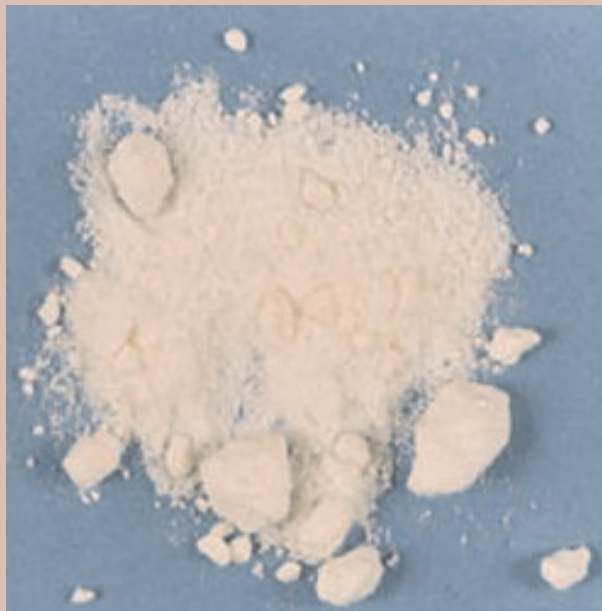


# Crack & Cocaine

## Just the Facts



Adolescents may not be aware of the dangers of using cocaine, especially the threat of addiction and overdose.

Any use of cocaine or crack is particularly dangerous because the physical effects can be severe, causing sudden death in some. In addiction, cocaine use can cause violent behavior and suicidal tendencies.

### What is Cocaine?

A central nervous system stimulant derived from the coca plant. Abused for the intoxicating effects, cocaine is the primary drug of abuse as reported by Texas adults entering chemical dependency treatment. Cocaine also has topical properties which do not cause intoxication.

### Is cocaine addictive?

**Yes. Clinicians** estimate that 10 percent of recreational users will go on to serious, heavy use of cocaine. Cocaine addicts may have a hard time limiting their use, may build a tolerance to the drug requiring larger amounts to get the same effect, and may develop problems with school, jobs, and personal relationships. Cocaine addicts have to support expensive habits, which can cause them to quickly turn to lives of crime. Today, cocaine is classified as a Schedule 2 Controlled Substance and is illegal in most circumstances.

### Why do people use cocaine?

**For the** exhilarating high, increased energy, and improved confidence. They may also seek the approval of their peers, stress reduction, or rebellion against authority. How is Cocaine used?

**Most often** this white, crystalline powder is snorted or dissolved in water and injected. Crack, a form of freebase or “smokable” cocaine, is processed with baking soda so that it can be smoked. Named after the crackling sound heard when heated, crack cocaine looks like white to tan pellets or chunks that resemble rock salt or soap. Crack is usually smoked in a pipe and can also be smoked with marijuana and tobacco.

### What are cocaine’s effects on the mind?

**Severe behavior** changes, causing violent, erratic behavior in some and suicidal feelings in others. Users under the influence may experience tactile hallucinations, where they feel “coke bugs” crawling on their body. After effects can be confusion, anxiety, and depression. They may lose interest in food or sex, have trouble feeling pleasure, and act paranoid after long term use. In severe cases, users may exhibit a cocaine-induced psychosis.

# Just The Facts

## COMMON NAMES:

Coke, Snow, White lady, Soda, Nose Candy, Blow, Blizzard, Caine, Sleet, Snow Cone, Sniff, blanco, Cubes, Devil Drug, Ready Rock, Moonrocks, Freebase, Crack, Hail, Pebble, Boulder, Hell, Chalk, Kibbles n' Bits, Casper

## What are cocaine's physical effects?

**Dilated pupils,** nausea, headaches, sweating, increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure, insomnia, loss of appetite, and seizures. Heart attacks, strokes, brain seizures, cardiac arrest, and respiratory failure can also result from cocaine use. New and chronic users can die suddenly. In Texas, 200-300 deaths due to cocaine use have been reported each year. Pregnant cocaine users risk miscarriages, severe hemorrhaging, premature births, and stillbirths. Infants who do survive may exhibit withdrawal symptoms, and may have development difficulties as they grow older.

