

Signs your child is using crystal meth...



The following behaviors and physical signs might indicate crystal meth abuse, especially when several are present at once. When in doubt, seek the advice of a professional.

Behaviors: Lack of sleep – Meth highs can last for several hours, and an abuser can stay awake and active for up to fifteen days. Hyperactivity – Users experience bursts of energy, talkativeness, excitement, increased alertness, increased heart rate and uncontrollable movements. Change in speech – Users

often speak quickly, uncontrollably and with a quiver. They twitch, their eyes dart and they have trouble focusing

Withdrawal – While high and recovering from a high, users abruptly distance themselves from friends and from activities they normally enjoy. Compulsions – Some abusers will compulsively clean and groom, and repetitively disassemble and sort objects. Mood changes – Users can become moody, hypersensitive and irritable, and may quickly change from friendly to hostile. Psychosis – Some experience paranoia, hallucinations, delusions and a psychosis similar to schizophrenia. Aggressive behavior – Users may have a false sense of confidence and power and/or delusions of grandeur, sometimes leading to aggressive and violent behavior.

Physical Signs: Tooth decay – Methamphetamine deprives the body of saliva, so users may experience rapid tooth and gum decay. Poor hygiene – During an extended high, users often don't bathe or take care of themselves. Distinct smell – Users might smell of industrial chemicals, Meth's main components. Sores

– Abusers often pick at their faces and get skin rashes, acne and sores. Weight loss – Users often don't eat during their extended highs, resulting in sudden weight loss and poor nutrition.

Other physical signs to look out for: Extreme rise in body temperature; uncontrollable movements, like twitching or jerking; dry, itchy skin; numbness; dilated pupils.

Drug Paraphernalia: Users may have some of the following items on hand: light bulbs, glass straws or short straws, tubes, razor blades, mirrors, syringes, smoking devices. Items containing white, beige, pink or brown powder or crystal-line substances.



The dangerous side of meth

One of the serious problems people encounter when they experiment with crystal meth is how quickly they become addicted to it. Crystal meth has the distinct probability of addicting as many as ninety-five percent of its first time users, especially if it is smoked or injected. Here's how it happens; crystal meth causes an intense rush, a feeling of euphoria and well being, but while it is providing the users brain with this deceiving pleasure it is also disrupting the bodies ability to keep the serotonin balanced. Serotonin is the bodies natural chemical that helps people fight off depression. When a person takes crystal meth they quickly kick the brains pleasure zones into high-speed over-drive; once the drug wears off they come down quick and experience a crash that is devastating. They find themselves in such an overwhelming depression that they will do anything to get out of it. Herein lies the real danger with crystal meth experimentation, using it has disrupted the body of its serotonin supply and now the body has no natural way of bringing the person out of the severe depression they will inescapably experience when the high has run its course. Some users have stated they became so depressed that they believed suicide was the only way out and many users actually commit suicide. Crystal meth also damages as much as fifty percent of the dopamine producing cells in the brain, once this occurs the brain can no longer function without crystal meth. Another risk is that your serotonin and dopamine levels can drop well below their normal level and stay there. This is why many people who take crystal meth become unable to experience feelings of happiness, satisfaction or enjoyment without crystal meth. Experimenting with crystal meth just isn't worth the problems it causes and anyone that offers it to you is most certainly not a true friend.

Lee Mason is a councillor and speaker with Young Warriors Network.

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The havoc crystal meth creates

Crystal meth distributors are destroying the lives of their victims; the deadly chemical completely damages the body and the mind. It also has a devastating effect on society, addicts are experiencing severe health problems, psychological problems and mental illnesses. There is an increase in property crimes as users fall deeper into their addiction, families are watching in horror as this vile and disgusting chemical destroys their children and tears their family apart. How do we as a society stop meth use from destroying our community? Keep an eye on your children and your neighborhood, learn the telltale signs that your child or someone you know is using crystal meth. Stop denying that it's already in your community, I've been to Quesnel, I've interviewed meth addicts there. There are no meth pushers on my street because we as a neighborhood simply will not allow it to happen.

We exercise our rights as adults in a caring society, we watch over all kids that live here, young ones and older ones, we treat them all as if they were our own.

