

COCAINE

COMMON & BRAND NAMES

Coke; Crack; Blow; Snow; Nose Candy, Dust, White Lady, Toot, Llello

Freebase Cocaine: Crack, Rock

EFFECTS CLASSIFICATION

Euphoric Stimulant

CHEMICAL NAME

benzoyl methyl ecgonine

DESCRIPTION

Cocaine is a common stimulant derived from the Erythroxylon coca plant. It is best known for its massive popularity in powdered and freebase (crack) forms. (Crack is not widely used or seen in Australia)

EFFECTS

Onset

Onset varies depending on method of ingestion. Snorting cocaine will produce effects within a minute. Smoking freebase cocaine produces effects almost immediately. Injected cocaine also produces effects within a few seconds.

DESCRIPTION

Cocaine is a naturally derived CNS (central nervous system) stimulant extracted and refined from the Coca plant grown primarily in the Andean region of South America. Cocaine is typically a white-ish powder with a bitter, numbing taste. It is most often insufflated (snorted), though it can also be injected and used orally.

While powder cocaine can be smoked to some effect (despite common belief otherwise), it is a very inefficient method of ingestion. Because of the high temperatures present when smoking, powder cocaine tends to burn rather than vaporizing. For this reason, freebase cocaine, also known as crack in its street form, is created from powder cocaine for smoking. Freebase cocaine vaporizes at smoking temperatures providing more effect with less material, as well as faster onset and a more intense high than powder cocaine.

LAW

Cocaine is illegal to possess and sell in Australia and in most other countries.

CHEMISTRY

The chemical name for cocaine is benzoyl methyl ecgonine (C₁₇H₂₁NO₄). It is a bitter, white, odourless, crystalline drug.

HISTORY

Coca leaf chewing has been practiced for thousands of years. Cocaine was first isolated from the Erythroxylon coca plant around 1850. Medicinal use of Cocaine increased through the late 19th century and recreational use started to become a known problem in the early 20th century.

COCAINE

Duration

The effects of snorted cocaine are quite short with the primary high lasting only 20-40 minutes. This is one of the reasons leading to problems with dependence. As the effects wear off, more is often snorted. This pattern of repeated use can quickly move in the direction of dependence. A hit of smoked Crack (freebase cocaine) will typically produce effects lasting 5-15 minutes.

The Experience

As with many substances, the effects of cocaine depend greatly on the person and the dose. Possible effects include feelings of well-being, decreased appetite, stimulation, sexual arousal, and increased focus. Negative effects can include increased body temperature and heart rate, agitation and anxiety, paranoia, dizziness, nausea/vomiting, violent behaviour, kidney failure, seizure, stroke, and heart attack.

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PROBLEMS

Street cocaine is quite often impure. The more direct the route of administration, the more dangerous this can be. Injecting impure cocaine can be deadly. Repeated snorting can cause severe damage to the nose. Smoking of freebase cocaine can cause breathing difficulties.

DEPENDENCE POTENTIAL

One of the most problematic aspects of cocaine is its dependence qualities. While cocaine is not believed to be physically dependent, it is, without a doubt, psychologically so. Those who use cocaine heavily or regularly frequently can encounter great difficulty ceasing use.

Many people find themselves drawn to overusing both crack and powder cocaine. Initial tolerance develops rapidly, especially with heavy use, though tolerance appears to level off relatively quickly (users do not generally require more and more material over time, once they have reached heavy use).

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Research shows that cocaine use during pregnancy may increase chances of miscarriage, premature labour, and stillbirth.
- Cocaine is likely to be passed to a child during breastfeeding, resulting in irritability and lack of appetite in the baby.

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