

## Reducing Harm & Finding Help, Continued

detox facilities, and addiction treatment programs can help with withdrawal.

Amphetamine addiction can be treated in a residential setting (often called “rehab”) or in an outpatient setting (when the patient lives at home, but goes to treatment appointments 1-7 times per week). Effective types of counseling for benzodiazepine addiction include cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, and twelve-step facilitation. There are also recovery support groups and online forums that can help people struggling with amphetamine addiction.



Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, and groups like SMART Recovery or LifeRing are all available to support people with amphetamine addiction. Recovery apps specific to amphetamine addiction can be downloaded to your smart phone that provide lists of recovery support meetings, reading material, tools like sobriety counters, and more.



## Amphetamines



## Information about Your Health



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## Amphetamines – What Are They?

Amphetamines are a category of drug that include prescription medications (like Adderall), methamphetamine (often shortened to “meth”), and MDMA (often called “ecstasy” or “Molly”). Although these drugs are not identical, they are all included in the category of amphetamines.

Amphetamines are stimulants. They can increase alertness, attention, and energy, as well as elevate blood pressure, heart rate, and breathing.

Amphetamines (such as Adderall) can be prescribed by physicians for attention disorders. They can also be manufactured illegally in labs (for example, methamphetamine and MDMA).

## Amphetamines & My Health

### Shorter Term

*Intoxication:* Amphetamine intoxication can impair judgment. At-risk sexual behavior is particularly associated with amphetamine use. When mixed with alcohol, amphetamines can be particularly risky because they increase alertness, which leads to more alcohol consumption and unhealthy



## Amphetamines & My Health, Continued

decisions. For some people, amphetamine intoxication can create or worsen mental illness symptoms like anxiety, paranoia, and hallucinations.

*Unknown drugs:* Because some amphetamines are illegal, they carry additional risks. Users of methamphetamine and MDMA cannot be sure of the drug’s contents or dose.

*Other health issues:* In the short-term, amphetamines can disturb sleep, cause overheating, and interfere with normal heart and blood pressure functioning.

### Longer Term

*Addiction:* Amphetamines have addictive potential. Not everyone who uses amphetamines becomes addicted, but some do. The risk of addiction is higher for a person taking them without medical supervision. There is evidence that methamphetamine is more addictive than prescription amphetamines or MDMA. If amphetamines are used chronically, withdrawal symptoms—including fatigue (feeling tired), depression, and disturbed sleep patterns—can result when a person stops taking them.

*Other health issues:* There are a number of health issues associated with long-term amphetamine use. Health effects depend on the types of amphetamines that are being used and the person’s patterns of use. Some of the long-term effects of amphetamine use are lack of needed nutrients, a number of health problems associated with too little sleep, oral (mouth and teeth) health issues, high blood pressure, and depression. People

who inject amphetamines and/or share equipment can develop injection site infections, damage to their veins, Hepatitis B & C, HIV, and blood clots.



## Reducing Harm & Finding Help

Many people use prescription amphetamines safely and as they are prescribed. If you have health concerns related to an amphetamine prescription, talk with your doctor. There are other approaches to treating attention disorders.

People who use amphetamines non-medically can reduce their risk of harm by being educated about what drugs they are taking. They can take steps to protect their sexual health and avoid unwanted pregnancies.

They can make sure to sleep enough, eat nutritious foods, and take care of their teeth. People who inject amphetamines can use new syringes and other injection equipment. Information on safe injection techniques and reducing drug-related harm for amphetamine users can be downloaded from the Harm Reduction Coalition website.

<http://harmreduction.org>

People who wish to stop using amphetamines should be aware that withdrawal may occur, but that it does not always need to be medically-supervised. However, physicians,