



Massachusetts Drug Supply Stream (MADDS) Street Narcotics Update: Methamphetamine

Methamphetamine is on the rise in Massachusetts

- From January 2021 to June 2022, methamphetamine was detected in 77 of 1357 (6%) drug samples tested by MADDS.*
- Amphetamines are stimulants that focus attention, eliminate fatigue, decrease appetite, elevate mood, and cause euphoria. Methamphetamine is an amphetamine that is faster-acting than common prescription amphetamines, like Adderall.

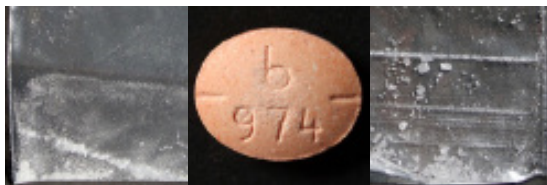
Because the methamphetamine supply is contaminated with fentanyl and other opioids, even people who do not combine methamphetamine with opioid use may be at risk for opioid overdose. It is therefore important for all people who use methamphetamine to have access to naloxone.

Methamphetamine is a health hazard.

- Effects of methamphetamine use include abnormal heart rhythm, increased heart rate and blood pressure, kidney injury, hallucinations, psychosis, paranoia, and aggression.
- Caffeine is a common active cut for methamphetamine due to its stimulant effect and similar appearance. In high doses, caffeine can cause abnormal heart rhythms, low potassium levels, and seizures, which may lead to cardiac arrest and death.
- Taking too much of a stimulant such as methamphetamine is called “overamping” and may lead to overheating, heart attack, seizure, or stroke.
- Combining fentanyl or other opioids with methamphetamine (called “goofballing”) increases the risk for overdose.
- Fentanyl has sometimes been found in/sold as methamphetamine, but methamphetamine has also often been found unexpectedly in fentanyl. Unexpected fentanyl may lead to overdose, unexpected methamphetamine may lead to health hazards like those above.

How to identify methamphetamine

- Methamphetamine often appears as a white crystalline solid, a clear crystal, or a white bitter-tasting powder or pill (see photos).



Examples of methamphetamine samples collected by MADDS

How to respond

- **Summon medical attention.** Monitor hydration and body temperature, and look for signs of a stroke, seizure, or heart attack.
- When a person appears to be experiencing a mental health crisis such as psychosis, try to **keep them calm** while you call for medical attention.
- When conducting community outreach, distribute water, safer use supplies, and naloxone, even for people who do not combine methamphetamine with opioids.
- In case of a suspected opioid overdose, **administer naloxone** (e.g., Narcan) and **call for help!**

People experiencing hallucinations, paranoia, or other symptoms of psychosis due to methamphetamine use may become aggressive if they feel threatened. Approaching these situations calmly decreases the likelihood that violence will ensue.

