

## Facts About Ice

### What is ice?

Ice is an illicit drug made from methamphetamine. It is known by different names such as crystal meth, shabu, glass, shardy party. It is a stimulant drug (that is it speeds up the messages travelling between the brain and body) and is stronger and more addictive than most other stimulants such as speed.

### What does it look like?

Ice usually looks like small slivers of glass or crystals but can also be a powder. It can be white, beige or yellow.

### How do people use it?

It is usually smoked or injected.

### What are the short term effects of ice?

Ice produces a very intense 'rush'. Depending on how many times it is taken, this effect can last between four to twelve hours. Long term use can lead to dependency (the user no longer feels pleasure without further ice use).

### Some of the short term effects of using ice:

a strong sense of happiness  
(euphoria)

talking lots and feeling energetic  
increased movement and  
restlessness (such as shaky hands)

increased body temperature,  
sweating and dry mouth

fast breathing

increased heart beat

big pupils, blurred vision

not needing to eat as much

not needing to sleep as much

sounds seem louder and lights look  
brighter

## What are the long term effects of ice?

If a person uses ice regularly over time this may cause:

aged appearance (they look older)

weight loss – from loss of appetite

damaged teeth – from teeth grinding and dry mouth which causes decay

sores (lesions) on the skin

risk of stroke – caused when blood vessels in the brain get blocked

difficulty breathing (decreased lung function)

poor memory and difficulty with making decisions

increased risk of getting diseases through sharing needles (Hep B, Hep C, HIV)

inability to sleep (insomnia)

anxiety, paranoia and aggression

Long term use of ice can also lead to loss of family and friends, financial worries and trouble with the law.

## Mental health/ice psychosis

Some people may go through a period of ice psychosis, where they feel they can't trust people, and they may see or hear things that aren't really there. They may believe that people are 'out to get them' or they may feel like there are bugs crawling under their skin.

These symptoms can become very serious, and are made worse with continued use of ice. If a person has these symptoms they should stop using ice, rest and seek help from a doctor.

## What to do about an overdose

A large amount of ice or a strong dose can cause an overdose.

People who have overdosed may have:

racing heart beat and chest pain

breathing problems

fits or uncontrolled jerking

sudden, severe headache

extreme agitation, confusion,  
clumsiness

collapsed because they are  
dehydrated and overheated.

aggression (and be likely to lash out,  
often because they are frightened)

Call triple zero (000) if a person has been using ice and you think they need help.

While you wait for help to arrive:

stay a safe distance if the person is  
being threatening or is unable to  
control themselves

if the person has collapsed, move  
them into the shade, make sure they  
have enough air and loosen any tight  
clothing.

talk to the person slowly and calmly,  
keep crowds away

### **Dependence on ice**

People who become physically dependent on ice need to take more of the drug to get the same effect. They find that their body has become used to having the drug present. As a result the user needs to increase the amount they take to feel 'normal'. People who are psychologically dependent on ice find that using the drug becomes more important than other activities such as work, or spending time with family and friends. They crave the drug (have a strong desire to use it) and find it very difficult to stop using.

### **Withdrawal (coming down)**

The more ice a person uses each time and the longer each session is, the worse the come down or 'crash' is when they stop. The crash and come-down period can last between two to seven days when the person feels tired, moody and unable to concentrate. They may feel depressed and need a lot of sleep. Symptoms of low mood, irritability and craving can last up to 10 weeks.



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### **Withdrawal symptoms can include:**

feeling confused

feeling fear or distrust (paranoia)

headaches

general aches and pains

hunger and increased appetite

disturbed sleep, often interrupted by nightmares.