## What are cocaine's short-term effects?

**After using** cocaine, users report feeling an intense "high" characterized by a surge of energy, intense pleasure, and increased feelings of confidence. Cocaine intoxication is rather short, lasting only 15-30 minutes of powder cocaine and 5-10 minutes for crack. Crack fumes can reach the brain as quickly as 10 seconds. These short periods of intoxication lead to cocaine "binges" where cocaine is used over and

over to prolong the "high." After the pleasurable effects wear off, users will experience a "coke crash." They will feel depressed, irritable, tired, anxious, and intense cravings for more cocaine.

## What are the long-term effects?

**Heart problems,** permanent liver damage, nutritional deficiencies, a compromised immune system, addiction, and death can occur from chronic use. Snorting cocaine may cause a loss of the sense of smell, nose bleeds, stuffy noses, sores around the nose and upper lips, swallowing problems, hoarseness, and permanent damage to the inside of the nose. Smoking crack can cause severe chest pain, wheezing, chronic cough, parched lips, tongue, and throat, extreme hoarseness, and burns. In the extreme, crack can cause bleeding in the lungs



and "crack lung," a condition characterized by pneumonia-like symptoms. Injecting users may have collapsed and scarred veins, bacterial infections, infections in the heart lining and valves, abscesses or boils, pneumonia and

tuberculosis, and other infection diseases. Injecting users are at risk of contracting HIV, the virus that cause AIDS, and Hepatitis B and C, and liver diseases that can lead to cancer. These diseases are spread by sharing needles and using unsterilized drug paraphernalia.

## How long does cocaine remain in the body?

2-4 days for occasional use and up to three weeks or more for chronic use. Benzoylecognine, a metabolic unique to cocaine, can be detected in urine.



# J u s t   T h e   F a c t s

## How pure is cocaine?

**It's processed** with many volatile solvents, such as kerosene, benzene, and gasoline, and these poisons can remain in the cocaine found on the street. In addition, dealers on the street may "cut" or combine the cocaine with other substances that can also affect purity.

## Is cocaine used with other substances?

**Yes. it's** often used with other illicit drugs, especially alcohol, marijuana, and heroin. Some users alternate snorting lines of cocaine and heroin, known as "crisscrossing," or inject the two drugs as a "speedball." Crack is also smoked with marijuana joints or cigar/blunts, a combination called "primo." Alcoholic beverages can intensify cocaine's effects, and may place users at greater risk of sudden death. A gram of powder cocaine may cost between \$20 - \$100, while crack rocks can be found for as little as \$5-\$10 each.

## What can parents and communities do?

**Before reaching** adolescence, and youths need to receive the support, guidance, and opportunities to develop healthy bonds with parents, school, and communities. Parents can help by becoming informed and talking to their teenagers about drug use. Participation in extracurricular activities, the expression of parental disapproval of using drugs and parental attendance at school events are associated with less drug experimentation. Communities can help by decreasing the availability of drugs, promoting drug-free homes and environments, and by supporting drug use prevention programs.

## Does Treatment Work?

**Yes. Cocaine** addiction is a chronic, relapsing "brain disease" characterized by intense craving for cocaine as a result of long-term chemical imbalances in the brain. A national study has found that treatment for cocaine dependency is effective, reducing cocaine use by over 50 percent. Though a combination of behavioral and drug therapies, abusers can recover.

## Who should I contact if someone close to me has a problem with Cocaine?

**Contact the** Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse's toll-free hotline at 800.832.9623 or your local Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse for referral assistance. You may also contact your family physician, hospital, or yellow pages for other intervention and treatment options.

## Narcotics Tip Line 972-941-STOP

City of Plano Police Department  
909 14th Street  
Plano Texas 75074  
[www.planopolice.org](http://www.planopolice.org)



**As memory, perception, and judgment are clouded under the influence, users are also at risk of severe injuries, overdoses, entanglement in violence and crime as they support their habits, and HIV/AIDS infection from sharing needles and trading sex for drugs.**