



on thin

# ICE

A USERS' GUIDE

# ICE

## About this booklet

'Ice', also known as 'crystal meth', is a highly purified crystalline form of the drug methamphetamine. This booklet has been designed to provide information on ice to people who use the drug. Many of the facts about ice are the same as for 'speed'. We therefore recommend that readers also refer to the 'User's Guide to Speed' for further information on how to reduce harms related to their drug use.

The information provided in this booklet is not intended as a self-help guide, and users of ice are encouraged to seek professional advice about their drug use if they want to cut-down or quit using. Nor does this booklet intend to provide advice on whether to use ice, or how to use ice.

This booklet is intended to provide a brief overview of the issues relating to ice use. The issues around drug use and drug-related harms are complex, and although every attempt has been made to provide the most up-to-date information, our understanding of these issues may have changed since this booklet was published. If you need specific information on the issues covered in this booklet you should seek up-to-date advice from a professional source.

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## What is ice?

'Ice', or 'crystal meth', is a highly purified crystalline form of methamphetamine. Methamphetamine is also sold under the street names 'speed', 'base', 'paste', 'goey', 'shabu' and a few other terms. It is a man-made stimulant that produces a sense of well-being, and increases arousal and alertness.

Methamphetamine makes you high by stimulating the brain's natural chemicals that are responsible for making us feel excited, alert and euphoric. These chemicals are called dopamine and noradrenaline.

Some of the other effects of methamphetamine, like your heart beating faster, are from the drug's effect in your body, where it produces an adrenaline-like effect.

## How is ice different from speed and base?

Ice is only different from speed and base in terms of its purity. Otherwise it is exactly the same drug. Ice is about 80% pure. In comparison, other forms of methamphetamine available in Australia are typically around 10-20% pure. Low purity methamphetamine is usually cut with glucose.

Ice can have slightly different effects to speed and base because ice is very pure. When you take ice, you are taking a higher dose of methamphetamine in one go, which can change the feeling you get from the drug.

Although some people prefer ice because it gives a stronger high and lasts longer, the side-effects are also stronger and it can cause agitation, worse comedowns, and is very addictive.

Further information on how to seek help for ice use is contained on the back page of this booklet.

## What about amphetamine?

Amphetamine was common in Australia back in the early 1990s, but nowadays what you buy on the street is almost always methamphetamine, regardless of whether people call it 'speed' 'base', 'ice', or 'crystal meth'. Methamphetamine is very closely related to amphetamine, but stronger.

## How is ice made?

Ice is made in much the same way as speed and base, but it is refined more, so that it turns into a pure crystalline form of the drug.

Most ice in Australia is imported. However, some ice is made here in Australia. Regardless of whether ice is made here or overseas, it is made in illegal chemical laboratories. It is usually made from pharmaceutical drugs used in cold-and-flu preparations together with other chemicals.

Some people think that because ice has a clear crystal appearance that it is more professionally manufactured. While this is true to some extent, ice can still be contaminated with other chemicals if it is not made properly. Sometimes people also cut ice with clear crystalline chemicals, so that it is hard to tell whether your ice is pure or not. This is why sometimes you get ice that isn't as strong as you expect.

Coloured ice can be a sign of impurities in ice. If you get residue when you smoke ice, this could also be a sign of impurities or cutting agents in the drug.

## On ice

Most people say they like taking ice because of the euphoria and sense of well-being they get. Feeling confident is also one of the desirable effects of ice, and so is having lots of energy and enthusiasm for everything.

While a lot of people take it before they go out, it is pretty common that people just hang out at home with their friends too. Aside from socialising, some people really enjoy activities like listening to music or drawing when they're on ice, or it just gives them the energy and motivation to get things done, even everyday chores like the housework.

### Desired effects of ice

- euphoria (or high)
- confidence
- alertness
- motivation
- energy

### Signs of intoxication

- sweaty/clammy skin
- dilated or large pupils
- agitation
- talkativeness

Some of the unpleasant side-effects of ice that users report include palpitations and chest pains, feeling agitated, anxious or irritable. Other common problems, particularly with heavy use, are relationship and financial problems, sleep disturbances, dental problems, depression and anxiety, withdrawal symptoms and psychosis.

