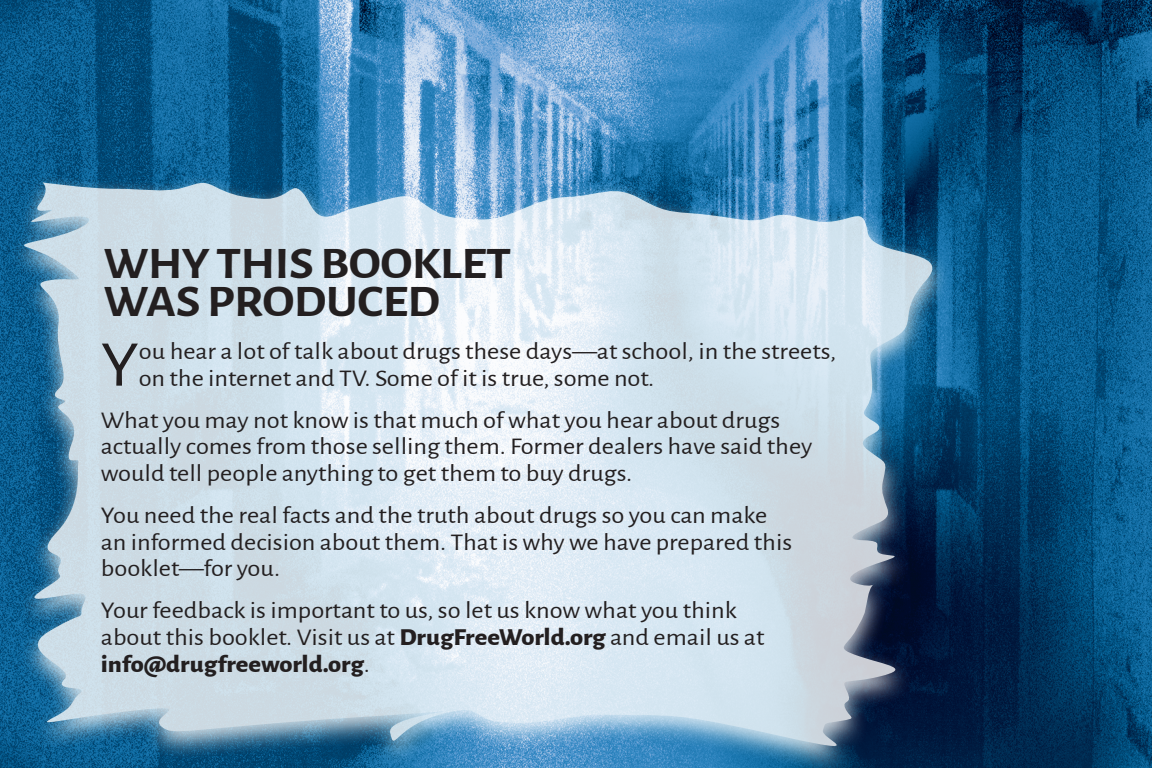

THE TRUTH ABOUT
CRYSTAL METH
and Methamphetamine
Ice
Tina
Chrissy
Speed
Tweak
Meth
Glass
drugfreeworld.org



WHY THIS BOOKLET WAS PRODUCED

You hear a lot of talk about drugs these days—at school, in the streets, on the internet and TV. Some of it is true, some not.

What you may not know is that much of what you hear about drugs actually comes from those selling them. Former dealers have said they would tell people anything to get them to buy drugs.

You need the real facts and the truth about drugs so you can make an informed decision about them. That is why we have prepared this booklet—for you.

Your feedback is important to us, so let us know what you think about this booklet. Visit us at **DrugFreeWorld.org** and email us at **info@drugfreeworld.org**.

What Is Crystal Meth?

Crystal meth is short for *crystal methamphetamine*. It is one form of *methamphetamine*, a powerful and highly addictive stimulant drug.

Crystal meth is often used as a "club drug," taken while partying in nightclubs or at rave parties.

Crystal meth's effect is highly concentrated. Its effects are intense and some users report becoming addicted after using it just once.

