

## Methamphetamine Fact Sheet

### What is it?

Methamphetamine – also known as meth, crank, crystal, and speed — is a powerfully addictive central nervous system stimulant.

### What does it look like?

Meth is a white, odorless, bitter-tasting powder that easily dissolves in alcohol or water and can be smoked, injected or snorted.

### Where is it made?

Two-thirds of our country's meth supply is produced in super labs in Mexico and Southern California run by organized crime and street gangs. The remaining third is made in the U.S. in makeshift meth labs found in basements, kitchens, garages, bedrooms, barns, vacant buildings, campgrounds, hotels and motels and trunks of cars.

### How is it made?

Meth is made from a fairly simple recipe found on the internet and can be produced in as few as 6 to 8 hours using apparatus and cookware that can be quickly dismantled and stored or relocated to avoid detection. Some of the ingredients commonly used to make meth are over-the-counter cold medications containing ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, red phosphorous, hydrochloric acid, anhydrous ammonia, drain cleaner, battery acid, lye, lantern fuel, and antifreeze. The fumes, vapors, and spillage associated with cooking meth can be toxic and explosive – and hazardous to children, adults and the environment.

### What are the short-term effects of taking meth?

Immediately after smoking or injection, the user experiences an intense sensation, called a "rush" or "flash," that lasts only a few minutes and is described as extremely pleasurable. (Snorting or swallowing meth produces euphoria — a high, but not a rush.) Following the "rush," there is typically a state of high agitation that in some individuals can lead to violent behavior. Other possible immediate effects include increased wakefulness and insomnia, decreased appetite, irritability/aggression, anxiety, nervousness, convulsions and heart attack.

### What are the long-term effects of taking meth?

Meth is addictive, and users can develop a tolerance quickly, needing larger amounts to get high. In some cases, users forego food and sleep and take more meth every few hours for days, "binging" until they run out of the drug or become too disorganized to continue using. Chronic use can cause paranoia, hallucinations, repetitive behavior (such as compulsively cleaning, grooming or disassembling and assembling objects), and delusions of parasites or insects crawling under the skin. Users can obsessively scratch their skin to get rid of these imagined insects. Long-term use, high dosages, or both can bring on full-blown toxic psychosis. This violent, aggressive behavior is usually coupled with extreme paranoia. Meth can also cause strokes and death.