## Smoking ice

Smoking ice is more addictive than most other forms of recreational drug use. If you smoke ice you are much more likely to have problems than if you snort or swallow speed. This is because smoking ice gives a more intense high, so it is hard not to want to keep using more.

When you're smoking ice with friends it can be difficult to know exactly how much you've used. Some people can also find it difficult to refuse a pipe that is handed around in a group situation. Getting impatient when the pipe comes around is a sign that you are craving the drug.

Smoking seems like a more innocent way to take ice than injecting, but the truth is that smoking ice is highly addictive, and ice smokers often use as much of the drug as injectors. Smoking ice is addictive because smoking is a very efficient way to take methamphetamine – it's a bit like smoking crack cocaine.

When ice is heated, the crystals of ice melt and then vaporise. When you inhale the vapors they get absorbed inside your lungs and the methamphetamine goes straight into your bloodstream. This is the reason that smoking ice causes the effects to come on so fast, and why you get such a strong euphoria.

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*"...and I eventually had my first smoke. And I was blown away, the euphoria I was feeling, feelings of well-being and of just being invincible. And just this feeling of closeness to everyone, and relating to people and talking, and having fun and dancing, and just a deep appreciation of everything in life."*

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Some of the immediate side-effects from smoking ice can include shortness of breath and dizziness. Smoking ice has also been associated with swelling and a build up of fluid in the lungs. This is a serious problem that doesn't happen often, and is thought to occur because of the pressure that methamphetamine puts on the heart.

In general, the effects of methamphetamine smoking on your lungs are not well understood.

## What problems can you get from smoking ice?

Smoking ice can also lead to all the same problems that you get when you use any form of methamphetamine, like speed or base. Dependence is probably the biggest risk with smoking ice – people start craving ice, using more and the comedowns get worse, they start having arguments with their friends about their drug use and get into financial difficulty, and have trouble keeping up with their work and other responsibilities.

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*"...you just feel like you need to have ice to function. And I couldn't get out of bed without a smoke of ice. And my life revolved around this pipe. I'd clean it, and I'd go crazy if someone touched it. ... And the comedowns were just disgusting, the paranoia, hearing things, delusional state ... just thinking about where my next hit of ice was going to come from."*

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## Injecting ice

### Injecting and dependence

Injecting drug use is associated with high levels of dependence (i.e. craving the drug, using more than you should even when it is causing you problems). Some people claim that they take up injecting because they don't have to use as much, and therefore it costs less. But the truth is, people who inject end up using a lot more.

Injectors are almost five times more likely to be addicted than people who snort or swallow methamphetamine, and are also much more likely to suffer from both physical and mental problems related to their drug use than people who don't inject.

### Injecting and hepatitis C

Ice injectors are at risk of getting hepatitis C or other blood borne viruses (hepatitis B and HIV). Over half of the injecting drug users in Australia are estimated to have hepatitis C. HIV is not as common among injecting drug users in Australia (less than 3% of injecting drug users have HIV), but you should still be careful.

Always use clean needles when you inject. Re-using needles increases the chance of not only hepatitis, but other infections too.

## Infections from injecting

Injecting any drug, including ice, can lead to infections like abscesses where you inject, and other problems with your veins (e.g. thrombosis).

Always clean your injection site with alcohol swabs to reduce the chance of infections. Make sure that you get any infections treated, because they can become nasty and make you really sick if you ignore them.

Injecting any non-sterile solution (including tap water) puts you at risk of serious infections, including some that can cause problems with your heart. This is because when you inject you by-pass the body's natural defense system for germs. You should always use purified water when injecting to reduce this risk.

## Thrombosis – what happens when you inject things that don't dissolve?

Ice should easily dissolve in water. If your methamphetamine does not dissolve, this could be due to impurities in the drug or be caused by the way the drug was manufactured.