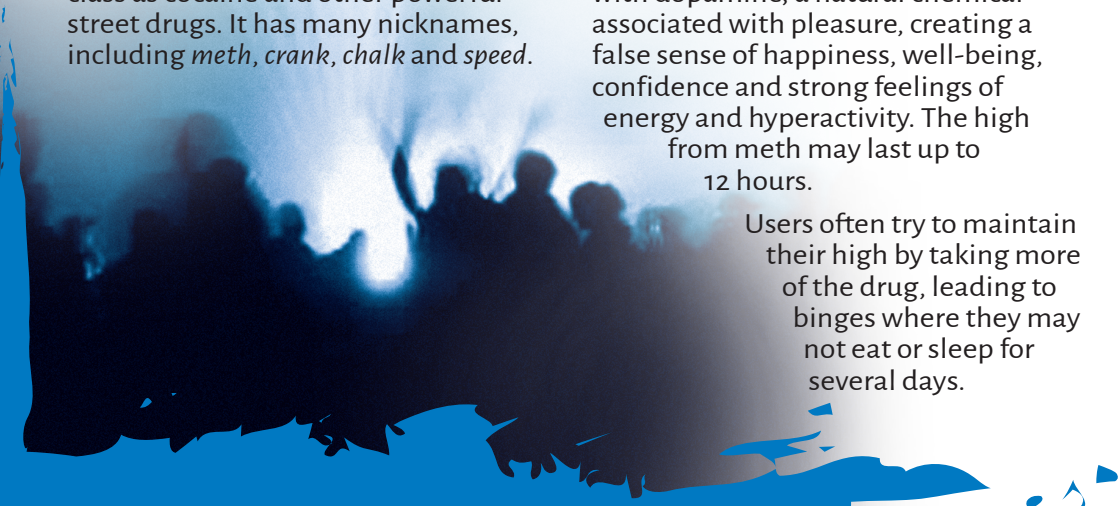
"I tried it once and BOOM! I was addicted," said one meth addict who lost his family, friends, career as a musician and ended up homeless.

It is one of the hardest drug addictions to overcome. One study found that nearly two out of three people who went through drug rehab returned to meth use within a year.



What Is Methamphetamine?

Methamphetamine is an illegal drug in the same class as cocaine and other powerful street drugs. It has many nicknames, including *meth*, *crank*, *chalk* and *speed*.



People take it orally, snort it, smoke it or inject it. Meth floods the brain with dopamine, a natural chemical associated with pleasure, creating a false sense of happiness, well-being, confidence and strong feelings of energy and hyperactivity. The high from meth may last up to 12 hours.

Users often try to maintain their high by taking more of the drug, leading to binges where they may not eat or sleep for several days.

Meth acts as a powerful stimulant. But because it is also a poison, at the same time the person is getting high, the drug begins to systematically destroy the body.

Meth use is associated with serious health issues such as memory loss, aggression, psychotic behavior and potential damage to the heart and brain. Meth use depletes the body's resources and can create a devastating dependence that can only be relieved by taking more of the drug.



Meth user in 2002



... and 2 1/2 years later

"I started using crystal meth when I was a senior in high school. Before my first semester of college was up, meth became such a big problem that I had to drop out. I looked like I had chickenpox from hours of staring at myself in the mirror and picking at myself. I spent all my time either doing meth or trying to get it."

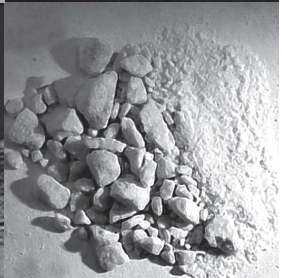
—Anne Marie

What Does Methamphetamine Look Like?









Methamphetamine usually comes as a crystalline white, blue, yellow or brown powder that is odorless, bitter-tasting and dissolves easily in water or alcohol.

Crystal meth looks like small fragments of glass or shiny blue-white rocks and is most commonly referred to as *ice* or *glass*. This form is more pure than powdered methamphetamine and has more intense and longer-lasting effects.

Crystal meth is smoked using a glass pipe or dissolved and injected.



STREET NAMES FOR METHAMPHETAMINE

Methamphetamine and crystal methamphetamine are referred to by many names.

METH

- Bennies
- Chalk
- Chicken Feed
- Cinnamon
- Crank
- Crink
- Crypto
- Getgo
- Go-Fast
- Meth
- Methlies Quik
- Mexican Crack
- Pervitin (Czechia)
- Redneck Cocaine
- Speed
- Tick Tick
- Tweak
- Wash
- Ya Ba or Yaba (Southeast Asia)
- Yellow Powder

CRYSTAL METH

- Batu
- Blade
- Cristy
- Crystal
- Crystal Glass
- Glass
- Hot Ice
- Ice
- Quartz
- Shabu
- Shards
- Stove Top
- Tina
- Ventanas

What Is Meth Made From?

