

COCAINE ABUSE.

© COPYRIGHT 2001 A Thomson Healthcare Company

COCAINE ABUSE

GENERAL INFORMATION:

What is it?

*Cocaine is a drug that is often abused. It makes you feel very "high" for a short time. It is against the law to use this drug unless it is given to you by a caregiver. Taking cocaine may make you dependent upon it. This means you feel like you have to have the drug. It is very easy to become addicted to cocaine. You may want to have it all the time. The longer you take it the more you need to get the same feeling.

*With your caregiver's help, you can stop taking the drug. If you do not stop, you can have many problems.

*A pregnant woman is at a higher risk of having a miscarriage if she uses cocaine.

*Women who are pregnant and use cocaine may have a baby who is addicted to the drug.

*Shooting cocaine in your vein puts you at a higher risk of getting AIDS.

*You may start to spend most of your time and money trying to get more cocaine.

*You can have hallucinations (huh-lew-sin-a-shuns) which is hearing or seeing things that are not there.

*You could die from a heart attack or an overdose.

*Some people are more sensitive to cocaine than others. A small amount of the drug can kill someone who is sensitive to it.

Causes: There are many reasons why people abuse cocaine. You may think that cocaine will make the problems in your life better. Some people feel that using cocaine is "cool" and that using it will help others like them more.

Signs and Symptoms: You may have any of the following signs, symptoms, or health problems if you abuse cocaine.

*Chest pain.

*Convulsions (seizures) if you use large amounts.

*Fast heartbeat.

*Feeling "high," excited, or have a lot of energy.

*Feeling that you are no longer happy with your life.

*Fighting with friends or losing your friends.

*Heart problems.

*High blood pressure.

*Loss of sex drive.

*Missing work.

*Nervousness.

*Nose bleeds.

*Overdosing.

*Paranoia (pair-uh-noy-yuh). This is when you think that everyone is "out to get you."

*Sleeping problems.

*Stroke.

*Trouble thinking or paying attention.

*Unable to decrease the amount of cocaine that you use or to completely stop using it.

*Use of cocaine throughout the day.

Care:

*The success of your treatment depends on how much you want to stop using cocaine. One of the most important parts of your treatment to stop using cocaine is for you to be in a drug-free place. When you stop using cocaine, caregivers may want you to go into the hospital to be closely watched. Tell caregivers exactly how much cocaine you have been taking. Let them know if you have been taking any other drugs or if you are pregnant.

*You may be given medicines to help lessen withdrawal symptoms. Following are signs or symptoms of cocaine withdrawal.

*A feeling of being "real down" or depressed.

*Irritable.

*Loss of energy.

COCAINE ABUSE.

*No interest in eating.

*Sleeping problems.

*Sore muscles.

*Sweaty or shaky.

*Very strong desire to have cocaine.

*It is called "crashing" when you stop taking cocaine and the amount of it in your blood drops. You may have the following signs and symptoms when you "crash."

*Decreased amount of activity.

*Depression.

*Desire to kill yourself.

*Fatigue.

*Increased desire for cocaine.

*Sleepiness.

Coping: You may feel scared, confused, and anxious because of your cocaine addiction. You may blame yourself and think you have done something wrong. These feelings are common. Talk about them with your caregiver or with someone close to you. Ask your caregiver about support groups for people with substance abuse addictions. Such a group can give you support and information. You may want to call the following organization for information about cocaine addiction: National Cocaine Hotline at 1 (800) COCAINE.

CARE AGREEMENT:

You have the right to help plan your care. To help with this plan, you must learn about cocaine abuse. You can then discuss the treatment options with caregivers. Work with them to decide which medicine and care will be used to treat you. You always have the right to refuse treatment.