Injecting impurities, such as the chalking agents used in pills, or oils, can cause serious problems because they can thicken in your veins and arteries and cause blood clots. This can lead to thrombosis.

Thrombosis is where the vein gets blocked. The symptoms are pain, warmth, swelling and redness around the area where the vein is blocked. The limb usually feels heavy, and you may get chills or a fever. Thrombosis is serious. You should see a doctor if you think you have this.

## Coming down

The worst part about using ice for most people is the comedown, and this is true for all forms of the drug, like speed and base too. As one user explained, what it gives you today, it takes from you tomorrow.

Feeling irritable and down, lethargic and paranoid are common complaints, and these can become really bad when you use ice a lot. Not being able to sleep, because of feeling wired or agitated, can also worsen these problems and lead to exhaustion.

A lot of people try to self-medicate the comedown with pills or by smoking pot. This is a bad habit to get into, and although using other drugs to mask the symptoms may seem like a good idea at the time, the best strategy is to simply rest and give your body and mind time to recover from using.

## Depression

Many people who use ice experience depression. People often feel depressed when they are coming down from ice, and these feelings can last a few hours to a few days. When you withdraw from ice you can get longer lasting mood changes that include feeling down and not being interested in things.

Some people who use ice also feel depressed when they are not using the drug, or have had problems with depression before they started using ice. Ice can alleviate the feelings of depression at first, but it can make the depression worse when you stop using.

Symptoms of depression can vary from feeling a bit down for a day or two, to feeling suicidal. If you feel really down for a longer period of time, or lose interest in things you normally enjoy, you should talk to someone about how you are feeling.

If you want to find out more about depression or anxiety, and the type of help you can get, visit the *beyond blue* website:

**[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au),**

or the Ybblue site:

**[www.beyondblue.org.au/ybblue](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/ybblue)**

## Anxiety

People often feel nervous and agitated when they are on ice or coming down. Some people use ice to overcome their anxiety in social situations or to cope with everyday worries. Panic attacks, where people feel suddenly very afraid or anxious for no reason, are another symptom of anxiety. To help cope with a panic attack you should:

- slow down your breathing
- breathe in and out of a paper bag (or you can achieve the same effect by cupping your hands over your mouth and breathing into your hands)
- sit down, and, if possible, go somewhere quiet

Feeling anxious and depressed can reinforce bad habits of using too much ice. This can make it hard to give up using.

## Aggression and ice

Aggression is also one of the problems that people worry about when one of their friends or family use ice. The relationship between ice use and aggression is not straight-forward. Ice use can increase aggression, but not all users become aggressive when they take ice.

It is not clear why some people are more prone to violent behaviour than others, but some of the things that probably play a role are:

- alcohol
- withdrawal from drugs, especially heroin
- barbiturate use
- personality
- not eating
- certain medical conditions (e.g. diabetes, brain tumours)

Ice can also worsen someone's response if they are angry for some other reason (e.g. fights over money or relationship problems), because of its adrenaline-like properties.

Sometimes violent behaviour is related to methamphetamine psychosis. Around one-quarter of people who experience psychosis say they get irritable and angry to the point where they become argumentative and yell at people, and they sometimes even smash things or hit people.

In this context, people who are behaving violently can feel threatened and are actually very frightened and upset. Other times it is because people can be more impulsive when they are on ice, and do things when they get angry that they wouldn't normally do.

You should try not to provoke people who've used too much ice and are agitated or showing signs of psychosis. Take a non-confrontational approach, and keep a calm voice, and do not argue with them or contradict them. Minimise direct eye contact, and maintain a non-confrontational posture, and keep a safe distance. Try to provide them with a quiet environment away from noise and other distractions. Encourage them not to keep using ice while they are still irritable.

## Social issues

Ironically, break-downs in social relationships are one of the common down-sides of using ice for people who take too much of the drug.

Sometimes people become over-confident and 'cocky' when they are on ice, and they don't appreciate the damage that they are doing to their relationships with their friends and family.