Methamphetamine is a man-made chemical, unlike cocaine, for instance, which comes from a plant.

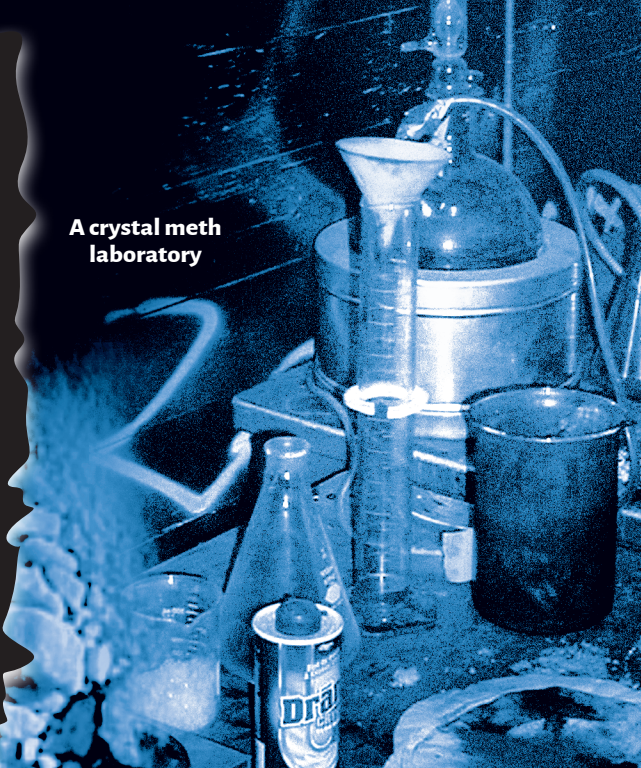
Meth is commonly manufactured in illegal, hidden laboratories, using various forms of amphetamine (stimulant drug) or derivatives combined with other chemicals to increase its potency. Common cold remedy pills are often used as a base for the production of the drug. Meth "cooks" extract ingredients from these pills and, to increase its strength, combine the substance with chemicals like battery acid, drain cleaner, paint thinner, lithium (from batteries), iodine, lantern fuel and antifreeze. Meth can contain up to 32 different chemicals not meant for human consumption.

The chemicals used to make meth are dangerous and can explode while being "cooked." Such accidents endanger others in nearby homes or buildings. Meth cooks, often addicts themselves, can be severely burned, disfigured or killed by explosions.

Meth labs also produce toxic waste—creating one pound of methamphetamine results in five pounds of waste that can seep into the soil and groundwater. People exposed to this waste, including law enforcement, can become poisoned and sick.

Welfare money was not enough to pay for our meth habit and support our son, so we turned our rented home into a meth lab. We stored the toxic chemicals in our refrigerator, not knowing that the toxins would permeate the other food in the icebox.

"When I gave my three-year-old son some cheese to eat, I did not know that I was giving him poisoned food. I was too stoned on meth to notice, until 12 hours later, that my son was deathly ill. But then I was so stoned it took me two hours to figure out how to get him to the hospital five miles away. By the time I got to the emergency room, **MY BOY WAS PRONOUNCED DEAD** of a lethal dose of ammonia hydroxide—one of the chemicals used to make meth." —Melanie



A crystal meth laboratory

A Worldwide Addiction Epidemic

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimated that about 27 million people worldwide use amphetamine-type stimulants (including methamphetamine).

