Methamphetamine is a health risk

- 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.
- Effects of methamphetamine use include abnormal heart rhythm, increased heart rate and blood pressure, kidney injury, hallucinations, psychosis, paranoia, and aggression.

How to identify methamphetamine

- Methamphetamine often appears as a white crystalline solid, a clear crystal, or a white bitter-tasting powder or in a pill. Visually, methamphetamine may be mistaken for other powders.
- Methamphetamine may cause false positives with fentanyl test strips. When using test strips to detect fentanyl in drugs expected to be methamphetamine, dilute with 30 mL water, about a shot glass worth.

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.*
- Of the 77 samples where methamphetamine was detected, 62 were pills/powders/crystals/rocks and 15 were residues in cookers and smoking materials. Samples showed both unexpected fentanyl in methamphetamine but also unexpected methamphetamine in fentanyl samples (see chart below).
- Of 15 counterfeit Adderall pills, all (100%) contained methamphetamine with no evidence of pharmaceutical-grade amphetamine. No counterfeit Adderall pills were found to contain fentanyl.

Harm Reduction and Risk of Overdose

- Taking too much of a stimulant such as methamphetamine is called “overamping” and may lead to overheating, heart attacks, seizures, or strokes. In case of overamping, keep calm and call for help.
- While no overdoses were associated with samples only containing methamphetamine, combining fentanyl or other opioids with stimulants such as methamphetamine (goofballing) increases the risk for overdose.
- The drug supply is unpredictable. Drug checking and using when other people are around can help. When using with other people, take turns to avoid simultaneous overdose.
- In case of overdose, administer naloxone (e.g., Narcan) and call for help! Naloxone is available at harm reduction programs and retail pharmacies without a prescription. Check with your local harm reduction program for availability and for safer smoking supplies, fentanyl test strips, advice on safer use, and drug checking with MADDS.

* All samples were provided by harm reduction programs or donated by police departments for MADDS testing. MADDS is a state-funded collaboration between Brandeis University researchers, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, various town police departments, and local harm reduction agencies. Contact us at maddsbindeis@gmail.com.