

Facts On n

Drugs

SECTION: COCAINE AND CRACK

Overview

- Cocaine is a stimulant and is extremely addictive.
- Cocaine is most commonly found in powder form and is snorted.
- Cocaine is a drug derived from the coca plant.
- Crack is a processed form of cocaine.
- There are great risks involved in using cocaine and crack.

Definition

Cocaine

- Cocaine is a stimulant that affects the body's central nervous system.
- Cocaine is a white crystalline powder made from dried leaves of the coca plant.
- Cocaine can be snorted, injected with a needle or smoked.
- Because of increased tolerance, users need more and more cocaine each time they want a high.
- Street names for cocaine include: Coke, Dust, Snow, Flake, Blow, Girl, Nose Candy.

Crack

- Crack is a type of cocaine that has been processed into a free base for smoking.
- Crack is sold in small plastic vials in the form of small white, gray or beige rough chunks that can be smoked in a marijuana or tobacco cigarette or in a pipe stem often made of glass.
- Crack is almost instantly addictive.
- When smoked, crack reaches the brain within seconds, producing instant effects that last eight to fifteen minutes.
- Street names for crack include: Freebase Rocks, Rock.

Facts n

Drugs

Short-term effects of cocaine & crack use:

- Feelings of euphoria
- Elevated heart rate
- Elevated breathing rate
- Elevated blood pressure
- Increased body temperature
- Constricted blood vessels
- Dilated pupils
- Irritability
- Restlessness
- Anxiety
- Sudden death

Long-term effects of cocaine & crack use:

- Serious respiratory problems
- Paranoia
- Depression (when cocaine use is stopped)
- Ulceration of the mucous membrane in the nose
- Disease due to needle sharing
- Inability to function sexually
- Seizure
- Heart attack
- Death

Quick Facts

- Users who inject cocaine are at risk of acquiring HIV, hepatitis and other intravenous transmitted diseases if needles or other injection equipment is shared.
- A cocaine high only lasts about 5 to 20 minutes.
- The term “Crack” refers to the crackling sound heard when the mixture is heated or smoked.
- Of the 4.2 million Americans who have ever tried crack, about 600,000 are currently addicted.
- The intensity of euphoria depends on the way the drug is ingested. The faster the absorption, the more intense the high.
- The highest number of new cocaine users emerged in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s, when there were an estimated 1.5 million new users each year.

Facts n

Drugs

- There are more hospitalizations per year resulting from crack and cocaine use than any other substance.
- When cocaine or crack is mixed with alcohol or any other drug the risk of sudden death increases.
- Serious respiratory problems often seen in crack users include lung damage, chest congestion, wheezing, spitting up black phlegm, extreme hoarseness, and burning of the lips, tongue and throat.
- Smoking crack cocaine can produce aggressive paranoid behavior because smoking allows extremely high doses of the drug to reach the brain very quickly often triggering intense reactions.
- Cocaine damage in the nose can be so severe that the nasal septum collapses.

Facts On Drugs

Frequently Asked Questions

- Q. Which is riskier, smoking cocaine or injecting cocaine?
- A. Compulsive cocaine use may develop more rapidly if smoked because smoking allows extremely high doses of cocaine to reach the brain very quickly and brings an intense and immediate high. However injecting the drug puts the user at greater risk for HIV infection or hepatitis if needles or other injection equipment are shared.
- Q. What are the symptoms of cocaine use?
- A. Some symptoms are anxiety, bloody nose, talking rapidly, paranoia, dilated pupils, stuffiness and runny nose, hallucinations and confusion.
- Q. What paraphernalia is associated with cocaine?
- A. If inhaled, a cocaine user typically has the following on hand: mirrors, razor blades, straws, rolled paper money. If injected a user typically has the following on hand: syringes, needles, spoons, belts, bandanas, or surgical tubing.
- Q. Is it true that the soda, Coca-Cola, used to have cocaine in it?
- A. Yes. Until 1906, this substance was a chief ingredient of Coca-Cola. Widespread use and addiction led to government efforts against cocaine in the early 1900s.

Quick Quiz

QUESTION #1

Fact or Myth? Only people who use cocaine for an extended period of time become addicted.

This statement is a myth. Cocaine is an extremely addictive drug and crack cocaine is almost immediately addictive.

QUESTION #2

Fact or Myth? A cocaine high lasts for less than 30 minutes.

This statement is a fact. A cocaine high lasts between five and 20 minutes.

Facts n

Drugs

QUESTION #3

Fact or Myth? Cocaine users quickly develop a tolerance to the drug so that with each use a higher dose is needed to get a high.

This statement is a fact. More cocaine is needed with each use in order to get a high.

QUESTION #4

Fact or Myth? Users who inject cocaine are at risk of developing other diseases such as HIV and hepatitis.

This statement is a fact. Users who inject cocaine are at risk of acquiring HIV, hepatitis, and other intravenous transmitted diseases when needles or other injection equipment is shared.

QUESTION #5

Fact or Myth? There are no long-term effects of cocaine use.

This statement is a myth. Individuals who use cocaine for an extended amount of time often suffer from aggressive paranoid behavior, heart attack, seizures, and depression.