



National Council on Substance Abuse

“The Armaira Building”

Cnr 1st Avenue Belleville & Pine Road St Michael, Barbados

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Early Warning System Drug Alert:

Methamphetamine

What Is Methamphetamine?

- Methamphetamine is a powerful, highly addictive stimulant that affects the central nervous system
- Methamphetamine is usually found in the form of a white odorless, bitter-tasting crystalline powder that easily dissolves in water or alcohol
- Methamphetamine is controlled and if found in your possession, persons are subject to penalties outlined in the Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act Chapter 131. Listed in Part 2 Section 3 List of Psychotropic Substances Under Control

How Methamphetamine can be used:

- In a powdered form
- As a pill
- Smoked
- Snorted or
- Injected to intensify the effect

What are common street names?

Common street names include:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| • Batu | • Poor Man’s Cocaine |
| • Bikers Coffee | • Shabu, Shards, |
| • Black Beauties | • Speed |
| • Chalk | • Stove Top |
| • Chicken Feed | • Tina |
| • Crank | • Trash |
| • Crystal, Glass | • Tweak |
| • Go-Fast | • Uppers |
| • Hiropon | • Ventana |
| • Ice | • Vidrio |
| • Meth, | • Yaba, and |
| • Methlies Quick | • Yellow Bam |



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Why Is It a Concern

Methamphetamine was developed early in the 20th century from its parent drug, amphetamine, and was used originally in nasal decongestants and bronchial inhalers. Regular methamphetamine is a pill or powder. Crystal meth resembles glass fragments or shiny blue-white “rocks” of various sizes. When smoked or injected, methamphetamine enters the user’s bloodstream and brain at a very rapid rate. This results in an immediate, intense rush and amplifies the drug’s potential and adverse health consequences. The rush lasts only for a few minutes and is described as extremely pleasurable. One must note when methamphetamine is snorted or orally ingested it produces a euphoric high, but not an intense rush. Snorting produces effects within 3 to 5 minutes while oral ingestion produces effect within 15 to 20 minutes. In addition, oral ingestion or snorting produces a long-lasting high instead of a rush, which reportedly can continue for as long as half a day.

Methamphetamine can be misused and easily binge used because of its pleasurable effects on the user. Binge use is likely to occur because methamphetamine disappears even before the drug concentration in the blood falls significantly, the user tries to maintain the high by taking more of the drug. The user will forego eating and sleeping while continuing to take the drug for several days.

I will now share some effects of methamphetamine use. For chronic users:

- violent behavior,
- anxiety,
- confusion,
- Insomnia.

psychotic features include:

- paranoia,
- aggression,
- visual and auditory hallucinations,
- mood disturbances, and
- delusions such as the sensation of insects creeping on or under the skin.

Paranoia can result in homicidal or suicidal thoughts. Research has also shown that as much as 50 percent of the dopamine-producing cells in the brain can be damaged after prolonged exposure to relatively low levels of meth. Studies suggested that the use of methamphetamine may also result in serotonergic neurotoxicity.

Short-term effects may include:

- increased attention and decreased fatigue
- increased activity and wakefulness



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-
- decreased appetite
 - euphoria and rush
 - increased respiration
 - rapid/irregular heartbeat
 - hyperthermia

Withdrawal

Withdrawal can occur when amphetamine use is stopped or severely cut down. Common symptoms are:

- Depression (inactivity, fatigue, altered mood)
- Increased sleep, but of poor quality
- Unpleasant dreams
- Increased appetite
- Anxiety
- Poor concentration and
- Paranoia
- Craving

Symptoms can be intense for the first 10 days and gradually lessen over the next few weeks. Some people report that craving and mood disturbance can linger.

Recovery

As with all forms of dependence, recovery takes time and persistence. Treatment works if you stick with it. Evidence based treatment includes brief interventions, cognitive behavioural therapy, behavioural therapy, contingency based therapy, residential rehabilitation and self-help or mutual support groups. People who use methamphetamine often have a poor appetite. As their your appetite returns, they should try to eat healthy foods, such as fresh fruit and vegetables, stay away from fatty foods, avoid alcohol and caffeine. Disturbed sleep is common when withdrawing from methamphetamine. Sleep disturbance and cravings are some of the most difficult aspects of methamphetamine withdrawal.

Report from Forensic Science Centre (FSC):

Emergence of Methamphetamine in Barbados

First confirmed case in Barbados. Date of offence 12 May 2022. Total weight 16.27g



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There have been many indications that methamphetamine has been present in the Barbadian market. This is the first confirmed case in the island. Tablets were not identical and variations occurred in shape, colour and content (see pictures above), the confirmed cutting agent identified was caffeine.

This emergence has placed FSC on heighten alert.



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The Early Warning System (EWS)

The Early Warning System is a multidisciplinary network which collects, appraises and rapidly disseminates information on the use of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS). EWS is designed to detect, test and distribute information on NPS as these substances appear.

NPS are not controlled by the 1961 United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs or the 1971 United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances. They include drugs that are ‘new’ to the market or existing substances that are misused in different ways. NPS are designed to mimic the effects of already established drugs.

The EWS, in addition to allowing for identification of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), will enable practitioners and policy makers to identify the new uses for existing drugs—e.g. codeine (legal) used to make “lean” (illegal). This information can then be used to craft new and appropriate responses.

Accurate information is crucial for effective management and reduction of substance abuse. With respect to the role of the NCSA, it is important that the agency remains on the cusp of new developments in order to respond with appropriate programming and policy advice. When a highly dangerous substance is detected, protocols will have been established to issue alerts. These can be rapidly and widely shared, to help individuals avoid anything that is dangerous and save lives. This is essentially the crux of the EWS.

Recommendations

The NCSA’s last three BARDIN Reports highlight that fact that our local drug situation have been changing slightly with reported seizures of methamphetamine and ecstasy. BARDIN Reports also, indicated stated that some persons are seeking treatment for non-traditional substances for example, benzodiazepines and ketamine. The fact we can now methamphetamine is here; it is important that we share as much information on the risks and harms to people who use methamphetamine. The government response to this would include the following:

- a universal public awareness campaign which would be led by the NCSA. This campaign will share information on the sign and symptoms of methamphetamine, harms associated with methamphetamine use and where you can go for help. This campaign will target all demographics with age-appropriate information.
- Training for first responders (boarder security personnel)
- Training for treatment professional’s use and
- Training and sensitization of ER to manage the violence-related side effects of the substance.



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References

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