

Withdrawal from Methamphetamine

You may experience SOME of the listed symptoms of withdrawal. Remember that ALL THESE SYMPTOMS ARE TEMPORARY. If any persist or worsen, have them checked by your doctor in case they are related to another problem.

See an explanation of some of the symptoms on pages 2-3.

FIRST STAGE WITHDRAWAL

The symptoms last hours to a few days.

Physical Symptoms

- excess need for sleep
- excess appetite, especially for carbohydrates
- very restless, uncontrollable jerking movements
- chills, tremors
- aching muscles

Psychological Symptoms

- severe irritability, easily provoked to aggression
- intense and rapid mood swings
- panic attacks
- scattered thinking, poor concentration

SECOND STAGE WITHDRAWAL

The symptoms appear after the first stage and gradually decrease over two weeks. Some symptoms can last for several months.

Symptoms

- excess need for sleep
- fatigue
- low physical and mental energy
- anxiety, mild to severe
- severe depression
- difficulty experiencing pleasure (anhedonia)
- craving

ONGOING SYMPTOMS FROM METHAMPHETAMINE USE

Because methamphetamine can have long acting effects on the brain that persist in abstinence, it is important to remember that the following symptoms from these effects on the brain can continue to occur for a varying length of time (can last several months) after you have stopped the methamphetamine and the withdrawal has ended.

- poor memory
- poor concentration
- hyper-vigilance, suspiciousness, paranoia
- severe anxiety
- obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviours
- hallucinations

DESCRIPTION OF SYMPTOMS (alphabetical order)

Anhedonia: difficulty experiencing pleasure with the continued use of methamphetamine.

After you stop using the methamphetamine, the brain gradually recovers so that you can experience pleasure normally. The ability to experience pleasure returns gradually, taking longer when there has been heavy use for a long time.

Anxiety: feeling that an unreal or imagined danger is about to happen, feelings of powerlessness accompanied by increased heart rate, increased breathing, sweating, trembling, weakness. Both excess caffeine and excess sugar can increase anxiety.

Craving: Can occur especially in situations that require extra energy, e.g. moving, travelling long distances.

Excess sleepiness: The excess need for sleep occurs especially with “binge” use.

Fatigue: This can be partly related to decreased iron and Vitamin B12 from poor eating habits while you were using the methamphetamine. You may need to have a blood test for iron and Vitamin B12 as you may need to take one or both.

Hallucinations: seeing, hearing, smelling or feeling things that are not real, e.g. hearing footsteps when you are by yourself.

Hyper-vigilance: constantly watchful to prepare for a negative event.

Mood Swings: feeling very happy and then very sad. The sadness can be a very severe depressed feeling.

Obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviours: e.g., obsessive thoughts about cleanliness; compulsive repetitive drawing, cleaning, organizing.

Paranoia: thoughts or feelings of being disliked (or if intense, hated) by other people; that they are thinking or saying bad things about you; that you are about to be harmed by other people. When the paranoia worsens, you fully believe in the threat of harm and act as if you are about to be harmed.