



What is cocaine/crack?

Cocaine is a fine, white or off-white powder that acts as a powerful stimulant. Crack is cocaine that has been further processed with ammonia or sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) so that it can be smoked. Crack looks like small flakes or rocks.

How is it taken?

You can smoke it, snort it, shoot it up, but the chances are you'll never get the same rush as on your first high. No matter how you use the drug, you are likely to become psychologically addicted and end up taking more and more cocaine/crack to get the same feeling you had on that first high.

How long is the high?

Smoking crack, or even injecting cocaine, provides a fast track to your brain for a quick, intense high - within a few seconds - but the effect only lasts 5 to 10 minutes.

Snorting cocaine takes effect more slowly, and the high is not much longer - 15 to 30 minutes.

What does it do?

Cocaine gives you a false sense of euphoria and the illusion of being 'alive' and in charge. While high, you might be violent or erratic, irritable or subject to mood swings or paranoid and out of touch with reality. And you get a really short high that can trigger sudden death. Regular cocaine use can lead to heart attacks, respiratory failure, strokes, seizures and coma.

Mixing alcohol with cocaine/crack is a dangerous cocktail - in fact, it is the most common two-drug mixture when sudden death occurs. On top of that, street cocaine is often diluted or 'cut' with other dangerous substances.



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Are there other risks?

If sudden death doesn't worry you enough, taking cocaine/crack clouds your judgement and boosts the chance you will make bad choices -- like sharing infected needles or having unprotected sex -- putting you at high risk to contract HIV/AIDS.



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