

MAFES Dawg Tracks



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Beware of the Dangers of the "Big M"



A problem that continues to grow all over the nation and world infects our young people and young adults predominantly. Everyone needs to be aware of what it is, how to recognize users and the physical and emotional effects it will have on users.

Law officials in our state and neighboring states are continuously breaking up small "meth" labs. Businesses are taking extra means and methods to protect the ingredients from open purchases. In spite of these two factors, they can't get them all, but are steadily trying.

What is Methamphetamine?

It is a powerful stimulant for the central nervous system. In layman's language, the drug works directly on the brain and spinal cord. Neurotransmitters are substances in our cells that are produced to communicate with each other and send messages to our bodies to influence and regulate our thinking.

The principal neurotransmitter that is affected by methamphetamine use is called dopamine. Dopamine is found in our natural reward system. An example is when you have made an accomplishment on a project and are proud of the results and the accolades that you probably receive from family, friends, or business associates; dopamine is the body chemical that influences this.

It is a synthetic drug, with a high potential for abuse and dependence. It is **illegally produced** in pill form, capsules, powder, and chunks. In the early 1900's, it was developed from the drug amphetamine for nasal decongestants, bronchial inhalers, and in the treatment of narcolepsy and obesity. In the 1970's it became a Schedule – II drug with very little medicinal use, but a high potential for abuse.

Methamphetamine has many street names such as meth, speed, crank, chalk, go-fast, zip, and cristy. Pure methamphetamine is hydrochloride, the smokeless form of the drug, and is called LA because of its clear, chunky crystals that resemble frozen or ice.

The problem with the drug now is that it is produced locally and imported as well. A factory can be set up out of a small suitcase and can be found in garages, basements, old empty buildings, and even in motel and hotel rooms.

The principal ingredients consist of ephedrine, pseudo ephedrine, red phosphorous, hydrochloric acid, drain cleaner, battery acid, lye, lantern fuel, and antifreeze. Anhydrous ammonia is another ingredient that wreaked havoc for farmers as a target for theft on their farms.

The stores such as drug stores, convenient stores, and the large discounters are moving the drugs that contain these chemicals off the shelves and in protected security, because of the demand for illegal use.

According to law enforcement and treatment counselors, there are two basic groups of users that they look for and target for use:

- Students – Both high school and college age
- Young adults – These would be white and blue-collar workers in their 20s and 30s.

A recent survey with 544 participants shows a breakdown of users:

- Under 18 yrs old – 24%
- 18-23-yrs old - 35%
- 23-30 yrs. old-19%
- 30-40 yrs old - 13%
- over 40 yrs. old – 6%

The breakdown by sex was about equal between male and female. Women were more like to use "Meth" than cocaine.

An increase is beginning to show in Hispanic and African-American women, but whites are still the dominant users.

It is also picking up in the teenage bracket. The amount of users in 18 years old and younger doubled between 1990 and 1996.

Statistics have shown that teens who are counseled by their parents are much less likely to use methamphetamines than those teens who aren't counseled by their parents.

Target groups that start using it are normally athletes and students because of the initial heightened mental and physical performance that it produces. Young factory workers like it because they can work extra shifts. Young women start to use it because they want to lose weight. Others use it to get energized at parties or other social functions.

OVERALL EFFECT ON USERS:

- Kills by causing heart failure (myocardial infarction)
- Brain damage and strokes
- Induces extreme, acute psychiatric and psychological symptoms that may lead to suicide or murder.

SHORT TERM EFFECTS:

- Euphoria
- Increased alertness, decreased appetite, and increased physical activity
- Athetosis (wreaking jerky flailing movements, irritability, extreme nervousness, insomnia, confusion, tremors, anxiety, aggression, incessant talking, hyperthermia and convulsions. Body temperatures can reach as high as 108 degrees.
- There are many other short-term effects that I don't have room to cover.

LONG TERM EFFECTS

- Fatal kidney and lung disorders, brain damage, liver damage, blood clots, chronic depression.
- Hallucinations, violent and aggressive behavior, malnutrition, and disturbed personal behavior.

50 milligrams of the pure drug is considered an overdose. The reaction varies with individuals. Beware! Any size dosage is dangerous. Any area seen as a suspected "factory" for this terrible drug or a component missing from your area should be reported to the proper authorities immediately.

**YOU GET WHAT YOU INSPECT-
NOT WHAT YOU EXPECT!!**

**FORGET THE HEARSE WITH SAFETY
FIRST~!!~**