

AMPHETAMINES

Street Names

Speed, Uppers, Whizz, Billy, Sulphate, Bennies, Greenies, Cartwheels, Meth, Crystal, Dexies, Hearts, Oranges.

Description

Amphetamines usually come in the form of a white powder.

Routes of Use

The powder is usually sniffed but can also be injected.

History

Amphetamine has a history of medical use. In the 1950's and 1960's it was used to suppress the appetite in obese people and used as an anti-depressant. They were a popular drug of abuse for the Mods in the sixties. Nowadays they are used in the treatment of extreme over-activity (hyperkinesia) in children and attacks of acute drowsiness (narcolepsy).

Effects People Seek

Amphetamine is a stimulant; it produces feelings of energy and confidence, and relieves tiredness. There is little need for food or sleep. At higher doses there is strong sense of exhilaration. The effects of a single dose can last for several hours and another dose is often required to avoid the effects of the 'come down'.

Other Effects

Feelings of anxiety, irritability, restlessness and paranoia are common. Frequent high doses can lead to a collection of symptoms including delirium, panic attacks, psychosis and hallucinations. Long term use can lead to depression, constant tiredness, delusions, hallucinations and paranoia. The body's ability to fight disease is lowered often leading to infections. Suicide has been known in cases of sudden withdrawal.

Dependence & Tolerance

As with most stimulants dependence is psychological. Tolerance develops easily, leading to the need for greater doses to produce the same effect.

The Law

Amphetamines are prescription only drugs and come under the Medicines Act. Patients can only possess them if a doctor has prescribed them for them. They are also subject to the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) and are class B drugs, unless prepared for injection when they become class A. It is an offence to possess (unless prescribed), produce or supply them and also to let premises be used for their production or supply. The maximum sentences that can be imposed by a Crown Court are: Possession, 5 years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine. Supply, 14 years imprisonment and/or unlimited fine. If prepared for injection the maximum sentences are: Possession, 7 years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine. Supply, Life imprisonment and/or unlimited fine. It is an offence to be in charge of a motor vehicle whilst 'unfit through drugs', sentences include a period of disqualification, fines and, especially after previous convictions, imprisonment.