Arguments over drug use, not having enough money to pay the rent or do other things, and just being pre-occupied with using ice, can all cause relationship problems.

Some people take up selling ice to their friends to make money, but often they end up using more and not making much more money. Then they have to deal with all the hassles of the dealing lifestyle, like being hooked up with criminals, the worry about being busted and being sent to prison.

*“pretty much everyone in the house was smoking ice, dealing ice, getting high on their own supply. And I’d rather just say it was fun, and it was party, party, party, but eventually we all started getting really screwed up, psychologically and emotionally, and we just, we couldn’t trust each other. That was due to the paranoia and the head-fucking going on with everyone, and you couldn’t trust your friends, and felt like you were all alone.”*

## Psychosis and ice – feeling paranoid

### What is ‘methamphetamine psychosis’?

Ice – and other forms of methamphetamine – can cause a brief psychotic reaction in some people where they hear and see things that aren’t there, and have unusual and implausible beliefs about things, such as believing that people are spying on them. Methamphetamine can bring on these types of experiences in healthy people, and this has been demonstrated in research studies from the 1960s and early 70s, back before the drug was illegal.

Symptoms of psychosis can range in their intensity from mild visual disturbances and feeling overly self-conscious in public, through to bizarre beliefs and hallucinations that can lead a person to act in a seemingly irrational and unpredictable way.

### What are the signs and symptoms of psychosis?

The most common symptoms of methamphetamine psychosis are:

- hearing or seeing things that aren’t there
- feeling suspicious, and feeling like other people are watching you, picking on you, or ‘out to get you’
- having strange thoughts that are hard to explain, e.g. feeling that other people are spying on you or know what you are thinking

Other, less common, symptoms of psychosis include repetitive compulsive behaviour (e.g. pulling things apart) which can include bizarre behaviours or rituals, and sexual compulsions.

Tactile hallucinations also occur in some people, where they feel like they have bugs under their skin. Olfactory hallucinations are less common, but sometimes people believe that they can smell things that aren’t there (e.g. rotting flesh).

Sometimes people’s thoughts become very muddled, and, as a result, their speech becomes incoherent and they go off on tangents. In extreme cases they may feel like their thoughts are being read by others, or that they are being controlled by other people. Often these feelings are linked in with the voices that they are hearing.

### What are the mild symptoms of psychosis?

Not all symptoms of psychosis are obvious. People can also get mild symptoms that don’t affect their functioning much. It is pretty common for ice users to have experienced mild symptoms, such as:

- seeing shadows or lights in the corner of your eye
- having illusions where you can see shapes of people or other things moving in inanimate objects
- hearing someone calling your name when no one is around – or hearing your phone ring when it didn’t
- thinking that other people are talking about you, or picking on you
- feeling really self-conscious because you feel like people are watching you
- feeling like ordinary everyday things have special significance or have taken on a special meaning
- imagining that objects are taking on the shape of living things, or moving when they are not

If you start to have these types of experiences, you should cut-back on your ice use or stop using altogether. If you’re not sure whether or not what you’re experiencing is real, tell a friend about it, and see what they think is going on.

## How long does methamphetamine psychosis last?

Symptoms of methamphetamine psychosis usually only last up to two to three hours. However, this depends on each individual, and whether they keep using ice after the symptoms start.

Sometimes symptoms become more severe and can last for days. In these situations the person involved is more likely to get taken to hospital and need treatment.

If the symptoms last longer than a few days, this could indicate a long-term psychosis like schizophrenia. If someone you know is experiencing symptoms such as these you should encourage them to seek help from a doctor.

## Are you at risk?

Everyone is at risk of developing psychosis when they take ice.

Even people who have no known history of mental health problems can experience psychotic symptoms after using ice.

