

METH CHECK



WORKER'S NOTES

This tool is designed to help guide a conversation with someone who uses methamphetamine. It is not intended to replace a full clinical assessment. Please consider all risk, safety, consent and confidentiality issues before commencing. If now is not a good time, this resource can be taken away and read at a later date. A guide to using this tool can be found at www.insightqld.org/meth-check

The purpose of Meth Check is to provide you with some useful information and practical tips around methamphetamine. It should only take about 5-10 minutes to complete.



WHAT ARE THE GOOD BITS ABOUT USING METH?

E.g. Having fun / excitement, coping with stress, to help stay awake.

WHAT ARE THE NOT-SO-GOOD BITS?

Think broadly about health, relationships, work, study, lifestyle and the law.

E.g. Sleep problems, feeling scattered, getting ripped off, fights, relationship bust-ups, money problems, hassles with work / study, getting busted, losing licence.

TOP TIP

It's good to know the reasons why you use meth. It affects where, when, how much and how often you use it.

This initiative is part of Queensland Health's response to 'ice' crystal methamphetamine.

TOP TIP

For some people who use meth, things can get out of balance. **Is there someone you trust** – like a family member, friend or worker – who you can talk to if you think there's a problem?

Turn the page over to check out your options... ↗

START HERE!



A BIT ABOUT METH

DID YOU KNOW...

- Meth is a powerful stimulant drug.
- It can make you feel good and increases your alertness and energy.
- It works by causing a huge release of 'dopamine', the brain's pleasure chemical.
- It is known by many different names – Speed, ice, crystal, shard, tina, fast, goey, whizz.
- Powdered speed used to be amphetamine, but these days it almost always is *methamphetamine*.

WHAT TYPE OF METH DO YOU USE?



PLEASE TICK
These are all the same drug – methamphetamine – only the form and purity is different.*

TOP TIP

- The higher the purity the less you need.
- Purity can change from batch to batch.
- All use carries risk.

DID YOU KNOW...

That only 2% of Australians have used meth in the last 12 months!**

The majority of these people use it less than once per month.



TOP TIP

- The more frequently you use meth, the more problems you can experience.
- If you find yourself using meth every week, you might be 'dependent' on meth.

HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU USED METH IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS?

- Weekly
- Monthly
- Less than once per month



DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH YOU SPEND ON METH?

You may need to get your calculator out for this section.

Per week \$ _____ (enter a dollar amount)

Per month \$ _____ (multiply the weekly number by 4)

Per year \$ _____ (multiply the monthly number by 12)

After buying meth, do you find that you have enough money left over for daily expenses? E.g. Food? Rent? Transport? Bills?

- Always
- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

GO TO 4

* There are also prescription medications which contain amphetamine or amphetamine-like substances (e.g. Ritalin, 'Dexies').
** National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2013, AIHW.

HERE ARE YOUR TWO OPTIONS

OPTION
A

NO – I'M NOT THINKING ABOUT CUTTING BACK OR QUITTING METH RIGHT NOW

While we understand that you might not be thinking about change, it's good to know how to stay safe while you are still using.

1. Before using meth – plan ahead.
2. Set limits on how much you will use.
3. If injecting, have sterile equipment.
4. New batch? Use a little bit first and wait before having more.
5. Use around people you trust in a safe place and look out for your mates.
6. Be safe sex ready (condoms and lube).



EAT

At least one meal per day and preferably eat healthy (e.g. fruit, smoothies, cereal + milk, soup, pasta).



DRINK

Water and stay hydrated. Limit how much alcohol you consume.



SLEEP

Know when it's time to take a break from using. If you can't sleep, try to have some downtime.



DON'T DRIVE

Meth can make you feel like you're driving safer than you really are. Roadside drug testing can detect meth in your saliva.



DON'T MIX

Be aware of taking alcohol, opiates and benzodiazepines (e.g. Valium / sleeping pills) to help you sleep. There is a risk of overdose from these drugs once the meth wears off.



TOO MUCH METH?

(Severe headache, chest pain, vomiting, overheating, extreme agitation)

Seek immediate assistance by calling '000' and ask for 'AMBULANCE'. If someone is unconscious and breathing, turn them on their side.



MIND YOUR HEAD

Some people who use meth can experience anxiety, low mood or feel 'scattered'. Another effect of meth can be strange or paranoid thoughts or hallucinations (often referred to as psychosis).

If this happens to you, it could be a side-effect of the drug and lack of sleep. Try and stay calm and find a safe place to chill. Drink water. Try to sleep. Make sure someone stays with you.

If these symptoms don't go away, you may need to seek professional help.

Do you smoke Cannabis?
This can increase feelings of anxiety or paranoia or make psychosis worse.

OPTION
B

YES – I AM THINKING ABOUT CUTTING BACK OR QUITTING

Most people successfully quit or cut back their use of meth all by themselves. Many find it easier with the support of family, friends and/or health professionals. There is more than one way of changing – everyone is different and it's important to think about what works for you.
CAN YOU THINK OF SOME PRACTICAL THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOU CUT BACK OR QUIT?

HERE ARE SOME OTHER TIPS...

- **REASONS** – Write down why you want to quit or cut down. This could include money, saving a relationship, health benefits, etc.
- **SUPPORT** – Make sure you have as much support as possible. Try thinking of people who can support you.
- **CUES** – Avoid things that will make you feel like using such as places, people and stressful situations. This is especially important in the beginning.
- **CUT TIES** – Throw out anything you associate with using (e.g. pipes, injecting equipment) and cut connections to people associated with meth if possible (e.g. delete phone numbers).
- **CRAVINGS** – Be prepared. These are uncomfortable but they will pass.
 - **Delay** making a decision on whether or not to use for 5 minutes or up to half an hour, or longer!
 - **Distract** yourself e.g. phone a friend, go for a walk, eat, listen to music.
 - **Deep breathing** or other relaxation techniques can help you stay calm.

WHAT TO EXPECT

You can sometimes feel worse before you feel better. You may feel flat, anxious, irritable or have trouble sleeping. Or you could find it more of a challenge to get motivated or organised.

These are normal responses to quitting and are signs that your body is readjusting from using the drug. They will improve over time.

REMEMBER:

- Help is available.
- Treatment works.
- People can make successful changes around their meth use.
- If you are trying to quit, sometimes it can take a few attempts. Learn from any slip-ups and keep going.

ARE YOU A PARENT?

Meth use can affect your children and others around you. Ensure your children remain safe and supervised at all times... Be prepared for the come-down.

ARE YOU PREGNANT?

Using meth during pregnancy carries increased risk including miscarriage and birth defects. Talk to a medical professional for advice.

WHAT MIGHT BE SOME SIGNS THAT YOUR METH USE IS BECOMING A PROBLEM?

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE HELP...

Your local service or NSP contact is:

The Alcohol and Drug Information Service is a free, confidential, 24 hour telephone service for Queensland residents.

1800 177 833