



JOB AID

Drugs and Alcohol: The Facts **About Stimulants**

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Stimulant drugs are a class of psychoactive substances that stimulate the central nervous system and produce temporary improvements in physical or mental functions.

Caffeine

It is likely safe for most healthy adults when used in doses of up to 400 mg daily (4 cups). Do not take caffeine-containing products and ephedrine (a drug used to prevent low blood pressure) at the same time.

Amount of caffeine per cup (may vary depending on how they are prepared):

- Coffee: 100 mg
- Black tea: 25-110 mg
- Green tea: 30-50 mg

Energy drinks with caffeine in concentrated form contain as much as 3 times the amount of caffeine as in one cup of coffee. They also contain added sugars and other additives and legal stimulants. The dangers of energy drinks include dehydration, heart complications, such as irregular heartbeat and heart failure, anxiety (i.e., feeling nervous and jittery) and insomnia. Avoid these products in excess.

Common Uses

- Mental alertness
- Athletic performance
- Memory improvements

Common Effects

- Insomnia
- Nervousness
- Restlessness
- Nausea

Nicotine

Nicotine is the main ingredient in tobacco products (e.g., cigarettes, vaping products, cigars, pipes and chewing tobacco). Avoid taking nicotine with either benzodiazepines (a type of sedative) or the contraceptive pill.

Short-Term Effects

- Mild stimulation
- Increased heart rate
- Increased ability to concentrate
- Coughing
- Dizziness
- Reduced appetite

Long-Term Effects

- Stroke
- Eye disease
- Pneumonia
- Coronary heart disease
- Asthma
- Cancer

Smoking vs. Vaping

Vaping products were created, in theory, to be safer alternatives to smoking cigarettes, but vaping still has harmful effects. Just like cigarettes, nicotine in vaping products raises your blood pressure and spikes your adrenaline, which increases your heart rate and likelihood of a heart attack. Inhaling vapors causes damage to the lungs similar to inhaling cigarette smoke and is just as addictive.

Cocaine

Cocaine is an intense, euphoria-producing stimulant drug that is powerfully addictive. Common names include blow, coca, crack, flake, snow and soda.

- Typically, a white powder
- Inhaled, dissolved, injected or smoked

Crack is much stronger and looks like off-white chips, sticks or "rocks," is the texture of porcelain and is smoked in a pipe.

Users may develop a tolerance for the drug, meaning they need more and more cocaine each time they want a "high."

Physical Effects

- Adrenaline rush
- Elevated blood pressure and heart rate
- Constricts arteries to the heart
- Deterioration of membranes of nose and lungs
- Heart attacks, liver and/or brain damage
- Lasts 5 to 20 minutes
- One use can cause death

Mental and Emotional Effects

- Euphoria
- False confidence
- Intense desire for more
- Severe mood swings
- Long-term impacts to brain chemistry/mental health

Amphetamines

Amphetamines, often called speed or uppers, are taken orally or injected, and some forms are smoked. People often use amphetamines for dieting, working longer hours and mental clarity or focus. Often, they are prescribed to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (or ADHD), attention deficit disorder (ADD) and narcolepsy. These stimulant medications are often diverted from their original purpose, which can range from giving a friend a single pill to selling one's prescribed pills to others.

Physical Effects

- Countermeasure to fatigue
- Increased blood pressure, heart rate
- Lasts 12-24 hours
- Loss of appetite
- Dizziness, fever, convulsions, blurred vision, loss of coordination
- Long-term use can cause acne, malnutrition, frequent illness, lower self-care and dental and hair damage
- Highly addictive

Mental and Emotional Effects

- Cycles of highs and lows
- Restlessness
- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Panic
- Meth or ice users often exhibit violent or bizarre behavior

Methamphetamines

Sometimes called ice or meth, methamphetamines are a stronger form of amphetamines and are usually a white, bitter-tasting powder or pill. People take it by smoking, swallowing, snorting or injection. Crystal meth is a concentrated form that looks like glass fragments or shiny, bluish-white rocks. Common names include ice or glass.

Short-Term Effects

- Increased wakefulness and physical activity
- Decreased appetite
- Increased blood pressure and body temperature

Long-Term Effects

- Risk of addiction
- Risk of contracting human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, and hepatitis
- Severe dental problems
- Lower self-care
- Intense itching, which leads to skin sores from scratching
- Violent behavior
- Paranoia

Consult a medical professional before using stimulant drugs with other drugs or medications.

Methamphetamine versus Cocaine

Methamphetamine	Cocaine
Stimulant	Stimulant and local anesthetic
Man-made	Plant-derived
Smoking produces a long-lasting high	Smoking produces a brief high
50% of the drug is removed from the body in 12 hours	50% of the drug is removed from the body in 1 hour
Increases dopamine release and blocks dopamine re-uptake	Blocks dopamine re-uptake
Limited medical use for ADHD, narcolepsy, and weight loss	Limited medical use as a local anesthetic in some surgical procedures