



**A Few MORE
Things
To Know
About Speed.**

So you've picked up this brochure WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

This brochure is intended to provide the most up to date information on the use of methamphetamine (speed). Some of this information you probably already know but the goal of this brochure is to help you make better decisions if you choose to use speed. There are also resources listed here to help you quit.

Basic Facts

Methamphetamine (aka: crystal, Tina, meth, ice, speed) is a street drug usually found in the form of a white or yellowish powder. Purer forms of the drug resemble chunks or shards of clear glass and may have a pinkish tone. Speed is usually made in home "labs" and involves the use of hydrochloric and battery acids, lye, drain cleaner, ammonia, and antifreeze. Since there is no such thing as quality control, the strength or purity varies widely from batch to batch.

1. Impact

Why People Use

Many people use speed because it makes them feel good. Like many recreational drugs, it has the ability to take you away from the daily stresses of everyday life and bring some excitement to your life. When things are going badly, when you're feeling down on yourself, speed may seem like a very attractive choice. It's not hard to find and the high lasts for hours.

Some of the major reasons that people use speed are because it gives them the ability to have a lot of sex with a lot of partners, to go dancing for hours on end, or even just to get boring tasks done, like cleaning the house. Speed also lowers sexual inhibitions and gives you the courage to try things that you may not normally do. If you normally top during sex it may make you interested in being a bottom.

Loneliness is another reason people use speed. Many people who use it say that speed makes it easier to meet and connect with others or just picks them up when they're feeling down. Ironically, when you come down from speed you're more likely to be more depressed than you were in the first place.

The high lasts an average of 8–12 hours (depending on tolerance) and is usually followed by a period of exhaustion and restlessness. Speed works by causing a rush of chemicals in the brain that send signals to each other. These chemicals are called neurotransmitters. These neurotransmitters are what make you feel good. The only problem is that after the rush you quickly run dry. This “crash” may last several days or even weeks.¹ Even a single use may be followed by a period of depression, sometimes severe, as your brain struggles to create more neurotransmitters that were used up during your high.

For those individuals already suffering from clinical depression, speed makes antidepressant medications less effective and can set off a prolonged depressive episode.²

All of this is dose-dependent, meaning it depends on how much you take and how often you use it. Regular use of speed may lead to permanent damage to brain cells, which may decrease your ability to concentrate and remember. Prolonged use of speed can result in delusional thinking and paranoia.³

Speed gives you lots of energy and decreases the appetite so it's not surprising that people who have concerns over their body image might use it to lose weight and keep them on the go. Speed users often prefer to hang out with other speed users who are on their same level, on the same high. One of the biggest reasons that people use is simply because their friends are using.

MM Methods of Ingestion

Swallowing:

The least dangerous method of ingestion

Receiving urine (piss):

down the throat or up the ass from a partner that has been using speed

Booty Bump:

Putting speed itself, or diluted with water, into the anus

Damage to mucous membranes, making you more susceptible to HIV/STDs

Snorting:

Damage to mucous membrane and cartilage

Smoking:

Damage to lungs

Injection:

Biggest high, most addictive
Risk of HIV/hepatitis, other infection, abscess

Risk of overdose/seizure/stroke

2. Life on Speed

The damage that speed does over time is not limited to physical harm. Conflict over drug use is a frequent cause of strain on one's friendships and relationships. Speed may make you feel like a new person but your friends or your partner may not care for the person you become when you're high. It's even more likely that they won't appreciate the after affects that result when you crash after using.

Because of its intensity, the increased sexual pleasure that comes along with speed use can often become compulsive. In the context of a romantic relationship, even an open one, trust and safety are often forgotten as soon as the rush kicks in.

Even more important, is the damage done to the relationship to oneself. Self-esteem is quickly eaten away. Priorities such as one's health, work, and well-being are simply forgotten as long as the high continues. The resulting guilt and shame become a vicious cycle. The more speed used – the further you remove yourself from those around you. The further isolated you become, the more likely you are to use speed. Speed becomes the problem – and speed becomes the solution. It's a short-term solution with a long-term price.³

3. Speed and STDs

Recent statistics show that men who have sex with men are 10 times more likely to use speed than the rest of the population.⁴ These men are significantly more likely to contract HIV, syphilis, gonorrhea (oral, anal, and in the penis), HPV (genital warts), chlamydia and hepatitis (A, B, and C).⁵

Remember, there is no vaccine for Hepatitis C (HCV) and the treatment, often disabling in itself, usually works for only half the people who take it.

