



COCAINE

Cocaine is a stimulant that has similar effects to other amphetamines such as speed and ice. However, it can produce a more intense and shorter 'high' depending on the dose. It can also be further processed to form 'base' and 'crack'. All forms of cocaine are highly addictive and can cause serious physical and mental health problems for a user.

COCAINE FACTS AT A GLANCE

The signs and symptoms of using cocaine can include:

- » Anxiety
- » Paranoia
- » Lethargy
- » Overheating and sweating
- » Increased heart rate
- » Tremors
- » Agitation
- » Nose bleeds
- » Aggression
- » Nausea and vomiting
- » Hallucinations
- » Chest pain
- » Dilated pupils
- » Muscle twitches
- » Reduced appetite

Consequences of using cocaine may include:

- » Depression
- » Convulsions
- » Dependence
- » Kidney failure
- » Nasal and sinus congestion
- » Stroke
- » Psychosis
- » Seizure
- » Violent or erratic behaviour
- » HIV and hepatitis if injecting
- » Impaired sexual performance
- » Nasal damage
- » Death

Effects of using cocaine:

In the short term, cocaine can produce increased heart rate, paranoia, agitation, dilated pupils, hallucinations, tremors, muscle twitches, nausea and vomiting. The immediate effects of the drug can intensify when it's taken in larger quantities, and can produce an irregular heartbeat, chest pain, hyperthermia, seizures or stroke.

Using large quantities of cocaine frequently can also lead to cocaine psychosis. This is characterised by paranoid delusions, hallucinations and bizarre, aggressive or violent behaviour. These symptoms usually stop a few days after the user has taken cocaine, but in some cases require further medical treatment.

As well as cocaine psychosis, long-term users also face the potential problems of eating and sleeping disorders, impaired sexual performance, ongoing respiratory problems, convulsions, kidney failure and are at an increased risk of experiencing a stroke. Sharing needles to inject drugs greatly increases the risk of contracting hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS.

Using cocaine in combination with alcohol can also be dangerous. When the two are mixed the body produces a substance in the blood called cocaethylene, which can be more toxic than cocaine alone.

Adapted from Australian Government Illicit Drugs in Sport Education Program

