

Treatment

Treatment consists of helping you break the 'using and abstinence' cycle with:

- Frequent appointments and urine testing, possibly as part of a Contingency Management (CM) programme
- Practical help
- Specialist counselling with the Community Reinforcement Approach (CRA)
- Help and support for you and your family
- Ear acupuncture
- Information about how Amphetamines can affect your body and mind
- Occasionally, there is a requirement for antidepressants or other medication (e.g. Naltrexone)
- We monitor your physical well-being including blood tests and heart monitoring
- Occasionally, inpatient stabilisation or detoxification is necessary

Does treatment work?

People who engage in treatment can expect to succeed in giving up their amphetamine use.

Some treatment centres report an 80% success rate.

Useful contacts

Frank Helpline	0800 776600
NA UK 24 hour Helpline	0845 3733366
Release Helpline	0845 4500215

Independence Trust (formerly GDAS)

Gloucester	01452 876440
Cheltenham	01242 584881
Stroud	01453 755711
Forest of Dean	01594 825656

Hepatitis/HIV Counselling

Gloucester	01452 311744
Cheltenham	01242 274285

Countywide Specialist Substance Misuse Service

West Gloucestershire Team	01452 891260
East Gloucestershire Team	01242 845614
Criminal Justice Drugs Team	01452 545779
Branchlea Cross	01242 845600

Primary Care Substance Misuse Service

Countywide Team	01452 523151
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CSSMS



Information for people affected by amphetamine use

How common is amphetamine use?

Amphetamines are the second most commonly used drugs after cannabis. A small number of regular users go on to develop problems with their use of amphetamines.

Problematic amphetamine use usually occurs in people who have used intravenously and/or have used very high doses of amphetamines.

Even though I don't use amphetamines every day, do I have a problem?

Unlike in opiate or alcohol dependence, where users take drugs or alcohol to prevent withdrawal symptoms, people with problematic amphetamine use are probably taking amphetamine in high dose binges.

These binges are combined with periods of 'crashing' when they sleep excessively and are clean from amphetamines.

Are amphetamines addictive?

Amphetamines can increase pleasure, self-confidence and well-being.

Initially amphetamines can appear to have no negative consequences. However, continued use leads to using bigger and bigger doses to chase that 'high' meaning it is psychologically addictive. Regular amphetamine users will also notice physical withdrawal symptoms whilst clean.

For example, during the first three days of abstinence you will crave sleep, have a increased appetite and feel down.

Between days three to eight of being clean, it is likely you will experience cravings for amphetamines, have low energy levels and strong memories of how you felt when taking amphetamines.

If you stay clean these cravings and feelings will reduce, but this could take several weeks.

How do amphetamines affect the brain?

Amphetamine use can lead to depression.

- Amphetamines affect the pleasure and reward chemicals in your brain. Chronic use means that your brain chemicals change and the pleasure and reward system in your brain is reduced. This means that when amphetamines are withdrawn, you may lack enjoyment and feel depressed.
- Amphetamines also act with your brain chemicals involved in learning and memory, particularly in the way you remember certain things about your surroundings. It can increase your memory of your drug use and the mood that you experienced with it.

This could mean even several weeks after stopping drug use, memories of using amphetamines can be brought on by certain situations or people. Also the more they are used, the more powerful the memories become.

How do amphetamines affect the mind?

Amphetamine use can lead to:

- Panic and nervous feelings
- Irritability and aggression

- Paranoia - e.g. believing you are being followed or being talked about
- Hallucinations - e.g. hearing voices or feeling that your skin is 'crawling'

How do amphetamines affect the body?

- Raised blood pressure
- Irregular heart beat, heart attack
- Weight loss
- Harm caused by injecting, for example a risk of Hepatitis or HIV
- Other physical harm due to high risk sexual behaviour, drug taking or violent behaviour whilst under the influence of amphetamines
- Amphetamines are not safe in pregnancy and may be associated with withdrawal symptoms in the baby after birth. Please see our leaflet on Amphetamines and Pregnancy
- Movement disorders, for example grinding of your teeth and involuntary muscle movement

Amphetamines and other substance misuse

Coming down from amphetamines is often associated with excessive use of alcohol or tranquillisers. It may also be associated with heroin use.