

What happens when you use crystal methamphetamine with other drugs?



Combining crystal methamphetamine ('ice') with other drugs carries extra risks and makes its use even more dangerous. The more drugs a person takes (or is affected by) at a time, the more chance there is of something going wrong.

Why do people use ice with other drugs?



In an **attempt to increase the effect of another drug**, or to 'bring on' or prolong the desired effects. For example, sometimes people drink alcohol when they are also under the influence of ice.

In an **attempt to reduce the negative effects** of ice, usually when 'coming down'. For instance, some people use cannabis or take a sleeping pill after they have used ice.



It seemed like a **'good idea at the time'**. Sometimes people will take drugs when they are already **intoxicated**, are not thinking straight or if people around them are using different types of drugs together.

The unpredictability of using ice with other drugs

It is not possible to predict the different effects ice will have from person to person, or from using one time to another. Being under the influence of more than one drug at a time makes the effects even more unpredictable. Factors that cause the effects of ice to vary include:



Ice itself (e.g. its **purity**, the amount used, frequency of use, how the drug is used, whether the drug has been cut (mixed) with another substance).

The person taking ice (e.g. their mood, expectations, personality and individual characteristics).



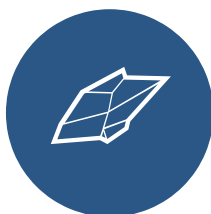
The setting (e.g. where the person is and the people they are with).

Find out more about [how ice works and how it affects the body](#).

Using ice with stimulants

Stimulant drugs, such as ice, increase activity in the central nervous system (made up of the brain and spinal cord; the system that controls the activities of the body). Combining different **stimulants** (e.g. ice and cocaine) can increase the risk of cardiovascular (heart) problems and substance-induced **psychosis**. Combining stimulants can also increase a person's risk of experiencing **serotonin syndrome, anxiety** or **panic attacks**.

COMBINING ICE AND STIMULANTS E.G. ICE AND COCAINE



+



=

**SEROTONIN SYNDROME
 PSYCHOSIS
 ANXIETY OR PANIC ATTACKS
 HEART PROBLEMS**

Using ice with depressants

Using ice with **depressants** places enormous strain on the body. Common **depressants** used with **methamphetamine** include alcohol, cannabis, opioids (e.g. heroin), **benzodiazepines** and amyl nitrate. Using ice with these drugs places extra strain on the heart, which may lead to serious complications, especially among people with pre-existing heart problems.

Using ice with cannabis can increase a person's risk of experiencing mental health problems, including **psychotic symptoms**, especially in those who have existing mental health problems.

The **stimulant** effects of ice can mask the effects of depressant drugs like alcohol, opioids and benzodiazepines. This can make people feel that they are less affected by those drugs, increasing the **risk of overdose**.

**COMBINING ICE AND DEPRESSANTS
 E.G. ICE AND ALCOHOL**



Using ice with medications

Using ice with medications can also increase the risk of adverse effects. Below are some common medications and what can happen when they are mixed with crystal methamphetamine:

- **Ritalin and other stimulant medications:** There is an increased risk of **anxiety** and **panic attacks**, as well as other problems associated with stimulant use, such as heart problems and substance-induced **psychosis**.
- **Antidepressant medications (e.g., SSRI's):** Using ice with some types of anti-depressants can increase the risk of **serotonin syndrome**, especially for people that take Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor (SSRI) anti-depressants.
- **Viagra:** The combination of crystal methamphetamine and Viagra can result in an increased risk of heart problems and very low blood pressure. As drugs like crystal methamphetamine can lower a person's inhibitions during sex, it is important to use contraceptive methods and get regularly tested for sexually transmitted infections due to an increased risk of these.

Health workers: For more information on the effects of combining stimulants and prescription medications, check out QNADA's factsheets [here](#).

+

When and where do I get help?

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

For other support options, refer to our [list of support services available in Australia](#).

Key Sources

Black, E. (2014). Polydrug use: *What you need to know about mixing drugs*. National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, University of New South Wales. Retrieved from: <https://positivechoices.org.au/documents/MYeYGoZx3/polydrug-use-detailed-resource-for-parentsteachers/>

Jenner L, Lee N. (2008). *Treatment Approaches for Users of Methamphetamine: A Practical Guide for Frontline Workers*. Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, Canberra. Retrieved from: <https://insight.qld.edu.au/shop/treatment-approaches-for-users-of-methamphetamine-a-practical-guide-for-frontline-workers-nds-released-2008>