



Speed or amphetamine sulphate

Speed facts at a glance

The signs and symptoms of using speed can include:

- Increased and irregular heart rate
- Increased breathing
- Teeth grinding
- Nervousness
- Restlessness
- Insomnia
- Aggression
- Fever and sweating
- Headaches
- Blurred vision
- Overheating
- Dry mouth and lips
- Dilated pupils
- Nausea and vomiting
- Mood swings
- Hallucinations
- Paranoia

The consequences of using speed may include:

- Chronic sleep problems
- Cracked teeth through grinding
- Panic attacks
- Insomnia
- Anxiety
- Decreased emotional control
- Severe depression
- Violent behaviour
- Speed psychosis
- Nerve cell damage
- Death from heart failure or stroke
- High risk of dependence (addiction), especially if injected
- HIV and hepatitis infections through needle sharing

What is it?

Speed is part of the amphetamine family of drugs, which also includes ice. Ice is the purest form of the drug followed by base and then speed, however the potential for dependence (addiction) plus physical and mental problems associated with speed is still high.

Speed is also known by a variety of other names, including: whizz, go-ee, snow, zip, point, eve, gogo, pure, and gas.

Physical effects

When using speed the drugs are targeting the brain's 'reward system' and users will often crave that feeling again, which can lead to addiction.

The sense of alertness and energy a person experiences is due to these drugs speeding up the messages between the brain and the body. This leads to an increased heart and breathing rate and higher blood pressure.

One of the most common effects of amphetamine overdose is 'speed psychosis'. This closely resembles the effects of paranoid schizophrenia, and usually begins with a heightened awareness of the environment and feelings of paranoia, anxiety and tension.

Problems

Short term:

- Increased and irregular heartbeat and breathing
- Excessive sweating
- Overheating
- Blurred vision
- Headaches
- Teeth grinding
- Jaw clenching
- Dilated pupils
- Nausea
- Diarrhoea

Long term:

- Dental problems
- Significant weight loss
- Stroke
- Heart problems
- High risk of dependence
- High risk of exposure to hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV

Research also shows that both verbal and physical violence are linked with long-term amphetamine use. Heavy binges on speed are associated with reckless and aggressive behaviour.

Users also face further psychological issues with prolonged amphetamine use, including attention and memory issues, decreased emotional control, paranoid delusions, hallucinations, mood swings and depression. This can lead to social and financial problems, the risk of family breakdown and losing friends.