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Meth Myths - Can Meth Addicts Really Recover?

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Methamphetamine is much different from regular amphetamine pills. Without going into a chemistry lesson, meth is simply a more refined or condensed form of amphetamine. It is much more powerful than what some people might think of as diet pills or speed. It produces both an intense feeling of energy and strong euphoric pleasure at the same time. Some of the intensity depends on how quickly it gets into the system. This drug in pill form, taken orally, is slow to produce this effect. Injecting it or smoking it is a completely different experience. By smoking meth, large amounts of the drug can be dumped into the bloodstream, which is carried to the brain in a matter of seconds.

What does this feel like to the user? In the real world, for most people, sex is perhaps the most pleasurable feeling one can have. Several recovering meth users have told me that it is like having one hundred orgasms all at once. I can only imagine.

History Developed in the late 1800s in Germany, the chemical make-up of methamphetamine has changed a few times over the years. Meth is an amphetamine drug that is prescribed for use in nasal decongestants and bronchial inhalers, treating narcolepsy, attention deficit disorder, and obesity. Prescribed under the name Desoxyn, this drug suppresses the appetite and increases energy levels, causing increased activity. For some people suffering from ADD, it has the opposite effect--slowing them down. Both legal and illegal use has been with us for many years. Amphetamines or speed was common back when I was using. Meth was more difficult to be found. During those years, cocaine was the drug

of choice. When I used meth in pill form, I could definitely tell that it was not a typical form of speed. The effect was also much longer lasting. I do know one thing for certain. If there had been a smokeable form of meth back then, I would not have hesitated for a second to use it. Smoking cigarettes, smoking pot, smoking anything was considered no big deal.

Chasing the High Before anyone runs out to try this, let me tell you more about it. With this drug, use turns to abuse, which turns to addiction very quickly. It's almost impossible to get that initial feeling of intense pleasure to happen more than a few times. We often hear the term chasing the high, meaning that once the user has this almost unbelievable experience, they want

to repeat it. This is like trying to catch up to something that is always out in front of you, but

never in reach. Chasing, running faster, and trying harder doesn't work--yet the user doesn't stop trying. Chasing that first euphoric experience can continue for a long time. In fact, some will die trying to catch it.

Consequences This particular drug also has some devastating effects--both on the body and mind. It is not uncommon for users to stay awake and active for days at a time. After being up for several days, users will start to hallucinate, seeing what is referred to as "shadow people"--a type of hallucination that seems to be unique to users of this drug. People high on meth will often become paranoid and obsessive, thinking the police are watching them. One user told me he became so obsessed with the color black that he painted the entire interior of his house that color. Another woman told me she thought her car radio was talking to her personally, and if a helicopter flew overhead she believed the people in it were watching her. Another man, who visited online chat rooms to arrange meetings for anonymous sex, said that the Internet is loaded with meth addicts looking for the same thing.

The physical consequences of meth use are more obvious: it eats away the enamel of the teeth and produces skin lesions. Lack of sleep and food for long periods of time will take its toll on the body and bring it to the point where it just can't function any longer. The drug will eventually stop working and the user may crash and sleep for days.

Does this sound like fun or what? I mean, why would you want all this to stop?

Recovery from Meth Addiction *Do people really recover from meth addiction? Can they recover?*

You may have heard the myth, People cannot recover from addiction to meth. Why has the myth evolved? It is probably because meth use has exploded over the past decade. Meth labs and meth-driven crimes receive a lot of press coverage, so there is a general assumption that addiction to methamphetamine is out of control and there is no hope of recovery. People

become addicted to meth more quickly than to various other drugs, and because of this, many are led to believe that nobody can get off this stuff. However, just because we have more and more people addicted to this drug does not mean that they can't recover. People recover from this drug very frequently. In fact, the recovery rates for meth addiction are about the same as for other drugs such as cocaine, alcohol, and heroin.

Is meth use a big problem? Yes! Do people do some crazy things when they are high on this drug? Yes. Is this impacting the crime rate? Yes. Do people become violent and unpredictable on this drug? Yes. ***But another yes is that people can and do recover from addiction to meth.*** It may require a longer period of treatment for recovery, and some of the

physical damage from the drug may take longer to heal, but nonetheless people frequently get off this drug.

Recovery rates from addiction are about the same, regardless of the drug of choice. Heroin, alcohol, tobacco, painkillers, and meth all have one thing in common: If the want to

is there, users can recover. *This may sound simplistic or trite, but it is true.* In fact, a former meth addict who is in long-term recovery once told me, "No one's case is special or unique. Those who want to quit badly enough can recover."

But what if a person doesn't want to? They may say they don't, because they can't imagine what life would be like without the drug, and they don't believe they could live without it. Sometimes they need to be coerced to seek help, and the want to comes much later, after a period of time in treatment. Treatment works for these people as well.

Don't let anyone tell you it doesn't.

(article excerpted from the book "Why Don't They Just QUIT?")

Joe Herzanek, a man who battled his own demons of addiction over twenty-five years ago, says, "I know people can change. If I can do it, anyone can!"

A recovering person himself, Joe is the president and founder of Changing Lives Foundation and author of the new book "Why Don't They Just Quit?" As an addiction counselor in Colorado he has spent thirteen years working in the criminal justice system.

His passion for helping men and women struggling with addiction, as well as their family members and friends, inspire him to offer hope and solutions.

Joe offers words of encouragement: "Addiction is not a hopeless situation," he writes. "Addicts and alcoholics aren't crazy, and they can quit."

Joe and his wife Judy have three children, Jami, Jake, and Jessica, and enjoy the beautiful Colorado outdoors with their two Cairn Terriers, Lewis and Clark.

<http://www.whydonttheyjustquit.com>

<http://www.changinglivesfoundation.org>

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