

Amphetamines



Amphetamines AKA speed, ice, fast, crystal meth, whizz, base, paste, dexies, meth.

What are they?

Amphetamines are stimulants, so they speed up your brain and your body. They come in a few different forms including powder, tablets, crystal and paste. Some prescription medicines include amphetamines as an ingredient (e.g. dexamphetamine which is used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)). Amphetamines can be swallowed, injected, shafted (put up your bottom), smoked or snorted, depending on the type.



There is no "safe way" to use amphetamines, however, if you are choosing to use, it is important that you use as safely as possible.

What do they do?



How amphetamines make you feel depends on things like how strong they are, the kind of mood you are in, who you are using with, how much you use and your size. As a general rule, amphetamines will make you feel excited, confident, talkative, energetic and awake. People who like to go clubbing use amphetamines to give them the energy to dance for ages.



If you use amphetamines, you probably won't feel hungry and you will find it tricky to sleep. They may take a while to wear off and you might even find that you can't sleep for a night or two. When they do wear off you can feel tired, irritable and depressed for a couple of days afterwards.

Amphetamines and your mental health

One of the reasons people use amphetamines is because they think they will make them feel good. In most cases they do. However if you already have a mental health problem you may find that amphetamines make you feel worse. Lots of people feel anxious, restless, irritable and suspicious when they use amphetamines. In extreme cases you might feel angrier and behave more violently than you would normally.



Amphetamine use can cause paranoia, so you might think that you are being talked about or watched when you aren't. If you use a lot, it can cause drug induced psychosis, where you start to believe strange things or see and hear things that aren't there.



Amphetamines



What happens if I stop using?

If you have been using amphetamines regularly, you will probably have withdrawal symptoms when you stop. How bad they are depends on how much you've been using and how often, as well as what kind of shape you are in. Withdrawal symptoms tend to be worst during the first week and then will start to ease off, although in extreme cases some symptoms may hang around for a couple of months.

Some common withdrawal symptoms are:

Irritability
Sleeplessness
Depression/anxiety
Mood swings
Headaches
Feeling hungry
Difficulty concentrating.

When someone overdoses

In some cases, taking too many amphetamines can cause someone to overdose. This may lead to things like loss of consciousness or overheating – it will look different depending on what's happening for the person (e.g. they may have mixed drugs or taken lots of amphetamines when they haven't eaten or slept for a few days).

If something like this happens, some sensible things you can do are:



Call 000 – you won't get into trouble for asking for help.



Don't leave your friend alone.



Put your friend on their side if they are unconscious or in case they vomit.



Keep an eye on their breathing.

Staying safe

If you are going to use amphetamines, there will always be a risk of bad things happening. You can reduce some of these risks by:



Going low, going slow. Just use a bit at a time and wait to see what it feels like before taking more.



Not mixing with other drugs or alcohol – it can get out of control quickly.



Only using with people you trust. It's good if someone in your group isn't using to keep an eye on you.



Never sharing needles. Use clean equipment to avoid the risk of contracting blood-borne viruses like HIV or Hepatitis C.



Making sure that you eat, even if you don't feel like it.



Take a break. Make sure that you have amphetamine free days and try not to use them before anything big (e.g. exams).



Calling an ambulance if things get bad.

Getting help

If your amphetamine use is starting to affect things that matter, like your mental health, wellbeing or your friendships, it can be a good idea to talk to someone about your options, such as different ways to reduce or stop your use. Whatever you decide, **headspace** can help.



headspace
National Youth Mental Health Foundation

For more information, to find your nearest headspace centre or for online and telephone support, visit headspace.org.au