

TEENS AND COCAINE



Common questions. Simple answers.

WHAT IS COCAINE?

Cocaine is a drug made from leaves of the coca plant, native to South America. Cocaine is used legally for certain medical purposes, but the street drug cocaine is illegal. Street cocaine looks like a fine white powder and can be mixed with other things — including fentanyl — to increase its intensity. Fentanyl is a deadly drug. Just a few grains can cause death.

HOW CAN YOU TELL IF COCAINE IS LACED WITH FENTANYL?

It's very difficult. Fentanyl has no taste or smell. People don't realize fentanyl is in their drug of choice until it is too late. Fentanyl test strips can help determine if a street drug contains fentanyl. Fentanyl test strips are available through the Brandywine Counseling Syringe Services Program at [locations throughout the state](#).

HOW DO TEENS USE COCAINE?

Teens snort cocaine through their nose or rub it on their gums. Cocaine can also be injected into the bloodstream or smoked — known as “freebasing.” The cocaine crystal itself can be heated — called “crack” — and fumes are inhaled.



WHAT ARE THE SHORT- AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF USING COCAINE?

Short Term

- Extreme pleasurable rush
- Mental alertness
- Hypersensitivity to sight, sound, and touch
- Irritability and anxiety
- Paranoia — extreme and unreasonable distrust of others

Long Term

- Loss of smell, nosebleeds, frequent runny nose, and problems with swallowing
- Cough, asthma, respiratory distress, and higher risk of infections like pneumonia
- Severe bowel decay from reduced blood flow
- Higher risk for contracting HIV, hepatitis C, and other bloodborne diseases, as well as skin or soft tissue infections; higher risk for scarring or collapsed veins
- Speeds up an HIV infection
- Possible psychotic behavior characterized by paranoia, hallucinations, mood disturbances, and violence

CAN MY TEEN OVERDOSE ON COCAINE, AND IS THERE A TREATMENT?

Yes, death can occur on the first use of cocaine or unexpectedly thereafter. Mixing alcohol or other drugs with cocaine can be deadly. There is no medication that can reverse a cocaine overdose. Cocaine overdose can lead to stroke, heart attack, or seizure.

NOW I'VE GOT THE FACTS — WHAT'S NEXT?

You can visit talk2kidsaboutdrugs.com for trusted, factual information for families and educators.