

## Injecting vs smoking

Most people already know, injecting comes with a range of risks (such as blood-borne viruses, vein damage, infection) and can be extremely addictive - physically and psychologically. But did you know smoking meth is as addictive as injecting?

You know the risks, so avoid introducing someone to injecting or smoking. If they insist on wanting to use, suggest snorting or swallowing.

Take care of your friends and younger users and help them avoid the risks of smoking or injecting.

Check out our brochure about *Alternative Routes of Administration* for info about other ways to use.



## Managing comedown & withdrawal

The feeling of coming down is the process of your body returning to normal. Things that affect your comedown and withdrawal include:

- Your general state of health and nutrition
- Length of time you have been using
- Amount you have been using
- What's going on around you

These are tips on how to manage withdrawal and comedown from people who have gone through it:

- Distract yourself - watch a DVD, go swimming, go outside, read, draw
- Don't be alone - be around people who are supportive
- Eat, sleep, take care of yourself

Remember - comedowns and withdrawal are never a good experience so it is a normal part of the comedown to feel depressed, exhausted, moody and have general aches and pains.

## Staying healthy when using...

**Sleep!** Every day or at least every couple of days. If you can't sleep make sure you rest for a few hours every day (laying down in a darkened room).

**Eat!** Re-fuel your body every day, even if you aren't hungry. Ideally, try to eat some fresh fruit and vegetables every day because these are the raw materials your body needs.

**Drink!** Water, Gatorade or Powerade are handy to keep your fluids up. Try to avoid soft drinks or energy drinks as they make you more dehydrated.

**Remember hygiene!** Shower every day and keep hands clean to avoid sickness and infection, and brush your teeth.

**Sex!** When using meth you may have some strong sexual desires. Make sure you use condoms and lube to avoid sexually transmitted infections and don't forget to get tested regularly, every 6-12 months. **You can get tested confidentially, for free, by our nurse in Perth or Bunbury—call (08) 9325 8387 to find out more.** Some people might find their level of inhibition is lowered, which can leave them potentially vulnerable. Be sure that all parties are consenting - from start to finish.

**Keep active!** Try to do the things you did before you started using - sport, art, music, Lego or whatever...

## Just keep doing it!

Be kind to yourself - mentally and physically.

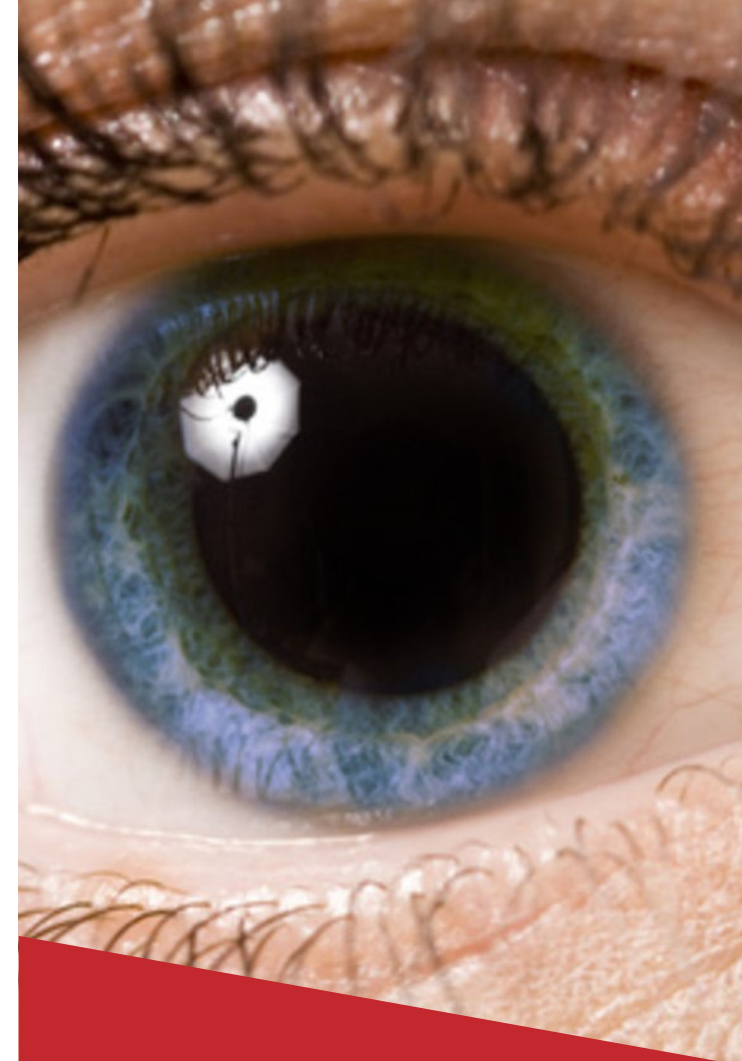
Ask for a red *Recognise & Respond* z-card for more tips about *amphetamine toxicity*.



## Who can you call?

**Alcohol & Drug Support Line:** (08)9442 5000

**Parent & Family Support Line:** (08)9442 5050



# The Ups and Downs Of Using Meth

Unit 22 / 7 Aberdeen Street, Perth

P: (08) 9325 8387

[www.harmreductionwa.org](http://www.harmreductionwa.org)



## People use meth for different reasons

Some people who use meth say it increases their confidence, concentration, energy and can help with work or study.

Despite the good things, some people who use meth begin to experience things like paranoia, hallucinations, lack of sleep, loss of weight, dependence and a general decrease in health and wellbeing.

This resource contains information and tips on ways to reduce the risk of the not so good things and how to manage them if they happen.

## Meth-induced psychosis

Symptoms of meth-induced psychosis include paranoia, hallucinations, delusions, odd thoughts and feelings...and the list goes on. The following can put you at higher risk of meth-induced psychosis:

- Long binges on meth without sleep
- Higher doses of meth
- Increasing frequency of using meth (more than twice a week)
- Injecting or smoking meth
- People who have experienced meth-induced psychosis previously



People with a family history of psychosis are also at high risk. Even people who have never used can experience psychosis the first time they use.

## Managing psychosis

**If someone starts looping out or becoming paranoid try the following tips from people who use meth and have managed these situations before:**

- Stay calm! Psychosis is a frightening experience in which people become removed from reality. They may not realise what is happening. How you react will affect how the person behaves.
- Communicate calmly and re-assure the person. Using their name helps. Talk in a clear, simple manner and repeat yourself if you need to.

The person may be fixed in their beliefs, but try not to get into a lengthy argument. Listen to them to get an idea of the emotions they are feeling.



- Take the person out of the stimulating environment to a calm, quiet place without too many people around. If there are too many people around making things worse, ask them to leave. Turn off lights, music and TV.
- Distract the person by talking about something else.
- **Get help if the person is getting worse** - call an Ambulance on 000.

## Reducing the risk

Keep track of how much you are using and how often you use. If you find you are becoming paranoid or anxious, decrease your use for a while. Take regular breaks and avoid taking meth for days on end. Try to use a max of 2 days per week.



If you have experienced psychosis try to keep to a low dose and use less often. Ask your friends to tell you when you are going too far.

If you have been on meth for a while, and a dose that would normally give you a rush has little or no effect, you have probably run your reserves down too far. Taking larger doses won't make you feel better. It will just make you fry longer. Take a break. Just one good meal and one night's rest can make a huge difference.

## What not to do...

- Don't tell the person their experience is not real - this can upset them further. Just reassure them that they are safe with you now.
- Don't get angry with them or confront them
- Avoid confrontational situations - for example, sit beside the person instead of in front of them.
- Don't leave them on their own
- Don't put yourself in danger