

## Dependency

Dependency to ATS can develop very quickly according to:

- Drug purity
- Severity of person's use
- Method the drug is used (IV, snorted, swallowed)
- Form of the drug (ice, base, powder)

## ATS Overdose

When someone overdoses it is a serious medical emergency which, if left untreated, can lead to acute toxicity, stroke, heart attack, brain haemorrhage, coma and even death.



In the case of overdose, call 000 or 112 (mobile) and **stay with the person** until the ambulance arrives.

**All drug use involves an element of risk.  
Long term affects may last for years.  
If you use drugs do not use alone.**

**DIRECTIONS ACT offers a wide range of programs for people who use drugs and their families, and the wider community:**

- Arcadia House Detox & Withdrawal Centre
- Family, Youth & Individual Counselling
- ACT Needle & Syringe Program
- Outreach and Health Promotion
- Community Education Program
- COMPASS Support Group
- Treatment Support Service
- Althea Wellness Centre
- Party Safe Program
- Inside Out Program
- SMART Recovery



## DIRECTIONS ACT

**1 BRADLEY ST WODEN**

**PH: (02) 6122 8000**

[www.directionsact.com](http://www.directionsact.com)

### Primary NSPs

Phillip Health Centre Cnr Keltie and Corinna Sts

City Health Centre Moore St, Canberra City

# DIRECTIONS ACT

# AMPHETAMINE TYPE STIMULANTS

## FACT SHEET



**WHAT YOU SHOULD  
KNOW ABOUT  
AMPHETAMINE  
TYPE STIMULANTS**

Version October 2010

---

## What are Amphetamine Type Stimulants

Amphetamine Type Stimulants (ATS) are a group of drugs called psychostimulants which include ecstasy, cocaine and methamphetamines. Street names for ATS include speed, goey, wiz, gas, meth, ice, crystal meth, shabu and glass.

ATS are drugs which trigger an excessive release of the pleasure chemicals (dopamine, serotonin and noradrenalin) which cause the excessive speeding up of messages sent from the brain to the body.

ATS use has become extremely common at night clubs, dances, festivals and house parties. While ATS use is common among young people, these drugs are used by people of all ages from a wide spectrum in society

## ATS and Poly Drug Use

People who use ATS mostly range from 16 to 28 years and tend to use a variety of substances together, which commonly include methamphetamine, ecstasy, alcohol, cannabis and psychedelics such as LSD (acid) and magic mushrooms. Many people who use ATS have no problem with dependence and predominantly use the milder forms such as base or powder, which they either snort or swallow.

ATS users tend to place themselves at far greater risk through poly drug use. Combining alcohol and ATS can increase blood pressure and put more strain on the heart.

ATS usually disguise the effects of alcohol and may place the person at greater risk of acute alcohol poisoning. Used together cannabis and ATS can dangerously raise the heart beat and can raise the blood pressure so high as to cause a stroke.

**Remember:** Each time you take a cocktail of substances, you need to keep in mind the risks you take by mixing drugs. Overdose becomes a real concern with people who participate in poly drug use. Refer to the last page.

## Effects of ATS Use

### Physical:

- Teeth grinding
- Hyperthermia (increased temperature)
- Tremors
- Increased respirations (breaths)
- Irregular heart beat
- Increased metabolism
- Cardiovascular collapse
- Increased sex drive

### Short term:

- Sharpened senses and alertness
- Reduced need for sleep
- Increased physical activity
- Reduced appetite
- Increased self confidence (recklessness)
- Talkativeness
- Restlessness and irritability
- Insomnia
- Impaired judgement
- Reduced inhibitions

### Long term:

- Violent behaviour
- Mood swings
- Hallucinations (hearing or seeing things that aren't real)
- Delusions and paranoia
- Homicidal or suicidal thoughts
- Insomnia
- Poor health and nutrition
- Poor dental health
- Decreased sex drive (libido)
- Impotence
- Vein collapse or infection (if injecting)
- Brain damage

## Mental Health Effects

The use of ATS has been strongly linked with a wide range of mental health issues.

- Anxiety
- Paranoia
- Mania
- Psychosis
- Aggression
- Depression
- Suspiciousness
- Panic attacks
- Suicidal thoughts
- Delusions and hallucinations
- Decreased concentration and memory loss

**ATS psychosis** may be triggered by severe underlying mental health issues, sleep deprivation or lack of nourishment. These symptoms are much worse for people who have existing, or are predisposed to, schizophrenia or other psychotic disorders. This may lead to hospitalisation.

**Mental health symptoms** can be severe. Some mental health issues can take place during intoxication and/or throughout the withdrawal process. Importantly stopping ATS use or using less frequently leads to improvement of mental health symptoms.

However ATS users who have recovered from ATS induced psychosis and depression remain at risk. It can take as little as one dose of ATS to trigger a relapse.

---

**DIRECTIONS ACT**