

FACTS ABOUT COCAINE

WHAT IS COCAINE

Also known as coke, crack, blow, Charlie, C, pepsi, cola, Vitamin C, dust, flake, nose candy, white lady, toot, snow, white dust, white, crack, rock, freebase, okey doke, AKA

Cocaine is a stimulant drug. It is extracted from the leaves of the coca plant. The different types are:

- cocaine hydrochloride, a white or off-white powder (can be mixed or "cut" with other substances, which may be harmful)
- freebase, a purer form made from treating cocaine with ammonia
- crack, made from treating cocaine with baking soda to produce rock crystals. Its name relates to the crackling sound it makes when smoked.

EFFECTS OF COCAINE

How it is used

Cocaine is usually snorted but can be rubbed into the gums, added to food and drinks, or injected. Freebase cocaine is smoked, and crack is smoked or injected.

Effects depend on the person (age, weight, size, health and tolerance), as well as the strength, the amount used and if it is used with other drugs, including alcohol.

When smoking or snorting (effects are felt within 2 to 3 minutes), gumming (1 to 2 hours), injecting (within 5 minutes). As it wears off, "comedown" effects can last 2 to 3 days.

Short-term effects, both desired and undesired, may include...

- euphoria, increased confidence, feel a "rush"
- more talkative and social, laugh more
- increased sex drive
- indifference to pain
- restlessness, irritability, agitation, difficulty sleeping
- violent or aggressive behaviour
- headaches, dizziness, dry mouth, enlarged pupils
- jaw clenching and teeth grinding, loss of appetite

- increased heart rate and higher temperature
- nosebleeds and nasal passage damage (from snorting)
- tetanus, infection, vein damage, Hepatitis B or C, HIV, AIDS (from injecting or sharing needles).

Long-term effects may include...

- increased risk of heart disease, heart attack and stroke
- cold-like symptoms (runny nose, watery eyes)
- severe weight loss, fainting and fits
- anxiety and depression
- low sex drive
- feeling of bugs crawling on or under the skin
- cocaine induced psychosis – paranoia, confusion, hallucinations
- cocaine dependence.

OVERDOSE

Effects from overdosing: irrational, agitated, aggressive, paranoia, nausea and vomiting, headache, heart pain, seizures, bleeding in the brain, kidney damage, heart attack, stroke, unconscious, death.

If a person is experiencing an overdose or is unresponsive call 000 for an ambulance. If unconscious, put them in the recovery position. If not breathing, start CPR. Paramedics won't involve police unless the person is a danger to themselves or others.

HOW LONG DOES COCAINE STAY IN YOUR SYSTEM?

Depends on use and person. Generally, "high" effects last 15 to 30 minutes and then start to wear off. Lingering effects may be felt up to 4 hours. It can be detected in urine 2 to 3 days, blood and saliva up to 2 days and hair up to 3 months.

TIPS FOR REDUCING RISK

There is no safe way to use cocaine. There will always be a health risk. The only way to be safe is not to use. If you choose to use, the following will help reduce risk:

Before: take a friend and tell them what you plan on using, plan how to get home (to avoid driving under the influence), use new equipment. Injecting is not recommended, though if choosing to inject, get your own clean, sharp syringe and find a clean location.

During: go slow, start with a low dose then wait to see effects before having a bit more, know and keep to your limits. Safely dispose of syringes.

Avoid: using cocaine with other drugs, including alcohol, using too much, too often and needle or equipment sharing. While using don't be alone, don't drive or do risky activities or be responsible for the care of others.

IS COCAINE BECOMING A PROBLEM?

It may be a problem if you agree with any of these statements:

-
- I struggle to limit or reduce the amount of cocaine I'm using
- I spend a lot of time using cocaine or affected by it
- I often feel strong urges to use cocaine
- I'm unable to perform tasks at work or home due to cocaine use
- I have developed a tolerance to cocaine, so I need to have more to feel effects
- I have withdrawal symptoms – feeling angry, anxious, depressed, upset, sick, vomiting, shaking, tired, weak, sleep problems, muscle pain, suicidal.

TIPS FOR PROBLEMATIC COCAINE USE

- seek support from a health professional, as well as from family and friends
- avoid people, places, objects, feelings or situations associated with using cocaine
- start doing activities you enjoy that don't involve using cocaine
- look after yourself – get enough sleep, follow a healthy diet, adopt a balanced lifestyle
- set some personal goals.

COCAINE AND THE LAW

It is illegal to use, possess, make or sell cocaine in Australia.

FOR SUPPORT – CALL DRUG ARM

CALL DRUG ARM CENTRAL INTAKE ON 07 3620 8880 DURING BUSINESS HOURS TO ACCESS FREE SUPPORT OR EMAIL INTAKE@DRUGARM.COM.AU. FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES, CALL 1300 656 800 OR EMAIL INFO@DRUGARM.COM.AU.

FOR 24/7 SUPPORT CALL:

ALCOHOL & DRUG INFORMATION SERVICE: 1800 177 833 (QLD) AND 1800 250 015 (NATIONAL).