



Methamphetamine, normally called “crystal meth” or “meth”, is a stimulant that is strikingly similar in chemical composition to amphetamine, a drug that is often used to treat attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and sleep disorders. Fortunately, crystal meth addiction can be effectively treated through rehabilitation. Users normally ingest meth by:

snorting it in powder form

injecting in in liquid form

swallowing it in pill form

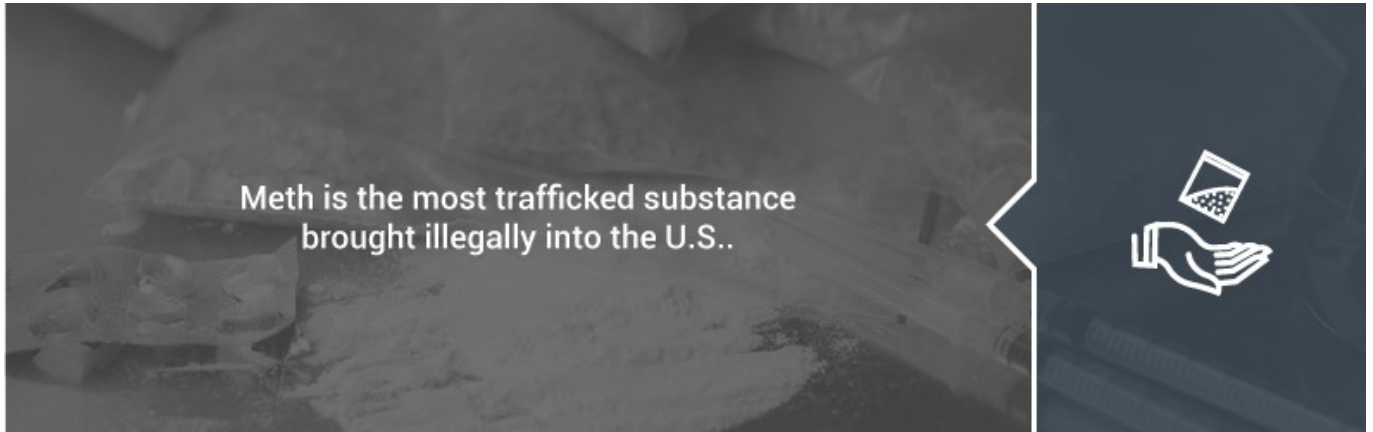
inhaling or smoking it in vapor form

### **Methamphetamine and Dopamine**

Meth directly affects the brain by increasing its natural production of dopamine. Dopamine is the chemical responsible for feelings of motivation, pleasure, and reward. Meth’s ability to essentially flood the brain with high levels of dopamine triggers the euphoria, or “rush” that many users experience.

The “rush” from methamphetamine fades just as quickly as it hits. For this reason, most users continue to take the drug in what’s known as a “binge and crash” pattern— continuous re-intoxication that results in little to no food or sleep.

Over time, continued meth use causes the brain’s dopamine system change, effectively impairing cognitive functions like coordination and learning. Moreover, studies have shown that long-term meth users might also undergo radical changes in emotion and memory.



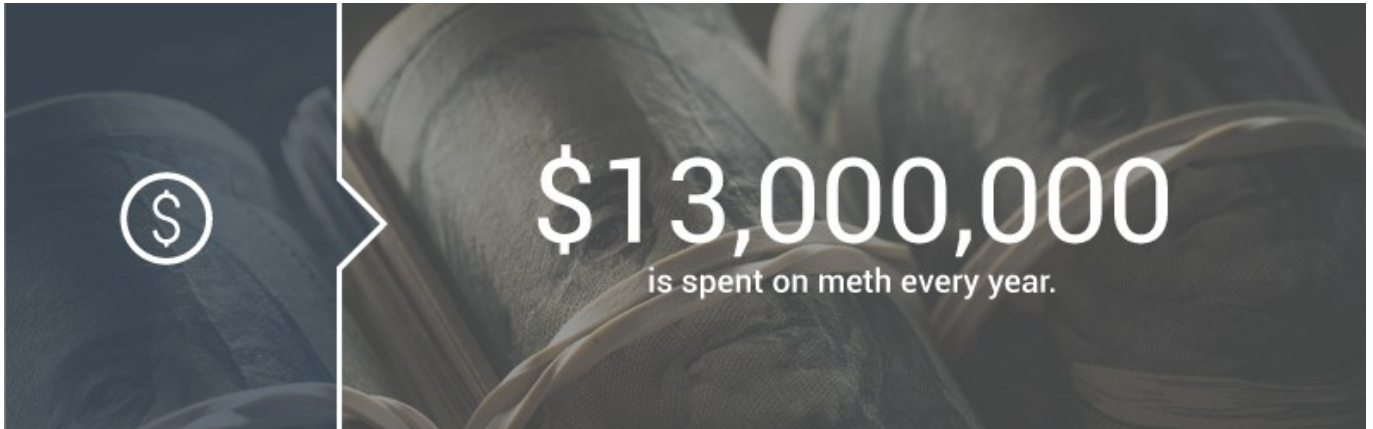
Meth is the most trafficked substance brought illegally into the U.S..

