

Cocaine: Myths and Facts



Cocaine is an illegal drug that's dangerous and addictive. Its quality is unpredictable. It's just as dangerous to snort cocaine as it is to smoke it or to inject it. A cocaine habit costs a lot of money. Many people who use it become dealers to support their habit.

Cocaine use often looks glamorous on TV shows and in the movies. But cocaine addiction often causes people to lose their jobs, their families, their homes, and their reputation. Learn the facts about cocaine and its use.

Some facts about cocaine

Fact: All forms of the drug are highly addictive. Some people can get addicted after using it for a short time.

Fact: Cocaine, in all forms, can have serious and dangerous effects on both the body and the mind.

Fact: Cocaine, especially at high doses, can cause tremors and convulsions (seizures), infection, heart attack, stroke, psychosis, and death.

Fact: Long-term (chronic) cocaine use can seriously harm your body and your athletic performance. It can also cost you your job.

Fact: Cocaine can cause increased sexual activity, which can lead to high-risk sex (multiple partners, unprotected sex). Heavy cocaine use can lead to impotence and loss of interest in sex.

Fact: Even a few uses can result in addiction, trouble with the law, or serious health problems—even death.

More facts about cocaine

Cocaine is a white powder made from the leaves of the South American coca plant. Suppliers mix it with other, similar-looking powders. So the user can't be sure what they are buying. These other powders dilute and contaminate the drug. They make it more unpredictable than it already is. They can have harmful side effects and may be fatal.

Crack is the smokable form of cocaine. It can be made by heating a solution of cocaine powder, baking soda, and water. The flakes or rocks that remain after the cooking process can be transparent, beige, or dirty white. Like powdered cocaine, crack has impurities. They increase its health risks. And they make it hard for users to figure out how much of the drug they're really ingesting. Crack cocaine gets its name from the crackling sound that is made when smoking the drug.

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