

Taking **methamphetamines** (like ice) can have a range of effects on a person's mental health and wellbeing. These effects can happen while a person is using the drug or after they stop using it. Effects of ice on a person's mental health may last a few days to a few weeks. For some people these mental health effects may not go away and will continue for a long time after they have used ice, and will require treatment.

The effects of ice on mental health can include:

## WHAT ARE SIGNS SOMEONE MAY BE EXPERIENCING A MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM?

### Insomnia (not able to sleep)

Methamphetamine is a **stimulant** which means it can keep a person awake even though a person may not still be feeling the 'high'. The use of methamphetamines like ice can make it hard to sleep and can mix up a person's sleeping patterns. This can lead to a person being unable to sleep even though the **intoxicated** feelings of ice have worn off.

Those experiencing problems sleeping (insomnia) often find it hard to fall asleep or may wake up lots during the night and they can't fall back to sleep. Continued problems with sleeping can lead someone to feel very tired, not able to concentrate or focus and have headaches during the day.

### Signs of Anxiety Disorders

Methamphetamines such as ice increase the heart rate which can cause people to feel out of breath. Some people may suddenly feel very frightened or **paranoid (suspicious)** which can trigger **panic attacks**. Other common symptoms include restlessness, shaking, dizziness, sweating, dry mouth, muscle aches, headaches, feeling sick in the stomach or vomiting. These symptoms can leave people feeling agitated or nervous, particularly as the drug starts to wear off. If these symptoms persist for several days, or a few weeks, it may be a sign that an **anxiety disorder** is present. [Click here](#) for tips about how to help someone who is having a **panic attack** or experiencing other side effects.

### Signs of Depression (Feeling very down)

As the effects of methamphetamine begin wearing off, it is common to feel very low, tired and useless (also called depressive symptoms) for a few hours or even up to a few days. Some people who use ice regularly also experience depressive symptoms even when they haven't used the drug recently. This is because it can reduce brain chemicals which are responsible for making us feel happy and excited.

Those who have experienced depression before are at particular risk of experiencing these symptoms. If these symptoms occur for several days or for a few weeks, this is a sign that depression may be present.

## Signs of Psychotic or Delusional Disorders (Not knowing what is real)

Use of lots of **methamphetamines** and for a long time can cause acute **psychotic** reactions in some but not all people.

Some signs of **psychosis** (not knowing what is real) from methamphetamine include:

- Feeling like you are being watched, picked on or that people are out to get to you.
- Hearing, seeing or smelling things that don't exist. For example, hearing someone call your name when no one is around, or imagining things are changing shape or moving on your skin when they are not. This can lead to skin irritation and sores.
- Unusual thoughts. For example, thinking other people are reading your mind or stealing your thoughts.
- Muddled thoughts or rambling speech.

These signs can last a few hours or up to a few days. A small number of people may find these last much longer (e.g. more than a few weeks), or continue even when they are not using ice. This might mean that an underlying **psychotic disorder**, such as **schizophrenia**, is present.

## Where to get support

If you, a friend or family member is experiencing problems, you can get support. It can be difficult to seek help, but in most cases the sooner you reach out for support, the better. You may want to discuss your concerns with a friend or family member that you can trust. Your General Practitioner or family doctor can also be a good starting point – they can confidentially discuss your concerns with you and refer you on to other services if you need additional support.

For more information on support services and how to get help for yourself or a loved one, visit the [When and Where to Get Help](#) and [What type of help is available?](#) sections.

If you need emergency support, call Lifeline on 13 11 14 (a free and confidential 24-hour crisis helpline) or dial '000' for the police or an ambulance.

## Key Sources

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