Because the use of speed can make erections difficult, it is frequently combined with erectile dysfunction (ED) medications such as Cialis®, Viagra®, and Levitra®. These drugs, in themselves, are generally safe and effective when used on their own. However, combining poppers (amyl or butyl nitrate) and ED drugs may result in a dangerous drop in blood pressure. When these two drugs are further combined with speed, this “PNP cocktail” creates a serious life-threatening risk.

Using ED drugs in combination with speed substantially increases your chances of contracting an STD (including HIV). Contracting an STD, greatly increases your chances of getting HIV.⁶

Combining speed and ED drugs allows for longer and often rougher sex than without either of them. This greatly increases the likelihood that a condom will break and also allows for the formation of small tears in the anus and penis, allowing bacteria and viruses to penetrate and infect you. When you're high, these tears are almost never noticed.

When it comes to speed, every benefit has its price.



If you use speed in association with sex, it is essential that you have routine STD checkups. It's also essential that you be vaccinated against Hepatitis A and B.

Most cities provide free or low cost testing and vaccination.

If you have Hepatitis C, you may not have a fully functioning liver. If you have Hepatitis C and are on HIV medications, your liver is already under attack and working overtime. Adding speed to this combination may worsen your HIV and any damage to your liver.



4. Focus- HIV & Speed

If you are HIV- and use speed when having sex, you are four times more likely to contract HIV.⁷

If you are HIV+ there are additional risks in using speed.

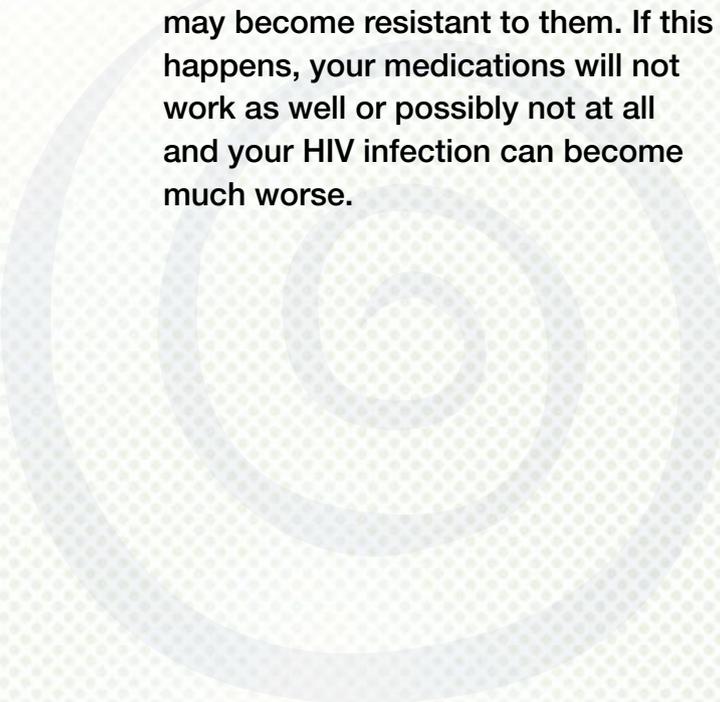
The use of certain HIV medications – particularly ritonavir (Norvir), often used in combination with other protease inhibitors to boost their effectiveness, is known to increase the concentration of speed in the body.

It does this by slowing down the liver's ability to breakdown chemicals. That means that if you use speed and take ritonavir in any form, the concentration of speed in your body will be 2-3 times higher.⁸ This greatly increases the likelihood of a speed overdose. If you do take ritonavir it is a really good idea to reduce the amount of speed you use at any given time. It is best to discuss drug interactions with a knowledgeable health care professional that you can trust.

One of the biggest problems for HIV+ people who use speed and who take medications for their HIV, is that they often forget to take these medications.⁹

Every time you use speed you may further weaken your immune system.

Speed may make it harder to take HIV medications regularly, making them less effective and causing an increase in the replication of the HIV virus (viral load).¹⁰



If you take medications for your HIV, it is absolutely essential that you take them regularly and on time. If you miss your HIV medications, the virus may become resistant to them. If this happens, your medications will not work as well or possibly not at all and your HIV infection can become much worse.

