

You can never be sure how crystal **methamphetamine** ('ice') will affect someone. It is an illegal drug and there is no control over how it is made. It is often mixed with other drugs or substances before being sold. Some people may experience serious effects such as **panic attacks**, dehydration (loss of water from your body), seizures and **stroke**. Below are some tips about how you can help someone who is experiencing these. **It is important to call for an ambulance immediately (000) if there is any risk that someone is getting sick from ice or any other drug.**

## Panic Attacks

Ice use can cause **paranoid** feelings (distrust, suspicion), symptoms of **anxiety** (worry, concern) and **hallucinations** (unsure of what is real), which may escalate into a **panic attack**.



What a **panic attack** may look like:

- Shaking and sweating
- Increased heart rate
- Chest pains and problems breathing
- Dizziness, headaches, and light-headedness
- Fear that the **panic attack** may lead to death
- Won't respond and is 'spaced out'

**What to do:**

Take them somewhere cool and quiet away from bright lights and crowds. Tell them that the feeling will pass and try to keep them calm. Tell them to take long, deep breaths to help them relax. If they pass out, call for help immediately, and follow the [DRSABCD](#) life support steps.

## Overheating & Dehydration

Ice use can increase body temperature, especially when taken with alcohol.

What it may look like:

- Feeling hot, tired, unwell, faint, or dizzy
- Headaches
- Vomiting
- Not able to talk properly
- Not sweating even when dancing
- Not able to urinate or urine becoming thick and dark
- Fainting, collapsing, or convulsing.



**What to do:**

It is important to call for an ambulance immediately (000) if there is any risk that someone is experiencing these symptoms when using ice or any other drugs.

- Make sure someone stays with them
- Get the person cold water to sip on
- Fan them to cool them down

## Feeling very tired

If someone becomes very drowsy as a result of using ice they could fall asleep and lose consciousness (won't wake up).

**What to do:**

- Call an ambulance (000), but make sure they are not left on their own



- Keep them awake while waiting for the ambulance - make them walk around or make them talk to you.
- If they aren't responsive or lose consciousness put them in the recovery position.
- Don't give them tea or coffee or try to shock them.

## Fits or Seizures

Someone who has used ice, particularly those who have also been drinking alcohol, may experience fits or seizures.

What to do:

- Call an ambulance (000).



- Loosen any tight clothing
- Clear the area of any nearby harmful objects
- Cushion their head
- Do not try to stop their movement or place anything in their mouth

Once the fit has finished, check their breathing and put them in the recovery position.

## Stroke

Use of **methamphetamines** (such as ice) may cause a **stroke** to occur.

## A stroke is always a medical emergency.

An easy way to remember common signs of a **stroke** is the F.A.S.T test, by The [Stroke Foundation](#).



### 1. Face

Check their face. Has their mouth drooped?



### 2. Arms

Can they lift both arms?



### 3. Speech

Is their speech slurred? Do they understand you?



### 4. Time is critical

If you see any of these signs call 000 straight away.

For more information about responding to **stroke**, visit the [Stroke Foundation](#) website.

[Click here for a step-by-step guide to performing CPR.](#)



Crystal Methamphetamine  
*Trusted, evidence-based  
information for the community*

GET THE FACTS ABOUT ICE

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF ICE?

STAYING SAFE

[www.cracksintheice.org.au](http://www.cracksintheice.org.au)



Australian Government

Department of Health  
and Aged Care



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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