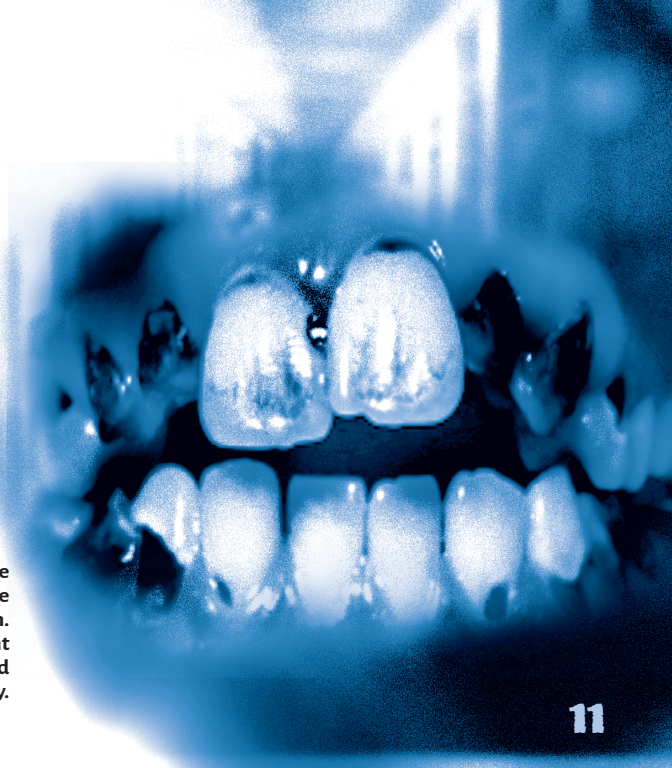
Meth use in the United States is a significant problem. Deaths linked to meth rose from 5,526 per year to 15,489—an increase of roughly 180 percent.

The US government reported that, in one year, approximately 2 million Americans aged 12 and up used methamphetamine, with 184,000 trying it for the first time. Around a million people aged 12 and up suffer from meth addiction.

In Czechia, meth is known as *Pervitin* and is widely abused. Although its use is primarily within the country, Pervitin is also exported to European countries. Czechia, Germany, Slovakia and Türkiye

account for 90 percent of people requesting treatment for methamphetamine abuse in Europe.

In Southeast Asia, the most common forms of methamphetamine are crystal meth (called *Shabu* in the Philippines) and a small pill called a *Ya Ba* in Thailand.



Meth's toxic ingredients lead to severe tooth decay known as *meth mouth*, where teeth become black, stained and rotten. The teeth are often damaged to the point of having to be pulled, gums are destroyed from the inside and the roots rot away.

The Deadly Effects of Meth

The short-term and long-term impact on the individual

Taking meth and crystal meth creates an intense false sense of well-being, causing users to push their bodies beyond natural limits. After the effects wear off, meth users can experience a severe crash or physical and mental breakdown. Because continued use of the drug decreases natural feelings of hunger, users can experience extreme weight loss. Negative effects can also include disturbed sleep patterns, hyperactivity, nausea, delusions of power, aggression and irritability.

Other serious effects can include confusion, insomnia, hallucinations, anxiety and paranoia.* In some cases, use can cause convulsions that lead to death.



The hideous effects of crystal meth show on the scarred and prematurely aged faces of those who abuse it.

LASTING DAMAGE

Over time, meth use can cause irreversible harm: increased heart rate and blood pressure; damaged blood vessels in the brain leading to a stroke; or an irregular heartbeat that can, in turn, cause cardiovascular† collapse or death. Meth addicts are also likely to suffer damage to their livers, kidneys and lungs.

Users may also suffer brain damage which can cause memory loss and cognitive impairment. Recovering meth addicts often experience memory gaps and extreme mood swings.

* paranoia: extreme and unreasonable suspicion, distrust or fear of other people without evidence or justification

† cardiovascular: related to the heart and blood vessels

‡ Alzheimer's disease: a disease affecting some older people that is accompanied by memory loss

METH HARM

SHORT-TERM EFFECTS

- Loss of appetite
- Increased heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature
- Dilation of pupils
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Nausea
- Bizarre and erratic behavior
- Addiction
- Convulsions, seizures and death from high doses

LONG-TERM EFFECTS

- Permanent damage to blood vessels of heart and brain
- High blood pressure leading to heart attacks, strokes and death
- Liver, kidney and lung damage
- Destruction of tissues in nose if sniffed
- Respiratory problems if smoked
- Infectious diseases and abscesses if injected
- Malnutrition, weight loss
- Severe tooth decay
- Disorientation, apathy, confused exhaustion
- Strong psychological dependence
- Psychosis
- Visual and auditory (hearing) hallucinations
- Hyperexcitability
- Irritability
- Delusions (such as the sensation of insects creeping under the skin)
- Depression
- Memory loss
- Paranoia (can lead to homicidal or suicidal thoughts)
- Aggressive or violent behavior
- Damage to the brain similar to Alzheimer's disease‡ and epilepsy

How Methamphetamine Affects People's Lives

Meth use can take over lives in various ways. There are three main levels of abuse:

LOW-INTENSITY METH ABUSE:
Low-intensity abusers swallow or snort methamphetamine. They want the extra stimulation methamphetamine provides so they can stay awake long enough to finish a task or a job, or they want the appetite-suppressant effect to lose weight. They are one step away from becoming binge* abusers.