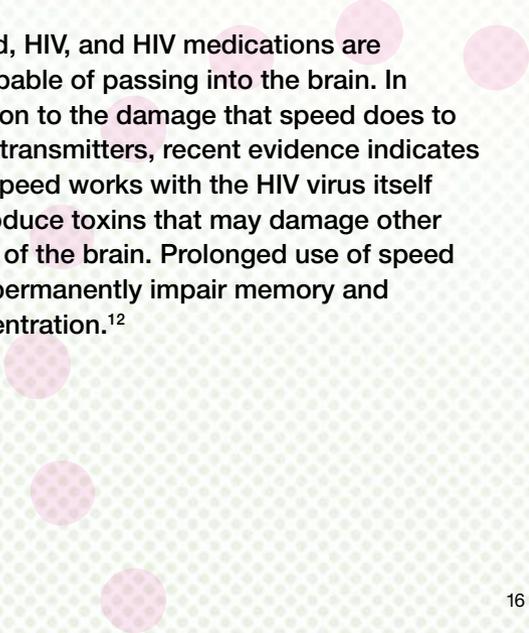
Many researches agree that:

For many HIV medications it is absolutely essential that you take them at least 95% of the time. Otherwise, you may be better off not taking them at all.¹¹

Make sure to talk with a doctor about starting or stopping medications.



Speed, HIV, and HIV medications are all capable of passing into the brain. In addition to the damage that speed does to neurotransmitters, recent evidence indicates that speed works with the HIV virus itself to produce toxins that may damage other areas of the brain. Prolonged use of speed may permanently impair memory and concentration.¹²



REVIEW

Physical Consequences of Use

IMMEDIATE

- Rise in blood pressure, irregular heartbeat, risk of overdose – stroke / seizure
- Impaired decision making
- Damage to penis / anus from prolonged, aggressive sex
- Development of the craving-addiction cycle in the brain
- Impotence
- Increase in HIV viral load
- Significant risk of contracting HIV, hepatitis, and other STDs
- Tolerance – requiring more and more of the drug to get the same high

LONG-TERM

- Addiction
- Tooth loss from dry mouth – grinding
- Skin lesions
- Weight loss (particularly problematic for those with HIV who may have trouble maintaining lean body mass)
- Damage to nerve cells in the brain resulting in impaired memory and thinking ability
- Abscesses and infection from injecting speed
- Paranoia, obsessive compulsive behavior, psychosis
- Sexual dysfunction
- Loss of money, jobs, relationships
- Isolation
- Decreased ability to take pleasure in life without using speed
- Arrest, criminal record
- A rapid aging effect on the body—making you look older than you actually are

5. Making the best of it—

If you are not ready to quit using speed there are a number of ways to decrease the risk of harm to your body. There are also several treatment options available for you (see list of resources).

Reducing Harm

- **Avoid HIV / STDs** – Use a condom every time you have anal intercourse. Remember, condoms are nearly twice as likely to break when you're using speed. So use plenty of water-based or silicon lube and check the condom periodically for tears.
- **Stay healthy** - Take your HIV medications on schedule.
- **Save your liver** - Get vaccinated for Hepatitis A and B.
- **Avoid overdose** - If you take protease inhibitors – reduce the amount of speed you take to one half or one third.
- **Avoid dehydration** - Consume plenty of fluids
- **Don't inject**

Injecting (aka: slamming) speed

By its very nature, using speed isolates you from your friends and family. However, if you still choose to inject speed, there are more ways to reduce the harm.

In California it is now legal to purchase syringes without a prescription at participating pharmacies.

- Use a new syringe every time you inject
- Do not share needles or any other paraphernalia (works).
- Clean injection sites with an alcohol pad. If no alcohol is available, warm water and soap make a reasonable substitute.
- Change injection sights to avoid collapsed veins and abscesses.
- Do not inject others or show others how to inject. If you inject another person and they overdose you are legally responsible.

For those of you who choose to stop using speed, or to cut back on your use:

Depending on how much you used, it takes about 10-14 days for your body to “re-adjust” back to normal.¹³

- Extend the time you use between hits.
- If you're partner has been using speed—don't ingest his urine through your mouth or ass.
- Delete your dealer's number.
- Plan to go crystal-free for a period of time – (a week, a month) just to take a break and clear your head.
- Put “No PNP” in your online profile.
- Budget your money. Make sure if you use crystal that you aren't spending more than you can afford. Set aside a certain amount for speed and stick to it.

6. Treatment Options

Don't assume that your situation is hopeless. Treatment does work. Treatment for speed addiction is available – whether it's inpatient or outpatient. Statistics show that the longer the period of treatment is, the more likely it is to be successful.

