



NIDA NOTES

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Targeting Methamphetamine Abuse



While the popularity of methamphetamine, a powerful and highly addictive stimulant, has waxed and waned over the years, NIDA-supported scientific research has continued to serve as the basis for the Nation's response to methamphetamine abuse and addiction.

NIDA's [Community Epidemiology Work Group](#) has tracked the patterns of methamphetamine manufacture and abuse throughout the U.S. Once seen primarily on the West Coast, methamphetamine has recently spread to urban and rural areas in the Midwest and certain areas in the Northeast.

Basic research supported by NIDA has examined how methamphetamine and similar drugs, such as ecstasy (MDMA), work in the brain and precisely how they damage brain cells. Researchers have also looked at the similarities and differences between methamphetamine and cocaine, as well as the relationship between methamphetamine abuse and the transmission of HIV/AIDS.

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Other NIDA-supported research has sought to identify effective methods to treat methamphetamine addiction. At present, there is no medication to treat methamphetamine overdose or addiction. However, cognitive-behavioral interventions that help modify a patient's thinking and teach skills to cope with stressful situations have been effective in many cases.

Drug abuse prevention programs have not always addressed issues affecting drug use by high school and college students. However, NIDA-supported researchers have evaluated drug abuse prevention programs, which typically target elementary and intermediate school students, to determine their potential for reducing methamphetamine abuse in older adolescents who may have tried methamphetamine but are not yet addicted.

Most recently, NIDA has worked in partnership with its constituent professional organizations across the country to address the issue of methamphetamine abuse through its [Town Meetings](#) and the widespread distribution of a [Community Drug Alert Bulletin on Methamphetamine](#). A methamphetamine component for NIDA's [Mind Over Matter](#) series for middle school students is currently under development.

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