BINGE METH ABUSE:
Binge abusers smoke or inject methamphetamine with a needle. This allows them to receive a more intense dose of the drug and experience a stronger rush that is psychologically addictive. Continued use puts a person on the verge of moving into high-intensity abuse.

HIGH-INTENSITY METH ABUSE:
The high-intensity abusers are the meth addicts. Their whole existence focuses on preventing the crash, that painful letdown after the drug high. In order to achieve the desired rush from the drug, they must take more and more of it. But as with other drugs, each successive high is less than the one before, plunging the meth addict into a dark and deadly spiral of addiction.

* binge: excessively or uncontrollably using a substance in a concentrated period of time



The Stages of the Meth "Experience"

1 The Rush—A *rush* is the initial response the abuser feels when smoking or injecting methamphetamine. During the rush, the abuser's heartbeat races and metabolism,* blood pressure and pulse soar. Unlike the rush associated with crack cocaine, which lasts for approximately two to five minutes, the methamphetamine rush can continue for up to 30 minutes.

2 The High—The rush is followed by a high, sometimes called the *shoulder*. During the high, the abuser often feels aggressively smarter and becomes argumentative, often interrupting other people and finishing their sentences. The delusional effects can result in a user becoming intensely focused on an insignificant item, such as repeatedly cleaning the same window for several hours. The high can last 4–16 hours.

* metabolism: the processes in the body that convert food into energy

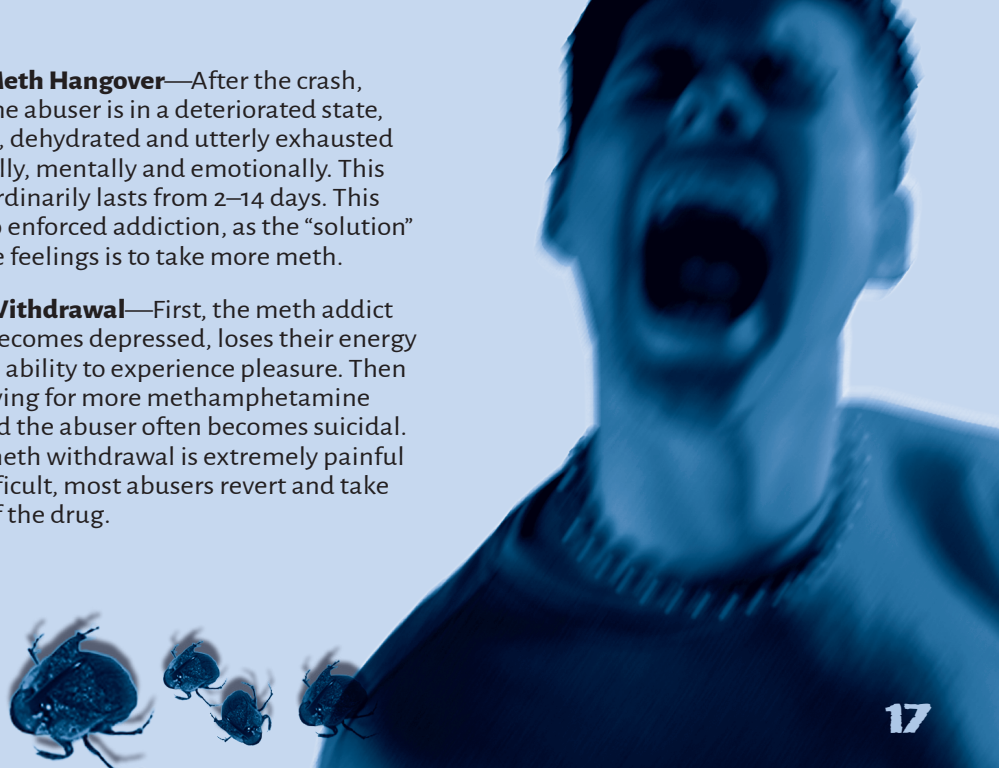
3 The Binge—A *binge* is uncontrolled use of a drug or alcohol. It refers to the abuser's urge to maintain the high by smoking or injecting more methamphetamine. The binge can last 3–15 days. During the binge, the abuser becomes hyperactive both mentally and physically. Each time they smoke or inject more of the drug, they experience another but smaller rush until, finally, there is no rush and no high.

