

Crystal Meth Use. What Parents Can Watch For

The following is a list of symptoms that parents can watch for which could indicate that their children are using crystal meth. Please remember that if you see these symptoms it does not necessarily mean that your child is using crystal meth. It simply indicates that there is a possibility.

- increased heart rate, blood pressure, and respiration
- flushed or tense appearance
- dilated pupils
- bloodshot eyes
- a chemical odor on their breath or body
- excessive sweating
- rapid speech
- inability to sleep or eat
- severe weight loss
- rotting teeth
- scars and open sores
- paranoia
- hallucinations (often times auditory)
- repetitive behavior
- memory loss
- depression
- psychosis
- teeth grinding
- restlessness
- tremors

What To Expect if Someone is Withdrawing From Crystal Meth

Methamphetamine is also called "meth," "crystal," "ice," "speed," "jib" and "crank." Methamphetamine is a drug that stimulates the central nervous system. When people use methamphetamine, they feel alert and energetic and often have no interest in food or sleep. Users may experience any or all of the following negative effects:

- rapid and unhealthy weight loss (under no circumstances should this drug be considered as an aid to weight loss)
- sores on the skin, or itchy skin that can lead to scratching and sores and infection
- confusion, irrational anger, paranoia and irritability
- damage to the inside of the nose from "railing" (snorting) the drug
- out of control rages (violent and aggressive behaviour referred to as "tweaking")
- problems with thinking, memory, concentration and movement
- brain damage - there is evidence that brain damage occurs in some users

In general, when people are withdrawing from methamphetamine they will experience the opposite of the effects of the drug. The severity of withdrawal depends on how long and how much they used. The following physical symptoms may last for about five days:

- extreme tiredness - they may sleep for most of two to four days
- disturbed sleep - after extended use of amphetamines normal sleep patterns do not return for many weeks
- dry mouth
- headaches
- anxiety, paranoia, hallucinations

The emotional withdrawal symptoms can last for weeks or months. These include:

- depression
- anxiety
- paranoia
- loss of motivation
- low energy
- extreme craving for the drug

What you can do

Watching others withdraw from drugs can be frightening and you may feel helpless. You can support them by:

- helping them get plenty of sleep
- ensuring they get plenty of fluids
- providing healthy food
- encouraging and affirming their move as wise and courageous in the long run
- acknowledging that withdrawal is difficult and sometimes painful
- reminding them that the brain and body need time to heal
- helping them learn to live again without the drug