

DRUGS FACT SHEET

Cocaine

WHAT IS IT?

- Cocaine is a powerfully addictive stimulant that directly affects the brain and central nervous system.
- Cocaine has a high potential for abuse.
- Cocaine's effects appear almost immediately after a single dose and last from a few minutes to several hours.

HOW DOES IT AFFECT THE BRAIN AND BODY?

- Physical effects associated with cocaine use include: constricted blood vessels, dilated pupils, and increased temperature, heart rate and blood pressure.
- Behavioral effects include: increased energy, decreased appetite, perceived mental alertness.
- Long term use of cocaine can cause irritability, mood disturbances, restlessness, paranoia, auditory hallucinations, physical dependence and addiction.
- Medical conditions can also occur, including: heart attack, chest pain, respiratory failure, stroke, seizure, headache, abdominal pain and nausea.



OTHER IMPORTANT FACTS!

- Combining cocaine with alcohol is extremely dangerous. The human liver combines these two drugs and creates a third chemical which intensifies the effects of cocaine and the risk of sudden death.
- Some people have died after using cocaine for the first time.
- Long term cocaine use damages the brain's dopamine receptors and can result in permanent injuries that make it impossible to feel pleasure.
- As cocaine abuse continues, tolerance often develops. This means that higher doses and more frequent use of cocaine are required for the brain to register the same level of pleasure experienced during the initial drug use.



REFERENCES:

- <http://www.drugabuse.gov/infofacts/cocaine.html>
- http://teens.drugabuse.gov/mom/mom_stim3.asp
- <http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/research/job185drugs/cocain.htm>