

CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE USE DURING PREGNANCY

SUMMARY

- Using crystal methamphetamine ('ice') when you're pregnant can severely impact the health and development of your baby and put your own health at risk.
- There is no safe level of crystal methamphetamine use during pregnancy. Using the drug more frequently or in larger amounts increases the risk of health complications.
- If you think you might need help with crystal methamphetamine or other drug use, there is professional support available. You can ask your GP or obstetrician or call the National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline on 1800 250 015 for a referral to a drug and alcohol service
- It's also important that you look after yourself and your baby in other ways during your pregnancy and after the birth. Your GP or obstetrician can give you advice on what to do and any additional supports you might need.

IS IT SAFE FOR ME TO USE CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE WHILE I'M PREGNANT?



No. There is no level of crystal methamphetamine use that is safe for you and your baby when you're pregnant. The more often you use crystal methamphetamine during pregnancy, and the larger the amount of crystal methamphetamine you use, the greater your risk of health complications for you and your baby.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE USE DURING PREGNANCY?



Crystal methamphetamine is a stimulant drug that speeds up your heart rate and puts strain on your body. This can increase your risk of health complications (such as brain, heart, liver, and kidney problems). These effects can also endanger your baby, increasing the risk of premature birth, miscarriage, or stillbirth.

Using crystal methamphetamine during pregnancy can also have other effects on your baby's health. For example, using crystal methamphetamine can make you feel less hungry, causing you to eat less. This can lead your baby to become malnourished and restrict their growth and development.

There is also some evidence that crystal methamphetamine use during pregnancy can impact a child over the long term. Studies have found associations between crystal methamphetamine use during pregnancy and poorer intellectual functioning, problem solving skills, short-term memory, and language development from birth to 16 years. There have also been associations with behavioural problems and learning difficulties. Babies may also be born small and/or premature, which increases their risk of needing intensive care and long-term health issues like diabetes, heart disease and lung problems.

Any drug use, including tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drug use during pregnancy can severely impact the health and development of your baby. There is no safe level of alcohol and other drug use during pregnancy.

IS IT SAFE FOR ME TO USE CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE WHILE BREASTFEEDING?



No. There is no level of crystal methamphetamine use that is safe during breastfeeding. This is because crystal methamphetamine can be released into breast milk and cause problems for your child's health and development. It's recommended that mothers don't breastfeed for at least 48 hours (2 days) after using crystal methamphetamine. Your GP or obstetrician can provide further advice on how to limit any risk to your baby.

I WANT TO STOP USING CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE, BUT I NEED HELP. WHERE CAN I GO TO FOR SUPPORT?



Several services throughout Australia can provide support to those experiencing problems with crystal methamphetamine and other drugs. Although it can be difficult to seek help, the sooner you reach out for support, the better.

Your GP or obstetrician can be a good starting point – they can discuss your concerns with you and provide referrals to other services that you might need. For free and confidential advice about alcohol and other drugs, you can also call the National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline on 1800 250 015.

For links to more alcohol and other drug services in Australia, visit our [When and Where to Get Help page](#).

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO LOOK AFTER MYSELF AND MY BABY THROUGH PREGNANCY?



It's important that you look after yourself and your baby in other ways during your pregnancy and after the birth.

Prenatal and postnatal care appointments are vital for any pregnancy and will need to be attended regularly to ensure you are healthy and that your baby is safe and growing well.

Regardless of whether you stop using crystal methamphetamine or continue to use the drug during pregnancy, it's important that you inform your GP or obstetrician of your crystal methamphetamine use. They will be able to give you advice on any additional steps you may need to take to support the health of you and your baby. For example, you might need nutritional supplements if your appetite has been affected by your crystal methamphetamine use.

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