

Understanding harm reduction

Harm reduction aims to reduce the risks when using methamphetamine or other drugs and encourages safer behaviours. Harm reduction recognises that some people will continue to use methamphetamine regardless of the risks. There are strategies that can be used to help lower the risk of harm and learn more about methamphetamine safer injecting harm reduction strategies here.

Understanding risk and harm

While most people who use methamphetamine or other drugs do not suffer serious harms, the use of any drug, whether legal or not, always carries risk. It is always safer not to use methamphetamine. People who inject are at higher risk of additional harms such as:

- Blood-borne viruses
- Bacterial and fungal infections
- Damage to the circulatory system
- Increased likelihood of overdose.

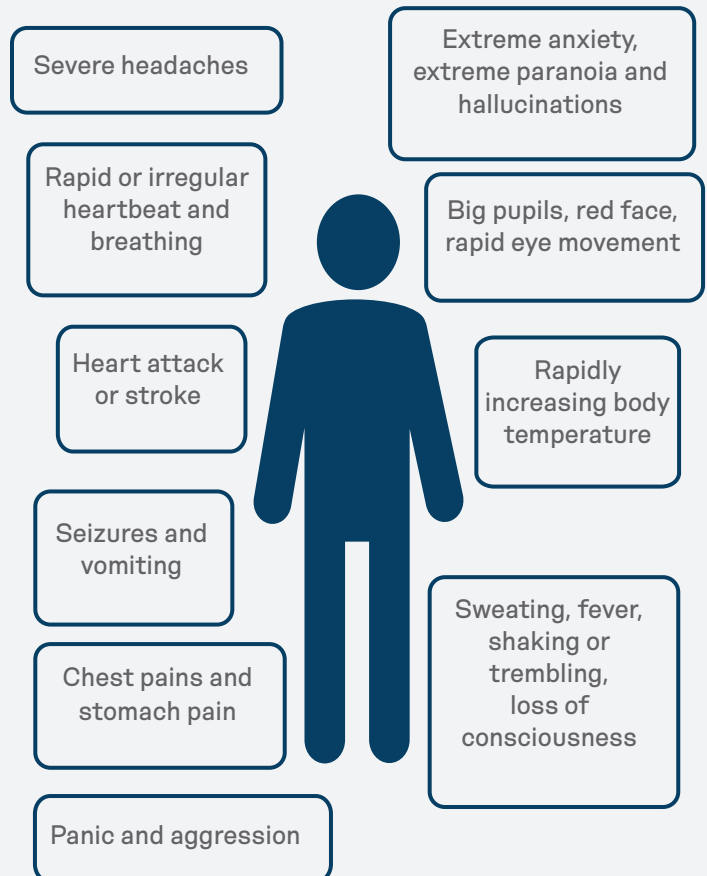
Understanding safer injecting

Injecting methamphetamine can increase the risk of harm. However, there are strategies that can be used to help lower the risks.

- Seek advice from a needle and syringe program and use the correct equipment for what you are injecting.
- Always wash your hands first with soap and water.
- Never share equipment and always use new sterile equipment e.g., needles, syringes, water, steri-cup, swabs, filters and any other injecting equipment.
- Mix up with plenty of sterile water. If you can't get sterile water, use the following options in this order of preference: 1) boiled water that has been allowed to cool to room temperature; 2) tap water; 3) still bottled water (not sparkling).
- Always use a filter, even if your mix looks totally clear. Don't reuse filters.
- Before injecting, swab the injection site with an alcohol swab.
- Try to rotate your injecting sites regularly to help reduce vein damage. This will give your veins a chance to recover and reduces scarring.
- Always inject with the flow of blood and towards the heart. If you inject against the flow it can cause vein damage, pain, swelling and clotting.

- To help reduce the risk of harm to others and the environment. Store and dispose of all injecting equipment in a strong, plastic, puncture-proof container.

Signs of overdose: Methamphetamine



To reduce the risks of overdose:

- Do not use alone and use in a safe place.
- Test with a smaller amount and wait before having more.
- Do not mix substances together i.e. using methamphetamine with over-the-counter, prescribed medications and other drugs.

Remember... If you have not used for a few days or more, been using less, or have been using a lower strength/form of methamphetamine, your body's tolerance will have been reduced.

This can mean you are more at risk of overdose.



What should I do in an emergency?

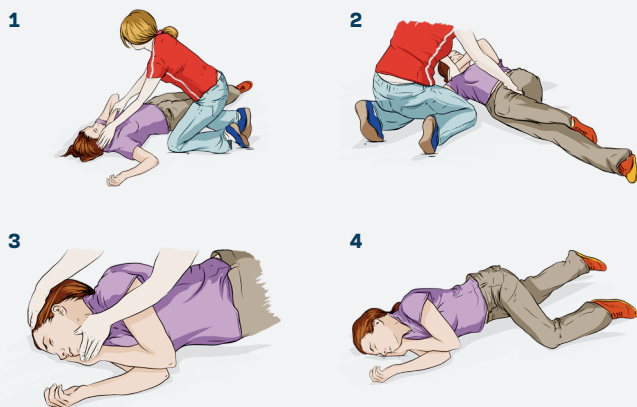
If a person has collapsed or lost consciousness immediately seek assistance by calling an ambulance on **triple zero (000)**.

If they have stopped breathing commence CPR. If they are breathing normally, place them into the recovery position and continue to monitor them until the ambulance arrives.

What help is available?

Adis 24/7 Alcohol and Drug Support is a 24 hour, 7 day a week confidential support service for people in Queensland with alcohol and other drug concerns, their families and health professionals.

Talk to us. Anytime, anywhere.
1800 177 833



Disclaimer

This factsheet does not accept, condone or promote the use of methamphetamine or other drugs. While most people who use methamphetamine do not suffer serious harm, the use of any drug, whether legal or not, always carries some risk. No amount of planning and care can ensure that you will have a 'risk free' experience when using methamphetamine and the best way to avoid potential harm is to not use. By developing this factsheet we are not suggesting that methamphetamine use is safe.