

ICE...know the effects

Ice is a type of methamphetamine, which is generally stronger, more addictive and has more harmful side effects than speed.

Methamphetamine is a stimulant drug, which means it speeds up the messages travelling between the brain and the body. Methamphetamine comes in different forms; powder, oily base or crystal (typically known as ice and usually comes as small chunky clear crystals that look like ice).

How is it used?

Ice is generally smoked or injected and the effects can be felt in 3 to 7 seconds. It is sometimes swallowed (15-30 minutes to feel the effects) or snorted (3-5 minutes to feel the effect).

The effects of ice

The stimulant effects of ice can last from anywhere between 7 to 24 hours, but some of the other unwanted effects can last much longer. Ice is typically made in backyard laboratories which means you can't be sure exactly what is in the drug and how strong (pure) it is. This can make it easy to use too much and overdose.

Soon after taking ice you may experience:

- Feeling excited, more energetic and a sense of wellbeing
- Talkative and restlessness
- Jaw clenching and teeth grinding
- Rapid shifts in the way you think and speak

Coming Down

Once the initial effects of ice begin to wear off you may start to experience a range of other effects which are part of the come down which can last for days. This is why your employer is concerned about your drug taking activities on the weekend.

Even the mild effects of 'coming down' such as being tired, moody and irritable might not seem like a big deal, it can cause you problems in the workplace. You might get into arguments with work colleagues because you are in a bad mood or always tired.

As with the use of most drugs – what goes up, must come down!

Who is using ice?

Approximately 7% of Australian's reported they have used methamphetamine in their lifetime¹. Whilst this level has remained consistent since 2007, the frequency of use and form of methamphetamine (speed, base or crystal) has changed significantly. There is an increased number of people using ice as opposed to speed, a less potent form of methamphetamine.

The demographic of people using methamphetamine changes depending on how often they are using and the form of drug being consumed. Typically, less frequent ice users are employed single males and as their use increases they tend to lose their jobs and engage in risk taking activities such as driving under the influence of drugs (Table 1).²

	Weekly/Monthly Ice Users %	Yearly Ice Users %
Male	62	62
Married	20	31
Employed	46	69
Worked under the influence of drugs	62	22
Drove under the influence of drugs	62	48
Drink at risky levels	78	59
Smoke tobacco	83	57

Table 1. Weekly/monthly and yearly ice use amongst Australians who have used in the past 12 months.²

Is your workplace at risk?

National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) has identified particular workplace settings have a higher prevalence of methamphetamine use than others. Those who are young (18-30 years old), male and employed as tradespersons or technicians are at a higher risk of using methamphetamine².

However, particular industry groups such as hospitality, construction, mining and manufacturing also have elevated levels of methamphetamine use.

A serious concern about Ice is how addictive it is, which has the potential to ruin lives. It is important the supervisors in the workplace know the signs and symptoms to help identify if a team member needs support.

Ice effects everyone differently, but some **signs a worker may be using ice** include:

- Difficulty concentrating and lack of coordination
- Feeling more energetic, talkative and restless
- Irritability, hostility and feeling aggressive
- Rapid shifts in the way they think and speak
- Unexplained patterns of absenteeism
- Feeling anxious and sleep deprived

Help and Support

If you are concerned about a co-worker's behaviour report it to your manager or a HR representative. There are free support services that are there to help if you or someone you know needs assistance.

DrugInfo	druginfo.adf.org.au PH:1300 85 85 84
Family Drug Help	PH:1300 660 068
Counselling Online	counsellingonline.org.au

References

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2013). National Drug Strategy Household Survey.
2. Roche, A, McEntee, A, Fischer, J & Kostadinov, V. (2015). Methamphetamine use in Australia. Adelaide: National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA).

This information sheet has been adapted from DrugInfo's factsheet 'Ice Facts', retrieved from <http://druginfo.adf.org.au/factsheets/>

Further information



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