

# STIMULANTS



**Stimulants** are drugs that speed up messages between the body and brain resulting in increased heart rate, blood pressure, and body temperature. When stimulants are taken, a large amount of dopamine is released in the brain resulting in feelings of euphoria and well-being.

**Dopamine** is the chemical messenger within the brain responsible for pleasure, motivation, and motor function, so people misuse stimulants to get high, increase activity, reduce appetite, and to boost excitement and self-confidence.

## Understand the Side Effects

- Inability to sleep
- Paranoia
- Exhaustion
- Nervousness
- Inclinations toward suicide or homicide
- Aggression
- Panic
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Chest pain
- Rosy colored skin
- Extreme sweating
- Vomiting



These effects fluctuate depending on the type of stimulant taken, how much is used, and the method of consumption.

## Beware of Binge

People who abuse stimulants often **binge**, meaning they take large amounts of the drug over a short period of time, typically until their supply runs out. Some people may take stimulants in a **“run”** pattern meaning they use the drug every few hours over a period of several days without eating or sleeping. The sudden stoppage of taking stimulants can cause a **“crash”** resulting in extreme tiredness, depression, anxiety, and drug cravings.

## Withdrawal and Overdose

Regular users of stimulants can quickly develop a **tolerance** that requires increasingly larger doses of the drug to feel the usual effects. Tolerance can rapidly lead to **addiction**, which in turn results in **withdrawal syndrome** when the drug use is discontinued.

### Symptoms of an Overdose:

- Fever
- Seizures
- Stroke
- Heart attack
- Organ failure.

Drug overdose deaths involving stimulants have increased over the last decade, with deaths involving methamphetamine more than **quadrupling** and deaths involving cocaine more than **tripling** between 2013 and 2019.

### The stimulant class of drugs is diverse and includes:



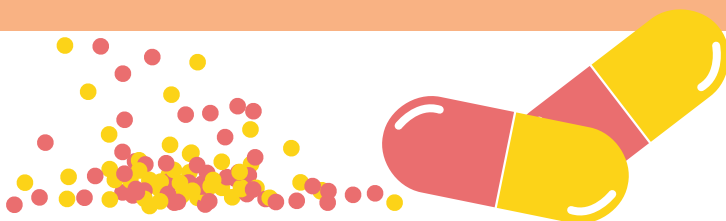
Prescription drugs used to treat conditions like ADHD such as Adderall (amphetamine), Vyvanse (dextroamphetamine) and Ritalin (methylphenidate)



Illicit drugs such as cocaine, methamphetamine (meth), and synthetic cathinones known as bath salts.



Stimulants can be found in different forms such as pills, powders, rocks, crystalline shards, and liquids, which can be swallowed, smoked, snorted, or injected.



## Know the Statistics

The recent rise in stimulant overdose deaths is attributed to **polysubstance** use, specifically mixing synthetic opioids like fentanyl with cocaine or meth. Methamphetamine and cocaine are also increasingly adulterated with fentanyl, resulting in the overdose deaths of unsuspecting users.

- **More than half** of all stimulant-related overdose deaths also involved an opioid in recent years.
- In a study of overdose deaths occurring within the first half of 2019 in 24 states and D.C., **almost 85%** involved illicit fentanyl, heroin, meth, or cocaine, either alone or in combination.

### ALERT

Any use of an illicit drug like cocaine, meth, or heroin or any pill that may resemble a prescribed medication like Xanax or Adderall obtained outside a pharmacy may contain fentanyl or another deadly synthetic drug and can cause immediate death especially among people who may have not used opioids previously.

## A Rising Problem

Initiation into stimulant use and misuse of stimulants continues to increase. In certain parts of the U.S. the number of cocaine and meth seizures have exceeded that of opioids.

Amphetamine-related hospitalizations more than tripled between 2008 and 2015 and hospital costs jumped from \$436 million in 2003 to \$2.17 billion by 2015.

### When is Adult Misuse the Highest?



#### Cocaine

18 to 25 years old



#### Meth

26 to 49 years old

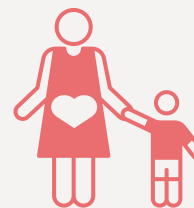
### The Impacts of Misuse

#### Impacts on Environment and Society

In addition to the detrimental impacts on individual health, societal impacts include increased crime, environmental damage arising from clandestine labs, law enforcement and incarceration costs, and premature death.

#### Impacts on Children and Parents

Stimulant use during pregnancy results in serious harms to the child including heart and brain abnormalities and cognitive impairments. Additionally, children with parents who use misuse stimulants are at increased risk of being abused or neglected and being placed in foster care.



## RESOURCES

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