



BREAKING THE ICE IN OUR COMMUNITY

FACT SHEET

Crystal meth (ice) A support guide for family and friends

Thank you to members of the Leadership Group of the Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Network (ADAN) and the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council for their editorial input into this resource.

What is 'ice'?

Ice, or crystalline methamphetamine is a stimulant which means it speeds up messages travelling between the brain and the body.

Ice is generally smoked or injected and the effects can be felt straight away. It can also be swallowed or snorted – the effects can take about 30 minutes to feel if used this way.

Street names: ice, crystal meth, crystal, glass, shard, shabu, meth, tina, rice.

What ice can do to someone

When they're 'high' (effects can last up to 8 hours) people who use ice can feel some of the following :

On the body:

- Enlarged pupils and dry mouth
- Teeth grinding and lots of sweating
- Fast heart rate and breathing
- Feeling less hungry
- Feeling dizzy and shaky
- Over-sensitive skin that may cause people to scratch themselves over and over

On the mind:

- Feeling very happy
- Increased confidence, alertness and energy
- Increased desire to have sex
- Feeling anxious or panicky
- Taking more risks than usual – do things they normally wouldn't do
- Feeling paranoid or like people want to hurt you
- Yelling or being aggressive
- Some people can get violent

'Coming down'

It can take a few days to come down from using ice. In that time people may:

- Have difficulty sleeping including twitching arms and legs
- Feel very tired – needing sleep
- Have Headaches, dizziness and blurred vision
- Paranoia (fearful, mistrustful), hallucinations (see things or hear things) and confusion
- Short tempered and feeling 'down'
- Short-term memory loss

Dependence

It's easy to become dependent on or addicted to ice if it's used regularly or often. And giving up ice can take a couple of goes.

One of the reasons people use ice is because it targets the 'feel good' part of the brain. In fact, it overworks it so much that things that would usually make them feel good, like hanging out with family and friends, seeing a funny movie or having a good chat with a friend, don't make them happy anymore. They need the strong effects of ice to feel good.

So when someone gives up ice they can be stressed, moody and 'down' until their brain gets back to normal – which can take weeks, months and in some cases, or for some people, can take years. That's why it's so hard to give up ice.

What you can do

It helps just to listen

If the person wants to talk to you about their ice use, try to listen without interrupting, judging or becoming upset. When they've finished talking, repeat what they've said back to them in a calm voice – this helps to check in and see that you have understood what they are telling you.

Doing this creates a 'safe space' for them to be honest about their problem. If they want help, they know that they can always come to you and not be judged.

Encourage them to change

You can help them think about change by being there and supportive.

Choose a time to talk when you are both relaxed and the person isn't using ice. Ask calm, respectful questions, for example:

- "What do you like about using ice?"
- "What don't you like?"

If they don't want to talk, don't force the conversation.

Set limits

Be clear to the person what is and isn't ok behavior and also what will happen if they break your rules.

It's important to stay safe, and get support for your own and your family's sake.

Help them be responsible

It's difficult to see someone you love getting into debt or breaking the law, but think about how giving them money may help them continue using ice.

If you do give them money, make sure you don't give them more than you can afford to not get back.

Real, long term change is a decision that means making a lot of changes for the person who is using ice. They may need your help or the help of others.

Look into treatment options

If the person is talking about giving up ice, make sure you have information on treatment options.

Treatment options

Talk to your GP, a local drug and alcohol worker or health service.

A range of treatment options are available to assist someone who might be dependent on ice.

They include:

- Withdrawal management/detoxification (detox)
- Stimulant Treatment Programs
- Counselling
- Residential Rehabilitation (rehab)
- Drugs in pregnancy services
- Complementary therapies
- Support Groups

Sometimes a person isn't ready to stop using ice yet, but treatment that focuses on reducing the harms may be helpful.

Forcing someone into treatment when they don't feel ready probably won't work.

You aren't alone and help is available

We know this isn't easy for you – you're probably feeling anxious, helpless and desperate for a solution. And to make things harder, not much can change until the person using ice is ready to admit there's a problem and is willing to make a decision to Change their use.

But there are things you can do to stay on top of how you feel.

You could think about:

- Talking with a trusted friend or family member
- Talking to a local doctor
- Joining a support group (women's/men's group)
- Doing activities that you enjoy
- Making sure you 'have a life', continue to do the things that make you happy, and stay connected to your family and friends.