You are at particularly high risk if you:

- use ice more than twice a week
- you smoke ice
- you inject ice
- you have a history of schizophrenia or mania
- you tend to have odd thoughts, feelings or sensations when you use other drugs

## What to do if you experience psychosis

If you start to experience symptoms of psychosis, you should:

- attempt to stop using – if you keep using the psychosis will get worse
- rest – sleep will help restore your sense of normality
- seek help – if you've had psychosis, you are likely to get it again, and you should cut back on your ice use

- consider medication – in most cases the psychosis will go away once you've stopped taking ice, so you may not need medication but it does assist some people in getting through this difficult time

Doctors sometimes prescribe sedative drugs to calm people down, and other times they may prescribe anti-psychotic drugs.

Remember: what you tell the doctor is confidential, so find a doctor you trust, and talk to them about what has happened.

## What to do if a friend gets methamphetamine psychosis

Try to be calm and supportive and give them peace and quiet. Try to encourage them to seek help from a doctor. If they are aggressive, do not disagree with them or confront them, and keep a safe distance from them. Do not approach someone who is breaking furniture, throwing things or threatening to hurt you.

If you are really worried that they might hurt someone or hurt themselves, you should call an ambulance and get them to a hospital.

## Physical effects

When you use ice, you're putting your body under a lot of stress. Because ice stops you feeling hungry and thirsty, and you don't need to sleep, you can lose weight, become dehydrated, malnourished, and you can end up looking gaunt and unhealthy.

## Teeth

Using methamphetamine a lot can cause jaw clenching and teeth grinding. This can cause increased sensitivity and lead to permanent damage such as cracked teeth.

Methamphetamine use has also been associated with other dental problems, including cavities and gingivitis (swollen and bleeding gums). One of the reasons for this is because methamphetamine gives you a dry mouth, but it is also related to poor dental hygiene.

## Kidneys

Methamphetamine use also places strain on your kidneys and has been associated with kidney failure. The following things increase the risk of kidney problems:

- dehydration from not drinking enough water
- not eating, particularly when you are on ice
- exhaustion from excessive physical activity
- not sleeping
- drinking alcohol and using other stimulant drugs (e.g. cocaine or ecstasy) at the same time as ice
- injecting drugs, because this can cause kidney infections

## Stroke

Strokes are caused when blood vessels in the brain get blocked, and this can cause damage to the brain. Stroke is not common among ice users, but it is known that ice users are at a higher risk of stroke compared to people who do not use drugs.

## What happens if you use ice while you're pregnant?

Premature births and underweight babies are the most common problems seen when women use ice (or any other form of methamphetamine, such as speed or base) while they are pregnant.

These problems are believed to be due to ice reducing the blood supply to the unborn baby and also the nutrients that it needs to develop.

## Can ice cause a heart attack?

Ice puts stress on your heart and can cause chest pain, irregular heart beat, and shortness of breath.

Heart attacks from methamphetamine are rare, but they can occur. They are most likely to occur in people already at risk of heart problems (e.g. smokers, people with heart disease).

Ice use has also been associated with sudden and unexpected heart failure, usually caused by an irregular heart beat. High blood pressure from ice use can also cause the major artery from the heart to rupture. These problems are rare but can be fatal.

The repeated stress of ice use on the heart can weaken and scar the heart muscle. This has the potential to increase the risk of heart attack later in life.

Ice also triggers the body's natural 'stress' chemicals and this can increase the risk of chronic heart disease (i.e. coronary artery disease).

We don't know how common heart problems are among methamphetamine users, or whether methamphetamine use increases the long-term risk of heart disease.

However, we do know that the following factors may increase the risk of heart problems:

- chronic use of methamphetamine (ice, base, or speed)
- frequent heavy use of methamphetamine
- concurrent use of other stimulant drugs (e.g. cocaine)
- tobacco smoking, heavy alcohol consumption, obesity
- congenital heart problems
- concurrent or pre-existing heart disease

## Sex and ice

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), such as Chlamydia, are on the rise in Australia. STDs are even more common now among people who inject drugs. So it is important to remember safe-sex practices.

Some people use ice to enhance sex, and sometimes these people engage in high-risk sex practices. Sexual risk behaviour among ice users is likely to be influenced by a range of factors, such as who is using the drug, why they are taking ice, and the nature of their sexual relationship. There is currently no conclusive evidence that just being on ice increases sexual risk taking.

