Methamphetamine (also known as speed, meth, crank, ice, poor man’s cocaine) is a stimulant or “upper”. It is made in illegal labs and has recently become a major drug of abuse in the United States. It is chemically related to amphetamine, but is more potent and more harmful. Methamphetamine is highly addictive in a short period of time and has a high potential for abuse. It is made illegally on the street in small laboratories and can be taken by mouth, smoked, inhaled or injected.

**So how does it work?**

Methamphetamine increases the amount of dopamine (a chemical made by the body) in the central nervous system resulting in a rush or “high”. Initial use can lead to increased alertness and energy, decreased appetite, and increased irritability. It can also cause increased blood pressure, increased/irregular heart rate, increased breathing rate, and increased body temperature. Long term use of methamphetamine has the potential to lead to serious physical, emotional, mental problems.

**Short term effects of taking Methamphetamines**

**Judgment**
- Use results in euphoria, decreased sleep, paranoia, memory loss, confusion, and irritability that may lead to impaired judgement and inhibition.
- Use of this agent is highly addictive and may lead to dependence in which higher or more frequent doses are needed to maintain the “high”.

**Memory**
- Use results in euphoria, decreased sleep, paranoia, and confusion, which can lead to impaired memory.

**Health**
- Use of this agent can lead to drug dependence/addiction.
- Use may cause a decrease in appetite leading to severe weight loss.
- Use may lead to increased/irregular heart rate and increased blood pressure resulting in severe problems such as heart attack or stroke. This may result in death or other harmful complications.
- High doses of this agent can cause seizures and increases in body temperature that can lead to death.

**Long term effects of taking Methamphetamines**

**Judgment**
- Use results in euphoria, decreased sleep, paranoia, memory loss, confusion, and irritability that may lead to impaired judgement and inhibition.
- Impaired judgment/inhibition can lead to a higher likelihood of contracting hepatitis (liver disease) and HIV from sharing needles or sexual contact.
- Long term use of this agent may lead to addiction associated with compulsive drug seeking behaviors. With chronic use, tolerance to the drug may develop, requiring users to take higher doses of the drug to experience the same “high”.

**Memory**
- Use results in euphoria, decreased sleep, paranoia, and confusion that can lead to impaired memory.
- Use may permanently damage neuron cell endings in the brain leading to memory loss.

**Health**
- Use of this agent can lead to drug dependence/addiction. Withdrawal from methamphetamine may result in depression, anxiety, aggressive behavior, fatigue and drug craving.
- Use may cause a decrease in appetite leading to severe weight loss.
- Use may lead to increased/irregular heart rate and increased blood pressure resulting in severe cardiovascular events such as heart attack or stroke. This may result in death or other harmful complications.
- Use of this agent can lead to a quicker progression from HIV to AIDS.
- Chronic use may result in psychosis including paranoia, aggressive/violent behavior, hallucinations, delusions and homicidal or suicidal thoughts.
- Severe dental problems leading to tooth decay (meth mouth) may result from use.
- Acne and sores may appear on the face and are unable to heal properly.