4 Tweaking—A methamphetamine abuser is most dangerous when experiencing a phase of the addiction called *tweaking*—a condition reached at the end of a drug binge when methamphetamine no longer provides a rush or a high. Unable to relieve the horrible feelings of emptiness and craving, an abuser loses his sense of identity. Intense itching is common and a user can become convinced that bugs are crawling under their skin. Unable to sleep for days at a time, the abuser is often in a completely psychotic state, existing in their own world, seeing and hearing things that no one else can perceive. Their hallucinations are vivid and seem real. Disconnected from reality, users can become hostile and dangerous to themselves and others. The potential for self-mutilation is high.

5 The Crash—To a binge abuser, the crash happens when the body, unable to cope with the drug effects overwhelming it, shuts down. This results in a long period of sleep. Even the meanest, most violent abuser becomes almost lifeless during the crash. The crash can last 1–3 days.

6 Meth Hangover—After the crash, the abuser is in a deteriorated state, starved, dehydrated and utterly exhausted physically, mentally and emotionally. This stage ordinarily lasts from 2–14 days. This leads to enforced addiction, as the "solution" to these feelings is to take more meth.

7 Withdrawal—First, the meth addict becomes depressed, loses their energy and the ability to experience pleasure. Then the craving for more methamphetamine hits, and the abuser often becomes suicidal. Since meth withdrawal is extremely painful and difficult, most abusers revert and take more of the drug.



History of Methamphetamine

Methamphetamine is not a new drug, although it has become more powerful in recent years as manufacturing techniques have evolved.

Amphetamine was first created in 1887 in Germany and methamphetamine, which is more potent and easier to make, was developed in Japan in 1919. The crystalline powder's ability to dissolve in water made it suitable for injection.

During World War II, methamphetamine was widely used by both sides to keep troops awake. High doses were given to Japanese Kamikaze pilots before their suicide missions. After the war, methamphetamine abuse by injection became widespread when military supplies became available to the Japanese public.

In the 1950s, methamphetamine was prescribed as a diet aid and to combat depression. It was easily available and used as a nonmedical stimulant by college students, truck drivers and athletes, leading to widespread abuse.

This pattern changed significantly in the 1960s with the increased availability of injectable methamphetamine, worsening the problem.

In 1970, the US government made most uses of methamphetamine illegal. After that, American motorcycle gangs took control of much of the drug's production and distribution.

In the 1990s, Mexican drug-trafficking organizations set up large meth laboratories in California. These massive labs could produce 50 pounds of meth in a single weekend, while smaller private labs appeared in kitchens and apartments, earning the drug the nickname *stove top*. Meth then spread across the United States and into Europe. Today, most of the meth available in Asia is produced in Thailand, Myanmar and China.



Kamikaze pilots were given methamphetamine before their suicide missions.

The Truth About Drugs

Drugs are essentially poisons. The amount taken determines the effect.