Coping with someone's bad reaction to ice

Stay calm

- Keep your voice low, calm and steady
- React calmly and try not to make too much eye contact
- Give the person space and don't crowd them
- Move children and older people and others away
- Make the area as safe as you can, remove anything they could hurt themselves with
- Encourage them to drink some water
- Don't ask too many questions. Use the person's name. Say things like, Jason, I just want to make sure you are safe"

Reassure

- Be supportive. Tell them that they will be okay, and that what they're feeling will pass when the ice wears off
- Help them calm down by moving them to a quiet place where they can rest
- Listen to them and respond with calming comments. This isn't a time to argue

Respond

- Call an ambulance by dialling triple zero (000) if the person has the following:
 - Racing heart beat and chest pain
 - Breathing problems
 - Fits or uncontrolled jerking
 - Extreme agitation, confusion or clumsiness
 - Sudden, severe headache
 - Unconsciousness
 - Ambulance officers don't need to call the police.
- If the person becomes violent or threatens to hurt themselves or someone else, move yourself and others to a safe place and call the police by dialling triple zero (000).

Further information

Help and support lines (24 hours, 7 days a week)

Alcohol and Drug Information Service

Sydney metropolitan: 02 9361 8000

Regional & rural NSW: 1800 422 599

Stimulant Treatment Line

Sydney metropolitan: 02 9361 8088

Regional and rural NSW free call*: 1800 10 11 88

Please note free call numbers are not free from mobile phones, except Telstra mobiles

Family Drug Support – www.fds.org.au

Australia-wide: 1300 368 186

Mental Health Line

NSW Health 1800 011 511

Local Health District Drug & Alcohol services –

intake numbers <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/Pages/contact-service.aspx>

Other help and support services and resources

If there are concerns about the health or emotional safety of children within the home, call the **Child Protection Helpline on 132 111**.

Where children are old enough to recognise they would like assistance or to talk to someone the

Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800 is Australia's only free, private and confidential phone counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25.

Aboriginal Health & Medical

Research Council of NSW

02 9212 4777

Contact AH&MRC for details of your local Aboriginal Community

Controlled Health or Residential Rehabilitation Service

DAMEC – Drug & Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre – www.damec.org.au

02 8706 0150

Offering multicultural AoD counselling services in Western & South West Sydney for culturally & linguistically diverse clients & their families

NSW Users and AIDS Association – www.nuaa.org.au

Sydney metropolitan: 02 8354 7343

Regional and rural NSW: 1800 644 413

ACON – www.acon.org.au

ACON's Substance Support Service offers specialist LGBTI-friendly counselling for stimulant and crystalline methamphetamine users.

NSW Intake Line: 02 9206 2000

Breaking the Ice (Alcohol & Drug Foundation) website www.adf.org.au/breakingtheice

A joint project by the ADF and NSW Health aiming to reduce harms from crystalline methamphetamine (ice) in NSW.

Cracks in the Ice – <https://cracksintheice.org.au/Evidence> based information about for the community Your Room website – yourroom.com.au

Website providing access to confidential counselling, information and resources for people in NSW, including a range of Indigenous resources.

Stimulant Health Check

An LGBTIQ-friendly resource with information about discussing your stimulant use in regular GP health check-ups. ACON: 02 9206 2000

Links to further help and support

www.health.nsw.gov.au/crystallinemethamphetamine/Pages/treatment.aspx

www.druginfo.adf.org.au/contact-numbers/help-and-support

Statistics

NSW statistics on crystalline methamphetamine

www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au/Indicator/beh_illimethed/

Australian statistics on crystalline methamphetamine

www.druginfo.adf.org.au/topics/quickstatistics

#amphetamines

Online resources

Crystalline methamphetamine

Key messages (NSW Health)

www.health.nsw.gov.au/crystallinemethamphetamine/Publications/key-messages.pdf

Crystalline methamphetamine (ice) (NSW Health)

www.health.nsw.gov.au/crystallinemethamphetamine/Documents/crystalline-methamphetamine.pdf

For information on treatment see www.adf.org.au/cdat-breaking-the-ice-resources

BREAKING THE ICE IN OUR COMMUNITY



twitter.com/AlcoholDrugFdn



facebook.com/AlcoholDrugFdn



adf.org.au



adf.org.au/programs/breaking-the-ice



yourroom.com.au

Suite 903, Level 9
122 Arthur Street, North Sydney NSW 2060
PO Box 338, North Sydney NSW 2059
Email adf@adf.org.au
Telephone 1300 858 584 [DrugInfo]

FACT SHEET

© The Alcohol and Drug Foundation, 2017.
ABN 66 057 731 192.

Disclaimer: The Alcohol and Drug Foundation has used its best endeavours to ensure that material contained in this publication was correct at the time of printing. The Alcohol and Drug Foundation gives no warranty and accepts no responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of information and reserves the right to make changes without notice at any time in its absolute discretion.