition and weight loss**

**Reduced resistance to infection**

**Violent behaviour**

**Emotional disturbances**

**Periods of psychosis**

**Paranoia**

**Delusional thoughts and behaviour**

**Mood swings**

**Increased risk of stroke and heart attack**

## Tips on how to address the problem with a friend or family member using methamphetamine

### 1. GET YOUR FACTS

- Call the **Alcohol and Drug Support Line** or the **Parent and Family Drug Support Line** (details overleaf) and talk to a counsellor confidentially to get accurate information about methamphetamine; the signs and symptoms and what options may be available.
- They will help you to clarify exactly what your concerns are and assist you in planning the steps needed to address the problem.

### 2. MAINTAIN OPEN AND HONEST COMMUNICATION

- Choose an appropriate time to talk free of distractions and when they are not intoxicated.
- Try to remain calm and stick to the point you wish to get across. Listen carefully without being judgemental.
- Be clear and honest about your feelings, let them know how their drug use is affecting you.
- Use “I” statements instead of “you” statements. For example, try “I’m really worried about” instead of “you should...”

### 3. NEGOTIATE AND SET GUIDELINES

- Talk through with your partner/others involved and make decisions about what you are and aren’t prepared to accept.
- Allow your friend/family member to experience the consequences of their behaviour.
- Don’t make ultimatums that you aren’t prepared to enforce.

### 4. SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

- Encourage the person to develop supportive networks.
- Congratulate them when they achieve their goals.

### 5. DON’T FORGET TO LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

- Family and friends can experience a range of emotions as a result of a someone else’s drug use and can be in more crisis than the user themselves. It’s important to find ways of coping with stress and to access information and support from services who understand.
- Call one of the support lines (details overleaf) to talk to a professional counsellor about how to get help.

# Methamphetamine

## Overdose

**Overdose** occurs when the level of intoxication from the drug reaches a point where it begins to produce physical and/or psychological harm. Overdose from methamphetamine usually results from the drug's stimulating effects and can cause strokes, heart failure, seizures and death. Overdose with amphetamine-type stimulants is referred to as 'toxicity'.

**Signs of a stimulant overdose** (e.g. ecstasy, speed, cocaine, methamphetamine):

**Hyperactivity/sweating**

**Chest pain/pounding heart**

**Severe Headache**

**Difficulty passing urine**

**Raised temperature**

**Convulsions**

**Shaking/trembling/spasms**

**Disorientation**

**Rapid breathing/  
feeling that you can't breathe**

**Paranoid, delusional, irritable,  
anxious or psychotic behaviour**

- **If you think someone is having an overdose call an ambulance (000) immediately.**  
Remember, **police will not attend overdoses** unless there is a death or ambulance staff are threatened.
- If you are concerned about someone's mental health you can contact the **Mental Health Emergency Response Line (MEHRL)** on **1300 555 788** (Metro callers), **1800 676 822** (Peel callers free call) or **1800 552 002** (Rural callers free call).

## Information and Support

**If you require immediate help call the emergency line (dial 000 from anywhere in Australia) for assistance.**

### Drug Aware

For information on drugs, including signs and symptoms, current research and existing drug campaigns you can visit the *Drug Aware* website.

Website: [www.drugaware.com.au](http://www.drugaware.com.au)

Email: [drugaware@live.com.au](mailto:drugaware@live.com.au)



### Alcohol and Drug Support Service

The Alcohol and Drug Support Service provides free, 24/7 non-judgemental telephone, counselling, information, referral and support lines for alcohol and drug use. For more information visit [alcoholdrugsupport.mhc.wa.gov.au](http://alcoholdrugsupport.mhc.wa.gov.au)

### Alcohol & Drug Support Line

For anyone concerned about their own or another person's alcohol or drug use.

Phone: **(08) 9442 5000**

Country callers: **1800 198 024**

Email: [alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au](mailto:alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au)

### Parent & Family Drug Support Line

For anyone concerned about a loved one's alcohol or drug use.

Phone: **(08) 9442 5050**

Country callers: **1800 653 203**

Email: [alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au](mailto:alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au)

### Working Away Alcohol & Drug Support Line

Supporting the health and wellbeing of working away from home communities.

Phone: **1800 721 997**

Email: [workingaway@mhc.wa.gov.au](mailto:workingaway@mhc.wa.gov.au)

**Drug use problems can be complex and often vary from person to person. It is important to note that the information provided is to be used as a guide only and may not be suitable for your own situation. If you are unsure about whether the provided information is right for you please call Alcohol & Drug Support Line on (08) 9442 5000 for support.**