## Addicted to ice

Some people find it difficult to have a good time without ice, while others feel like they can't function without the drug. Everyone is different when it comes to how 'addicted' they are to ice. However, some things to watch out for are:

- using ice more often than you used to, or needing more ice to get high
- craving ice
- comedowns that last for days when you feel really depressed, lethargic and irritable
- using ice or other drugs to cope with coming down
- spending a lot of time thinking about ice, scoring, using or coming down
- finding it hard to use less, or go without using
- using even in situations or at times when you know that you shouldn't, like when you are sick, or when it could be dangerous
- using even when you know that it'll make other problems worse, like depression or paranoia

People who inject or smoke ice are more likely to experience symptoms of addiction than people who snort or swallow speed. This is because smoking and injecting are very efficient ways of taking methamphetamine that give an intense high.

### Are you addicted to ice?

Choose a time frame (for example, the past month) and then answer each of the following questions about how you felt during this time.

#### Did you think your ice use was out of control?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0 never or almost never | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 often                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 sometimes             | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 always or nearly always |

#### Did the prospect of missing a hit/smoke of ice make you anxious or worried?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0 never or almost never | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 often                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 sometimes             | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 always or nearly always |

#### Did you worry about your use of ice?

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0 not at all | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 quite a lot  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 a little   | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 a great deal |

#### Did you wish you could stop using ice?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0 never or almost never | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 sometimes               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 often                 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 always or nearly always |

#### How difficult did you find it to stop, or to go without ice?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0 not difficult   | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 very difficult |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 quite difficult | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 impossible     |

### How did you score?

For each 0 answer, give yourself a score of 0, for 1, give yourself a score of 1, and so on. Give yourself a total score. So how did you score? As a general guide, people who score 4 or higher on this scale are usually also experiencing some health, emotional or social problems from their ice use.

**Scores 0-3:** Most people who score low are using weekly or less, and not feeling very dependent on ice, but might be starting to worry a bit about their ice use.

**Scores 4-5:** People who score 4 or 5 are often starting to experience some problems because of their ice use. They are usually using ice 2 or 3 days a week, but don't feel the need to use the drug all the time. This is a good time to moderate ice use before it gets out of hand.

**Scores 6 or greater:** Most people who score 6 or higher are aware that ice is causing problems, and might already be thinking about how to cut-back on their use, and where they can get help from to do this.

## Taking a break

### What will happen when I stop using ice?

If you are using ice frequently, you may get some withdrawal symptoms when you stop using. This can feel pretty bad for the first week or two, but you should start to feel much better within a few weeks.

After taking the drug for a while, your body and mind adapts or gets used to having ice, and will only function 'normally' when you've taken the drug.

When you stop using, your body has to re-adapt to not having ice in your system. This process is what causes the withdrawal symptoms. Withdrawal is this period of readjustment, where the body 'learns' to work normally again without the drug.

Withdrawal symptoms from ice, or any other form of methamphetamine (such as speed or base), are more psychological than for heroin or alcohol withdrawal. However, mood swings, irritability, sleep problems, changes in appetite, and strong cravings are all symptoms of your body getting used to not having ice.

### Common features of ice withdrawal

Time since last speed use	Common Symptoms
<b>Day 1-3 (comedown)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- exhaustion</li> <li>- increased sleep</li> <li>- depression</li> <li>- decreased appetite</li> <li>- restlessness</li> <li>- irritability</li> </ul>
<b>Day 2-10 (withdrawal)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- strong urges (cravings) to use ice</li> <li>- mood swings, alternating between feeling irritable, stressed, agitated, restless and anxious, to feeling tired, lacking energy and generally run down</li> <li>- very disturbed sleep</li> <li>- poor concentration (feeling scattered)</li> <li>- general aches, pains and stiffness</li> <li>- headaches</li> <li>- increased appetite</li> <li>- strange thoughts, such as feeling paranoid</li> <li>- misunderstanding things around you, such as seeing things that aren't really there</li> <li>- easily upset</li> </ul>
<b>Day 7-28 (symptoms start to settle down, although some still occur)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mood swings, alternating between feeling anxious, irritable or agitated, to feeling flat, a bit depressed and run down</li> <li>- disturbed sleep</li> <li>- cravings for ice</li> <li>- feeling bored</li> <li>- increased appetite</li> </ul>
<b>1 to 3 months</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- return of normal sleep, mood and activity levels</li> <li>- major improvements in general health and mood</li> </ul>