It's time to speak up, it's time to push your MLA and the Premier to take immediate action to address the crystal meth problem by going after manufacturers and distributors of the deadly poison and hit them hard with stiff prison sentences.

If a person takes a gun and purposely goes out and kills another human being, it's first-degree murder and the penalty upon conviction is life without the eligibility of parole for 25 years.

If you manufacture and distribute crystal meth you are killing many human beings all in the name of greed and profit.

You are destroying bodies, minds, families, and wreaking havoc on society.

You are causing many addicts such intolerable grief that they escape the horrors of addiction to your poison by taking their own lives.

Life in prison is a suitable sentence for you, and while you're there you can also witness how many additional lives you destroyed now that they are confined to prison because they had to resort to crime to feed the monster you saddled them with.

Lee Mason is a councillor and speaker with Young Warriors Network.

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The link between Meth and Ecstasy

Many people are using the drug Ecstasy believing it is a harmless party drug; the fact is it comes with some very serious side effects.

Continued use of Ecstasy depresses the natural release of serotonin, which causes depression, Ecstasy can easily lead to death by inducing extreme hyperthermia and dehydration.

Ecstasy is part amphetamine and part cinogen and is far from harmless, lab confirm that some of the drugs seized at parties were sold as Ecstasy were, in fact, crystal meth.

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or dances that

Ecstasy has been directly linked to numerous deaths by overdose and by suicide. Ecstasy harms neurons that release serotonin, a brain chemical that plays an important role in regulating mood, memory and other functions.

When a person uses Ecstasy it causes significant damage to the brains serotonin transporters and when the Ecstasy wears off users have been known to experience deep and sometimes fatal depression.

Ecstasy also damages the frontal lobes of the brain; the frontal lobes play an important part in peoples impulse control, judgment, language, memory, motor function, problem solving, sexual behavior, socialization and spontaneity.

It is reported that regular Ecstasy users will be so brain damaged at thirty years of age that they will have all the symptoms of an Alzheimer's patient and will require round the clock care.

There are additional matters Ecstasy users should be aware of, it is reported that Paramethoxyamphetamine has been found in at least 26 variations of Ecstasy tablets that are on the market today.

Paramethoxyamphetamine, also known simply as PMA is a hallucinogenic stimulant that increases the heartbeat and raises the body temperature; causing agonizing convulsions and can very easily cause death.

This drug is also being sold as Ecstasy or "E" and the main targets of the dealers are young people.

Health Canada considers PMA one of the most dangerous hallucinogens in the world.

It doesn't have the same initial intensity as Ecstasy, so users often take more pills, causing an overdose of an already dangerous drug.

At high doses PMA often causes convulsions, coma and death. Widespread bleeding of the brain or internal organs can also occur.

Many young people think the "crusties" they and their friends get on the corner of their mouths are a natural part of taking Ecstasy.

What is actually happening is your internal organs are starting to shut down because your body is dangerously overheating.

People who use Ecstasy are taking a gamble every time they consume the drug, the following case studies took the gamble and lost.

Case 1: A 22-year-old man complained that he was "burning up" and collapsed after ingesting drugs at a friend's house.

He died soon afterwards at a local hospital, despite attempts at resuscitation. His core body temperature was 42°C.

Case 2: An 18-year-old man died at his home after ingesting a number of "Ecstasy" tablets over five hours, both at a dance club and at home. Two hours after death his core body temperature was 39°C.

Case 3: A 19-year-old man died in hospital 40 hours after being brought to the emergency department in respiratory arrest with a body core temperature of 41.6°C.

Case 4: A 14-year-old Victoria girl died the very first time she took Ecstasy.

So, now that you have all this information, do you think taking drugs is worth the gamble?

I've heard people say, "I'm not worried, I trust my dealer." Let's be straight up about drug dealers.

They don't have a clue what's in the drugs they are selling you and they don't care if you live or die, they just want your money.

Trusting a drug dealer is not a smart idea.

Lee Mason is an addictions recovery specialist and founder of the young warriors network based in Vancouver.

To contact Lee Mason for Ecstasy updates and additional information, visit www.youngwarriors.net