The use of acupuncture has been found to be helpful in reducing cravings from an addiction to speed.¹⁴ Several medications have also shown promise for the treatment of speed dependency. In San Francisco, there are currently several studies that use medications to treat methamphetamine addiction. They include Welbutrin® (bupropion), a drug used to treat depression, also known as Zyban®, (which is used to help quit smoking), Abilify® (aripiprazole), a mood stabilizer, and Remeron® (Mirtazapine), another anti-depressant. These medications may lower cravings for speed and decrease the high after injecting it.¹⁵ They work by limiting the ability of brain cells to absorb dopamine, the main

neurotransmitter that gives you your high. It curbs the “rush” and regulates the amount of dopamine that is available. Since those people coming off speed are dealing with reduced levels of dopamine, Welbutrin® eases the come down until the body can stabilize itself. While these medications may be of great help, the support of friends, family, and the community is essential.

San Francisco also has another program, known as PROP (Positive Reinforcement Opportunity Project), which may help you to stop using speed. The program works by paying you increasing amounts of money over a 12 week period as an incentive to stay off speed. Participants must provide a urine sample 3 times a week at designated locations.

In recognizing the huge problem that speed has become, federal, state and local governments have set aside a great deal of new money – specifically for the prevention and treatment of speed addiction.

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A Key to Methamphetamine – Based Literature:
http://nyhealth.gov/diseases/aids/harm_reduction/crystalmeth/docs/meth_literature_index.pdf

7. Resources

SAN FRANCISCO / BAY AREA

Acceptance Place, Baker Places, Inc.

673 San Jose Avenue
(415) 621-1326

BUMP

Studies – focusing on pharmaceutical interventions for speed addiction
Dr. Grant Colfax (415) 554-9013,
www.sfbump.com

Crystal Meth Anonymous

www.bayareacma.org

Drug Information and Referral

24 hour hotline providing information and referrals to various substance abuse programs. (415) 362-3400

Haight Ashbury Free Clinics Drug Detox Program

Outpatient, medical drug detox, HIV acute care, counseling and education – free.
(415) 565-1908 - Detox
(415) 487-5632 – Medical Clinic

Harbor Lights

Detox program for people living with HIV/AIDS. (415) 626-2063

Harm Reduction Coalition

Info on reducing drug-related harm
Harmreduction.org

Harm Reduction Therapy Center

San Francisco and Oakland
(415) 863-4282
– An alternative, non-judgmental, harm reduction psychotherapy for those looking to reduce their drug use, quit, or discuss health and relationships.

LifeRing Secular Recovery

Unhooked.com

New Leaf

Counseling and treatment services for the gay community.
NewLeafServices.org
(415) 626-7000

Ohihoff

Treatment facility
(415) 621-4388 – In-patient
(415) 221-3354 – Outpatient

Oznam Detox Center

1175 Howard Street
(415) 621-6458

P.R.O.P. (Positive Reinforcement Outpatient Project)

Incentive based program for speed users wishing to stop.
PROPSF.org
(415) 740-6273

S.T.O.P. (Stimulant Treatment Outpatient Program)

3180 18th Street – Suite 202
(415) 502-5777

STOP AIDS Project

CrystalclearSF.com

The Stonewall Project

Tweaker.org

Walden House Multi-Services Center

Outpatient, long-term, and day treatment for alcohol and drug abuse. SF residents only.
(415) 554 -1130

San Francisco STD/HIV Testing Sites

City Clinic

356 7th Street

Testing:

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 8am to 4pm
Tuesday: 1pm to 6pm Thursday: 1pm to 4pm

SFcityclinic.org

(415) 487-5500

Magnet

4122 18th Street –

Open Tuesday through Saturday

magnetSF.org

(415) 581-1600

Positive Health Project West

3180 18th Street – Suite 301

Testing:

Monday through Friday: 10 am to 2:30 pm

Positivehealthproject.org

stdtest.org

Online testing. 24 hours a day. 7 days a week.

STOP AIDS Project

2128 15th Street

(415) 575-0749

(call for appointment, HIV testing on Monday evenings and in mobile RV at various locations and times).

National Resources

Treatment Referral Hotline

800-662-4357

Treatment Access Program

800-750-2727

Gay and Lesbian National Hotline

888-843-4564

Crystalmeth.org

crystalmethanonymouse.org

DumpTina.org

Harmreduction.org

hookinguponline.org

kci.org

LifeforMeth.com

methwatch.com

PropSF.org

sfbump.com

soberRecovery.com

Tweaker.org

Unhooked.com

xtwkrs.org

Info about club drugs and safety

Clubdrugcounselor.com

Dancesafe.org

Info on drug abuse and prevention for young people

Doitnow.org

DumpTina.org

Freevibe.com



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