

# Stimulants

## Quick reference

## for Community Health Workers/Representatives (CHW/Rs)

### Overview & Definition<sup>1</sup>

Stimulants are substances that speed up the central nervous system (CNS) by flooding the brain with dopamine. Common types include: caffeine, methamphetamine, cocaine, and prescription stimulants (e.g., Adderall®, Ritalin®).

People get stimulants into their body by swallowing, placing under tongue or in cheek, smoking, snorting, injecting, inserting rectally/vaginally.

### Health Implications

**Intense dopamine surge** → reinforcement after use. May make previous pleasurable interactions and activities less so because they don't have the same type of neurobiological reward.

**Immediate/Short-term:** Feelings of euphoria and alertness. May experience insomnia and engage in risky behaviors.

**Long-term:** cognitive decline, oral health concerns, depression, psychosis, cardiovascular problems.

### State

### What you might notice:

#### Intoxication

Dilated pupils, rapid speech, restlessness, elevated heart rate/blood pressure, chest pain

#### Withdrawal

Extreme fatigue, depressive mood, increased appetite, vivid dreams

#### Overramping/overdosing

Severe agitation/paranoia, overheating or excessive sweating, hypertension (high blood pressure), panic or extreme anxiety, psychosis, tremors, irritability, seizures or stroke like symptoms.<sup>2</sup>  
**Call 911 right away.**

For more information visit our website <https://crh.arizona.edu/> or email us at [AzCRH-OD2A@arizona.edu](mailto:AzCRH-OD2A@arizona.edu)

Center for Rural Health



Comprehensive Center  
for Pain & Addiction

## Treatment & Recovery

### ► Evidence-based therapies:

- Contingency Management – incentives for negative drug screens<sup>4</sup>
- Motivational Interviewing – client-centered counseling to resolve ambivalence<sup>5</sup>

### ► Levels of care: outpatient/intensive outpatient, residential, therapeutic communities, peer led recovery support and housing.

### ► Referral pathway: CHW/Rs can dial **OARLine 1-888-688-4222** or **2-1-1** to locate stimulant-use treatment; follow up within 48 hours to confirm linkage.

### ► No FDA-approved medications currently available (Rawson, 2023).

## References

1. National Institute on Drug Abuse. *Methamphetamine Research Report*. National Institute on Drug Abuse website. Published December 2024. Accessed May 15, 2025. <https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/methamphetamine>
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4. Rawson RA, et al. Implementing an evidence-based prize contingency management program. *J Subst Abuse Treat*. 2023;151:209079. doi:10.1016/j.josat.2023.209079.
5. Schwenker R, Dietrich CE, Hirpa S, et al. Motivational interviewing for substance use reduction. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev*. 2023;12(12):CD008063. Published 2023 Dec 12. doi:10.1002/14651858.CD008063.pub3

We respectfully acknowledge the University of Arizona is on the land and territories of Indigenous peoples. Today, Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribes, with Tucson being home to the O’odham and the Yaqui. The University strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships, and community service.

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