### **Harmful Long-Term Effects of Crystal Meth Addiction**

More long-term consequences of regular meth abuse include:

- anxiety
- confusion
- skin problems
- dental problems
- rapid weight loss
- sleeping problems
- violent behavior
- hallucinations
- paranoia

However, while some of these changes in the user's brain can be reversed with a year or more of abstinence, others might result in permanent physical or psychological damage.



### **The Effects of Meth on Disease Contraction**

One of the worst things about meth is that it's a drug that increases susceptibility to other major health issues. In addition, meth use can alter one's judgment, which may lead to out-of-character behaviors and risky decisions that could ultimately affect the user's health. One example would be engaging in unprotected sex while high, which increases the risks for sexually transmitted infections.

Additionally, some meth users have the habit of sharing needles for injection. This strengthens the risk of contracting dangerous infectious diseases like HIV, hepatitis, and other diseases through contact with blood or other bodily fluids. Even worse, the drug can quicken the progression of contracted disease in users. In fact, studies have shown that meth users with HIV suffer more damage to nerve cells and cognitive function than meth users who do not have HIV.

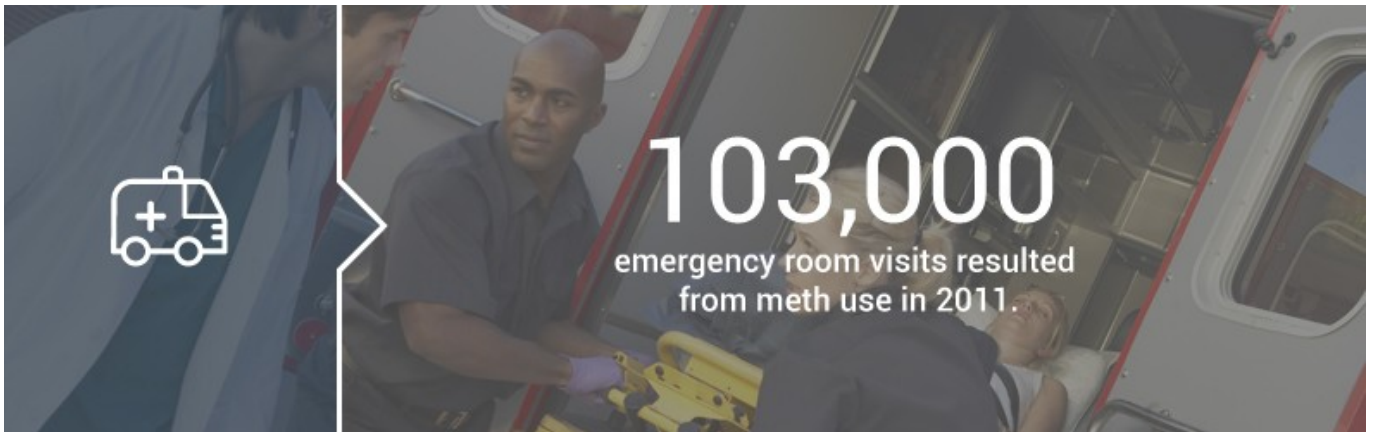


### **Methamphetamine Withdrawal and Overdose**

Undoubtedly, quitting meth cold turkey without professional help is extremely dangerous. When users abruptly stop taking it, the withdrawal symptoms they experience can include severe depression, intense cravings, psychosis, fatigue, and anxiety. Unfortunately, these

and other symptoms combined can compel users to start taking meth again, sometimes in dangerous amounts that can lead to overdose.

Meth overdose can lead to a number of medical complications like heart attack, stroke, or organ failure. In effect, these and other conditions can result in coma or death.



### **Overcoming Crystal Meth Addiction**

Finally, while meth is notoriously hard to quit, it's possible for any user to give up the drug through medical detox, therapy, aftercare and other programs widely available at recovery centers. Accordingly, these and much more are available at Wellness Retreat Recovery Center. Thus, if you or someone you know suffers from a meth addiction and is looking to get sober, we welcome you to review our [admissions process](#) or [Contact Us](#) for more information.