## Cravings

'Cravings' are urges to use drugs. Everyone gets cravings for things that they like. But with ice, sometimes cravings are so strong that it is hard not to use even when you really shouldn't.

- cravings are what make ice so addictive
- cravings are not caused by a lack of willpower or motivation
- cravings are only really severe for short periods of time – usually less than one hour
- cravings can be triggered by physical or psychological discomfort
- cravings will still occur after you've gone through withdrawal and given up using ice, but they become less severe and easier to cope with
- cravings will eventually go away if you don't give in to them

It is really important to get to know your cravings so you can cope with them when you don't want to use. Different people have different ways of coping.

## Coping with cravings

**DELAY** the decision as to whether you will use for one hour.

When you get cravings, delay the decision to use. Make a deal with yourself that you will put it off for one hour, rather than trying to make a decision whether to use or not.

**DISTRACT** yourself with some activity during this hour.

Cravings can occupy your thoughts a lot. As a result, they seem to get worse and worse. The only way to avoid this is by putting your energy into other things, like maybe listening to your favourite CD, watching TV or a video, cleaning the house or going out for a walk.

**DECIDE** whether it's worth using after the hour is up.

At the end of the hour, the craving should have settled down, especially if you're good at distracting yourself, although it probably won't have gone away.

Before you make the final decision, think about the reasons why you want to stop using, and the reasons why you want to take a break.

## What to do when you give in to the craving:

Learning to not use ice use is like changing any habit. You are bound to slip up along the way – it's normal.

Slip-ups are not failures. They don't mean you have lost control. Just try again, and use your experience to work out how to cope better next time.

If you use when you didn't want to, or use more when you only wanted to use a little bit, take time to think about why.

- What led up to the slip?
- How could you have avoided the slip, in hindsight?
- What will you do next time in a similar situation?

By learning from slip-ups you'll prevent lapses turning into huge binges or returning to old patterns of use.

For more information please contact the following agencies:

NSW	Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)	(02) 9361 8000 1 800 422 599 (toll free)
	NSW Users and Aids Association (NUAA)	(02) 9557 1476 1 800 644 413 (toll free)
Victoria	Directline	1 800 888 236 (toll free)
	Victorian Drug User Group/VIVAIDS	(03) 9329 1500
South Australia	Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)	(08) 8363 8618 1 300 13 13 40
	SAVIVE	(08) 8334 1699
Western Australia	Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)	(08) 9442 5000 1 800 198 024 (toll free)
	WA Substance Users Association (WASUA)	(08) 9227 7866
	Parent Drug Information Service	(08) 9442 5050 1 800 653 203 (toll free)
Queensland	Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)	(07) 3837 5989 1 800 177 833 (toll free)
	Queensland Injectors Health Network	(07) 3620 8111 1 800 172 076 (toll free)
Tasmania	Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)	1 800 811 994 (toll free)
	Alcohol and Drug Service	1800 811 994 (toll free) (03) 6336 5577 (North: Launceston) (03) 6429 8555 (North West: Ulverstone Office) (03) 6230 7091 (South: Hobart)
	Tasmanian Council on AIDS, Hepatitis, Related Diseases (TASCAHRD)	(03) 6234 1242 1 800 005 900 (toll free)
Northern Territory	Amity House	(08) 8981 8030 (08) 8981 7516 1 800 629 683 (toll free)
	Northern Territory AIDS and Hepatitis Council	(08) 8941 1711 1 800 880 899 (toll free)
ACT	ACT Community Health	(02) 6205 4545
	Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL)	(02) 6279 1600