

Cocaine

What is Cocaine?

Cocaine is a powerful drug made from the South American coca bush.

Its street names include **coke, C, snow, and flake.**

Cocaine is sold as a **fine white powder.** Street dealers sometimes dilute it with substances like cornstarch or sugar, or local painkillers such as benzocaine.

Users often **snort** cocaine. They also dissolve it in water and **inject** it into their veins.

Possessing, producing and trafficking in cocaine can result in fines, prison sentences and a criminal record.

Short Term Effects

- Cocaine may cause the user feel intense **pleasure, alert, energetic, and confident.**
- Using cocaine **increases breathing rate, heart rate, and blood pressure.** It **dilates the pupils, decreases your appetite** and **reduces the need to sleep.**
- Large doses can produce **euphoria, severe agitation, anxiety, erratic and violent behavior, twitching, nausea, headaches, hallucinations, blurred vision, chest pains, rapid shallow breathing, muscle spasms and fever.**
- Overdose can cause **seizures, strokes, heart attacks, kidney failure, coma and death.**
- A cocaine high can last from **5 minutes to 2 hours.** When users "**crash,**" they feel very **depressed, anxious and irritable.**

Effects of Long Term Use

- Heavy users can feel **depressed, restless, agitated and nervous.** They can have **sleeping, eating and sexual problems.** They can have **dramatic mood swings, delusions, hallucinations and paranoia.** **High blood pressure and irregular heartbeats occur.** Repeated use may cause **long-lasting problems with memory, attention and behavior.**
- Chronic snorting causes **stuffed, runny, chapped or bleeding noses, and holes in the barrier separating the nostrils.** Those who **inject** cocaine risk infections including **hepatitis and HIV,** the virus that causes AIDS.

Cocaine and Addiction

People who use cocaine heavily over a long period of time, or binge for several days, need to take more cocaine to feel the same effects.

Regular users can develop powerful psychological **dependency,** a constant **craving** for the drug.

When dependent users stop using they go through **withdrawal.** Symptoms include **anxiety, sleeping and eating disorders, depression, irritability and strong cravings to use again.**