



Drug Fact Sheet

Amphetamines

Overview

Amphetamines are stimulants that speed up the body's system. Many are legally prescribed and used to treat attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Street names

Bennies, Black Beauties, Crank, Ice, Speed, Uppers

Looks like

Amphetamines can look like pills or powder. Common prescription amphetamines include methylphenidate (Ritalin® or Ritalin SR®), amphetamine and dextroamphetamine (Adderall®), and dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine®).



Methods of abuse

Amphetamines are generally taken orally or injected. However, the addition of "ice," the slang name of crystallized methamphetamine hydrochloride, has promoted smoking as another mode of administration. Just as "crack" is smokable cocaine, "ice" is smokable methamphetamine.

Affect on mind

The effects of amphetamines and methamphetamine are similar to cocaine, but their onset is slower and their duration is longer. In contrast to cocaine, which is quickly removed from the brain and is almost completely metabolized, methamphetamine remains in the central nervous system longer, and a larger percentage of the drug remains unchanged in the body, producing prolonged stimulant effects. Chronic abuse produces a psychosis that resembles schizophrenia and is characterized by: Paranoia, picking at the skin, preoccupation with one's own thoughts, and auditory and visual hallucinations. Violent and erratic behavior is frequently seen among chronic abusers of amphetamines and methamphetamine.

Affect on body

Physical effects of amphetamine use include increased blood pressure and pulse rates, insomnia, loss of appetite, and physical exhaustion.

Drugs causing similar effects

Drugs that cause similar effects include: dexmethylphenidate, phentermine, benzphetamine, phendimetrazine, cocaine, crack, methamphetamine, and khat.

Overdose effects

Overdose effects include agitation, increased body temperature, hallucinations, convulsions, and possible death.

Legal status in the United States

Amphetamines are Schedule II stimulants, which means that they have a high potential for abuse and limited medical uses. Pharmaceutical products are available only through a prescription that cannot be refilled.

Common places of origin

Amphetamine was first marketed in the 1930s as Bensedrine® in an over-the-counter inhaler to treat nasal congestion. By 1937 amphetamine was available by prescription in tablet form and was used in the treatment of the sleeping disorder, narcolepsy, and ADHD. Over the years, the use and abuse of clandestinely produced amphetamines have spread. Today, clandestine laboratory production of amphetamines has mushroomed, and the abuse of the drug has increased dramatically.