

Methamphetamine - Not a Victimless Crime

Lorinda L. Dishington, RN, BSN

Methamphetamine

- An addictive synthetic stimulant derived from ephedrine
- Street Names:
 - Speed
 - Meth
 - Chalk
 - Ice
 - Crystal
 - Glass

Source: The National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2005

Methamphetamine

- Releases high levels of dopamine =
 - Euphoria
 - Enhanced mood
 - Enhanced body movements

Source: The National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2005

Other Side Effects:

- Increased HR, BP, & Respiration
- Decreased appetite
- Hyperthermia
- Irritability
- Insomnia
- Confusion
- Tremors
- Convulsions
- Anxiety
- Paranoia
- Aggressiveness.

Source: The National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2005

Methamphetamine

- Death can result from the cardiovascular effects of the drug, hyperthermia, and/or convulsions
- Chronic use can deplete the brain's supply of dopamine and lead to Parkinson-like symptoms

Source: The National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2005

Meth Labs – The Risk to Children

- Methamphetamine is made in home-based laboratories
- Involves “cooking” toxic chemicals at high temperatures in order to produce the drug
- Toxic vapors & explosive chemicals are produced

Source: Swetlow, 2003

Meth Labs – The Risk to Children

Products used the production of methamphetamine include:

- Cold medicines
- Diet pills
- Lithium batteries
- Tincture of iodine
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Lighter fluid
- Gasoline
- Kerosene
- Paint thinner
- Rubbing alcohol
- Mineral spirits
- Muriatic acid (*used in pools and spas*)
- Sulfuric acid (*found in battery acid*)
- Sodium hydroxide (*from lye-based drain cleaners*)
- Anhydrous ammonia fertilizer

Source: Swetlow, 2003

Meth Labs – The Risk to Children

Children may be exposed to toxic chemicals through the:

- Inhalation contaminated air
- Absorption or ingestion from objects or food

The byproducts adhere to cooking and eating utensils, floors, countertops, etc.

- Normal cleaning will not remove these toxic byproducts

Neurological damage, respiratory problems, and death can occur as a result of exposure

Source: Swetlow, 2003

Meth Labs – The Risk to Children

Other risks include:

- Explosive and fire hazards
- Abuse and Neglect
- Exposure to crime and firearms

Source: Swetlow, 2003

Meth Labs – The Risk to Children

Protecting and caring for drug endangered children involves a multidisciplinary approach:

- Medical and mental health services
- Child protective services
- Law enforcement
- Public safety
- Prosecution

Source: Swetlow, 2003

Resources

Swetlow, K. 2003. *Children at Clandestine Methamphetamine Labs: Helping Meth's Youngest Victims*. U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Office for Victims of Crime. Retrieved November 17, 2006 from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/publications/bulletins/children/197590.pdf>.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse. 2005. *NIDA InfoFacts: Methamphetamine*. Retrieved November 17, 2006 from <http://www.drugabuse.gov/infofacts/methamphetamine.html>.