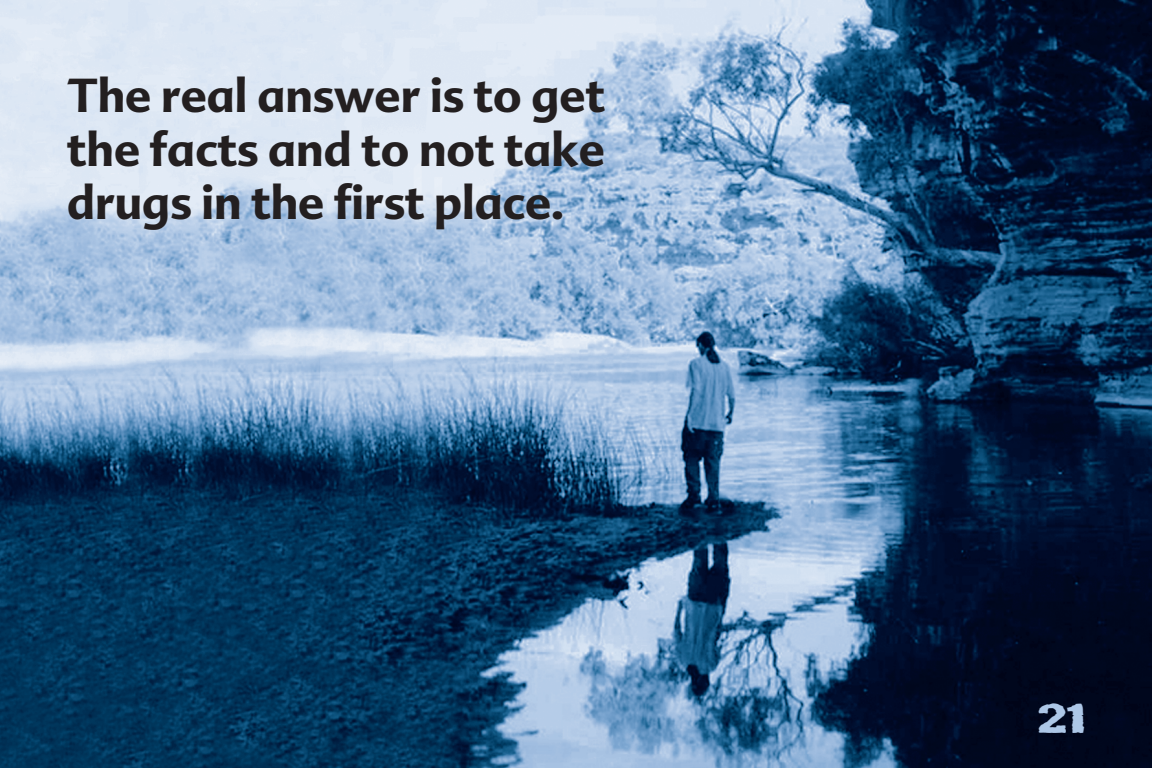
A small amount acts as a stimulant (speeds you up). A greater amount acts as a sedative (slows you down). An even larger amount poisons and can kill.

This is true of any drug. Only the amount needed to achieve the effect differs.

But many drugs have another liability: they directly affect the mind. They can distort the user's perception of what is happening around him or her. As a result, the person's actions may be odd, irrational, inappropriate and even destructive.

Drugs block off all sensations, the desirable ones along with the undesirable. So, while providing short-term help in the relief of pain, they also wipe out ability and alertness and muddy one's thinking.

Medicines are drugs that are intended to speed up, slow down or change something about the way your body is working to try to make it work better. Sometimes they are necessary. But they are still drugs: they act as stimulants or sedatives, and too much can kill you. So if you do not use medicines as they are supposed to be used, they can be as dangerous as illegal drugs.


The real answer is to get the facts and to not take drugs in the first place.

WHY DO PEOPLE TAKE DRUGS?

People take drugs because they want to change something in their lives.

Here are some of the reasons young people have given for taking drugs:

- To fit in
- To escape or relax
- To relieve boredom
- To seem grown-up
- To rebel
- To experiment

They think drugs are a solution. But eventually, drugs become the problem.

Difficult as it may be to face one's problems, the consequences of drug use are always worse than the problem one is trying to solve with them. The real answer is to get the facts and to not take drugs in the first place.



Millions of copies of booklets such as this have been distributed to people around the world in over 20 languages.



As new drugs appear on the streets and more information about their effects becomes known, existing booklets are updated and new ones created.

The booklets are published by the Foundation for a Drug-Free World, a nonprofit public benefit organization headquartered in Los Angeles, California.

The foundation provides educational materials, advice and coordination for its international drug prevention network. It works with youth, parents, educators, volunteer organizations and government agencies—anyone with an interest in helping people lead lives free from drug abuse.

REFERENCES:

For the references used to compile this booklet, go to DrugFreeWorld.org/refs.

PHOTO CREDITS: page 2: Corbis; page 3: istock.com, Lou Oats; page 5: Faces of Meth; page 6: DEA (bottom right: crystal meth); page 12: courtesy of Attorney General's Office, Taswell County, Illinois (right: meth user 1998–2004)

FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

This booklet is one in a series of publications that covers the facts about marijuana, alcohol, fentanyl, synthetic drugs, Ecstasy, cocaine, crack cocaine, crystal meth and methamphetamine, inhalants, heroin, LSD and prescription drug abuse. Armed with this information, the reader can make the decision to live a drug-free life.

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