

MYTHS VS FACTS

NIH
HEAL
INITIATIVE

Stimulants

Stimulants are a group of drugs that include cocaine, methamphetamine, ecstasy, and prescription drugs like dextroamphetamine and methylphenidate. These drugs are increasingly involved in overdose related deaths.

HEALing Communities Study
Kentucky

Methamphetamine, often called "meth", was detected in more than 50% of overdose deaths in Kentucky in 2020.

MYTH

Mixing meth or cocaine with an opioid can get rid of the negative or harmful effects of each drug

FACT

Mixing substances is dangerous. In fact, most overdose deaths involve multiple substances. Meth and cocaine often contain fentanyl, which increases the risk for overdose death. Fentanyl has been identified in many stimulants, such as cocaine, meth, and in pill forms of counterfeit ADHD medication.

MYTH

Meth overdose or "overamping" is not dangerous

FACT

Negative effects can happen regardless of how much you use. Overdoses from stimulants can cause death or disability from stroke, heart attack, or cause your body to overheat. Overdoses that involve fentanyl or other opioids can cause you to stop breathing. These are **emergencies**.

MYTH

Meth causes holes in the brain

FACT

Stimulants can affect how your brain functions. Using stimulants can lead to anxiety, depression, decreased attention, impaired memory, decreased motor skills, panic attacks and seizures. Stimulants can also cause dangerously high heart rate and blood pressure, which can stress the heart and brain.

MYTH

There is no treatment for stimulant use disorder

FACT

People engaged in treatment for stimulant use disorder have shown a reduced number of days using stimulants, amounts of stimulants used, and cravings for stimulants, as well as a reduction in behaviors that increase the risk of HIV. Currently there are no FDA approved medications for treatment of stimulant misuse.

Resources

<https://harmreduction.org/issues/overdose-prevention/overview/stimulant-overamping-basics/>
<https://www.drugabuse.gov/drug-topics/methamphetamine>
<https://odcp.ky.gov/stop-overdoses/Pages/default.aspx>
<https://www.yalemedicine.org/conditions/stimulant-abuse>