



Australian Government



## SPEED

Speed is part of the amphetamine family of drugs, which also includes ice. Ice is the purest form of the drug followed by base and then speed. However, the potential for dependence (addiction) and physical and mental problems from using speed is still high.

Speed is also known by a variety of other names, including whizz, go-ee, snow, zip, point, eve, gogo, pure, and gas.

### Speed facts at a glance

**The signs and symptoms of using speed can include:**

- increased and irregular heart rate
- increased breathing
- teeth grinding
- nervousness
- restlessness
- insomnia
- aggression
- fever and sweating
- headaches
- blurred vision
- overheating
- dry mouth and lips
- dilated pupils
- nausea and vomiting
- mood swings
- hallucinations
- paranoia.

**The consequences of using speed may include:**

- chronic sleep problems
- cracked teeth through grinding
- panic attacks
- insomnia
- anxiety
- decreased emotional control
- severe depression
- violent behaviour
- speed psychosis
- nerve cell damage
- heart failure or stroke
- high risk of dependence (addiction), especially if injected
- HIV and hepatitis infections through needle sharing.

## Physical effects of speed

Speed targets the brain's 'reward system' and users will often crave that feeling again, which can lead to addiction.

The sense of alertness and energy a person experiences is due to these drugs speeding up the messages between the brain and the body. This leads to an increased heart and breathing rate, and higher blood pressure.

## Problems using speed

In the short term, speed use can produce increased and irregular heartbeat and breathing, excessive sweating, overheating, blurred vision, headaches, teeth grinding, jaw clenching, dilated pupils, nausea and diarrhoea. It can also lead to insomnia.

Long-term users also face the potential issues of dental problems (through teeth grinding), significant weight loss, stroke, heart problems and a high risk of dependence. Sharing needles to inject drugs greatly increases the risk of contracting hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV.

Research also shows that both verbal and physical violence are linked with long-term amphetamine use. Heavy binges on speed are associated with reckless and aggressive behaviour.

Users also face further psychological issues with prolonged amphetamine use, including attention and memory issues, decreased emotional control, paranoid delusions, hallucinations, mood swings and depression. This can lead to social and financial problems, the risk of family breakdown and losing friends.

One of the most common effects of amphetamine overdose is 'speed psychosis'. This closely resembles the effects of paranoid schizophrenia, and usually begins with a heightened awareness of the environment and feelings of paranoia, anxiety and tension.