

American Drug Testing

Drug-Free Workplace Programs

Volume 1

Issue 167

(843) 747-4111

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 IV

What are the Medical Complications of Methamphetamine Use?

Methamphetamine can cause a variety of cardiovascular problems. These include rapid heart rate, irregular heartbeat, increased blood pressure, and irreversible, stroke-producing damage to small blood vessels in the brain. Hyperthermia (elevated body temperature) and convulsions occur with methamphetamine overdoses, and if not treated immediately, can result in death.

Chronic methamphetamine abuse can result in inflammation of the heart lining, and among users who inject the drug, damaged blood vessels and skin abscesses. Methamphetamine abusers also can have episodes of violent behavior, paranoia, anxiety, confusion, and insomnia. Heavy users also show progressive so-

cial and occupational deterioration. Psychotic symptoms can sometimes persist for months or years after use has

“Methamphetamine abusers also can have episodes of violent behavior, paranoia, anxiety,”

ceased. Acute lead poisoning is another potential risk for methamphetamine abusers. A common method of illegal methamphetamine production uses

There have been documented cases of acute lead poisoning in intravenous methamphetamine abusers.

Fetal exposure to methamphetamine also is a significant problem in the United States. At present, research indicates that methamphetamine abuse during pregnancy may result in prenatal complications, increased rates of premature delivery, and altered neonatal behavioral patterns, such as abnormal reflexes and extreme irritability. Methamphetamine abuse during pregnancy may be linked also to congenital deformities.



methamphetamine, organized crime drug groups operating from Mexico currently domi-


nate wholesale methamphetamine trafficking in the United States for several reasons: these organizations established access to wholesale ephedrine sources of supply on the international market; these organizations are producing unprecedented quantities of high-purity methamphetamine on a regular basis; and, they already control well-established cocaine, heroin, and marijuana distribution networks throughout the western United States, enabling them to supply methamphetamine to a large retail level market. For additional information, see the “client area” www.AmericanDrugTesting.net or call 843-747-4111.

How is methamphetamine distributed?

Traditionally, the suppliers of methamphetamine throughout the United States have been outlaw motorcycle gangs and numerous other independent trafficking groups. Although these groups continue to produce and distribute

| <u>Methamphetamine</u> | <u>vs.</u> | <u>Cocaine</u> |
|--|------------|--|
| Man-made | | Plant-derived |
| Smoking produces a high that lasts 8-24 hours | | Smoking produces a high that lasts 20-30 minutes |
| 50% of the drug is removed from the body in 12 hours | | 50% of the drug is removed from the body in 1 hour |
| Limited medical use | | Used as a local anesthetic in some surgical procedures |

lead acetate as a reagent. Production errors may therefore result in methamphetamine contaminated with lead.



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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