



# American Drug Testing

*Drug-Free Workplace Programs*

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## DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE ADVISOR

AN ONGOING SERIES TO PROTECT YOUR COMPANY BY HELPING TO KEEP DRUGS OUT OF YOUR WORK-

### Methamphetamine: A Drug Abuse Nightmare, Part III

#### What are the long-term effects of methamphetamine use?

Long-term methamphetamine abuse results in many damaging effects, including addiction. Addiction is a chronic, relapsing disease, characterized by compulsive drug-seeking and drug use which is accompanied by functional and molecular changes in the brain.

#### **Long-term effects of methamphetamine abuse:**

- Dependence
- Addiction psychosis
- Paranoia
- Hallucinations
- Mood disturbances
- Repetitive motor activity
- Stroke
- Weight loss

In addition to being addicted to methamphetamine,

chronic methamphetamine abusers exhibit symptoms that can include violent behavior, anxiety, confusion, and insomnia. They also

*“...can include violent behavior, anxiety, confusion, and insomnia.”*

can display a number of psychotic features, including paranoia, auditory hallucinations, mood disturbances, and delusions (for example, the sensation of insects creeping on the skin, called "formication"). The paranoia can result in homicidal as well as suicidal thoughts.

With chronic use, tolerance for methamphetamine can develop. In an effort to intensify the desired effects, users may take higher doses of the drug, take it more frequently, or change their method of drug intake. In some cases, abusers forego food and sleep while indulging in a form of bingeing known as a "run," injecting as much as a gram of the drug every 2 to 3 hours over several days until the user runs out of the

drug or is too disorganized to continue. Chronic abuse can lead to psychotic behavior, characterized by intense paranoia, visual and auditory hallucinations, and out-of-control rages that can be coupled with extremely vio-

that as much as 50 percent of the dopamine-producing cells in the brain can be damaged after prolonged exposure to relatively low levels of methamphetamine. Researchers also have found that serotonin-



**4 years, 5 months**

lent behavior. Although there are no physical manifestations of a withdrawal syndrome when methamphetamine use is stopped, there are several symptoms that occur when a chronic user stops taking the drug. These include depression, anxiety, fatigue, paranoia, aggression, and an intense craving for the drug. In scientific studies examining the consequences of long-term methamphetamine exposure in animals, concern has arisen over its toxic effects on the brain. Researchers have reported

containing nerve cells may be damaged even more extensively. Whether this toxicity is related to the psychosis seen in some long-term methamphetamine abusers is still an open question.

For additional information, see the "client area" [www.AmericanDrugTesting.net](http://www.AmericanDrugTesting.net) or call 843-747-4111.




**The Drug-Free Workplace Advisor** is published by American Drug Testing, a leading drug-free workplace administrator and testing company. Call (843) 747-4111.

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