

## What are stimulants?

Stimulants (“uppers”) refer to several groups of drugs that tend to increase alertness and physical activity. Some people use stimulants to counteract the drowsiness or “down” feeling caused by sleeping pills or alcohol. This up/down cycle is extremely hard on the body and is dangerous.

## What are amphetamines?

Amphetamines include three closely related drugs - amphetamine, dextroamphetamine, and methamphetamine. Their street names include: “speed,” “white crosses,” “uppers,” “dexies,” “bennies,” and “crystal.” In pure form, they are yellowish crystals that are manufactured in tablet or capsule form. Abusers also sniff the crystals or make a solution and inject it.

## What are the physical effects of amphetamines?

An amphetamine increases heart and breathing rates, elevates blood pressure, dilates pupils, and decreases appetite. In addition, the user can experience a dry mouth, sweating, headache, blurred vision, dizziness, sleeplessness, and anxiety. An amphetamine injection creates a sudden increase in blood pressure that can cause death from stroke, a very high fever, or heart failure.

## How do amphetamine users feel?

Users report feeling restless, anxious, and moody. Higher doses intensify the effects causing the user to become excited, and talkative, and to have a false sense of self-confidence and power. People who use large amounts of amphetamines over a long period of time also can develop an amphetamine psychosis: seeing, hearing, and feeling things that do not exist (hallucinations), having irrational thoughts or beliefs (delusions), and feeling as though people are out to get them (paranoia.) People in this extremely suspicious state frequently exhibit bizarre, sometimes

violent, behavior. These symptoms usually disappear when people stop using the drug.

## What about long-term effects?

Long-term heavy use of amphetamines can lead to malnutrition, skin disorder, ulcers, and various diseases that come from vitamin deficiencies. Lack of sleep, weight loss, and depression also result from regular use. Frequent use of large amounts of amphetamines can produce brain damage that results in speech and thought disturbances. In addition, users who inject amphetamines intravenously can get serious and life-threatening infections from equipment that is contaminated. Injecting them can cause lung or heart disease and other diseases of the blood vessels, which can be fatal. Kidney damage, stroke, or other tissue damage also may occur.

## Can people become dependent on amphetamines?

YES. Some people report a psychological dependence, a feeling that the drug is essential to their normal functioning. These users continue to use amphetamines to avoid the “down” mood when the drug’s effects wear off. In addition, people who use amphetamines regularly may develop tolerance, the need to take larger doses to get the same initial effect.

When people stop using amphetamines abruptly, they may experience fatigue, long periods of sleep, irritability, hunger, and depression. The length and severity of the depression seem to be related to how much and how often the amphetamines are used.

## What are barbiturates?

Barbiturates are often called “barbs” and “downers.” Barbiturates that are commonly abused include amobarbital (Amytal), pentobarbital (Nembutal), and secobarbital (Seconal). These drugs are sold in capsules and tablets or sometimes in liquid form or suppositories.

## What are the effects of barbiturates when they are abused?

The effects of barbiturates are, in many ways, similar to the effects of alcohol. Small amounts produce calmness and relaxed muscles. Larger doses can cause slurred speech, staggering gait, poor judgment, and slow, uncertain reflexes. These effects make it dangerous to drive a car or operate machinery. Large doses can cause unconsciousness and death.

## How dangerous are barbiturates?

Barbiturate overdose is a factor in nearly one-third of all reported drug-related deaths. Accidental deaths sometimes occur when a user takes one dose, becomes confused and unintentionally takes additional or larger doses. With barbiturates there is less difference between the amount that produces sleep and the amount that kills. Furthermore, barbiturate withdrawal can be more serious than heroin withdrawal.

## What other sedative-hypnotics are abused?

Other sedative-hypnotics can be abused, including the benzodiazepines. Diazepam (Valium), chlordiazepoxide (Librium), and chlorazepate (Tranxene) are examples of benzodiazepines. These drugs are also sold on the streets as downers. As with the barbiturates,

tolerance and dependence can develop if benzodiazepines are taken regularly in high doses over prolonged periods of time.

Other sedative-hypnotics which are abused include gluthethimide (Doriden), ethchlorvynol (Placidyl), and methaqualone (Sopor, Quaalude).

### What is methaqualone?

Methaqualone (“sopors” or “ludes”) was originally prescribed to reduce anxiety during the day and as a sleeping aid. It is one of the most commonly abused drugs and can cause both physical and psychological dependence. The dangers from abusing methaqualone can include injury or death from car accidents caused by faulty judgment and drowsiness, and convulsions. An overdose can cause a coma that could lead to death.

### What is Rohypnol?

Rohypnol, generically Flunitrazepam, is a benzodiazepine prescribed as a sleeping pill. It is marketed in Mexico, South America, Europe and Asia by Hoffman-Laroche. An approved prescription medication in much of the world, it is not approved for sale in the United States. It is the most widely prescribed sedative in Europe.

Known on the street as rophies, roofies, ruffies, R2, roofenol, roche, and roachies. Rohypnol abuse in the United States was first reported in South Florida in 1993. The street price for a single tablet may vary from as low as 50 cents a day up to \$8.00 per tablet. It is called the “date rape drug” and is reported as being one of the “in” drugs on high school and college campuses. Roofies are often mixed with alcohol, marijuana or cocaine to produce a rapid and dramatic high. Even when used alone, users can appear extremely intoxicated, with slurred speech, no coordination, swaying and bloodshot eyes...with no odor of alcohol. The drug has been added to punch and other drinks at fraternity parties and college social gatherings, reportedly in hopes of lowering sexual inhibitions among female party participants.

### Effects of Rohypnol

Taken alone, flunitrazepam is unlikely to cause death even if an overdose is taken. However, in combination with alcohol, the safety margin is reduced and it is more likely to be lethal due to enhanced central nervous system depression. Rohypnol intoxication is generally associated with impaired judgment and impaired motor skills. Respiratory depression, aspiration and death can occur when mixed with other drugs. Chemically a “downer”, the drug has a paradoxical effect: users can become aggressive and do things like slam dancing which can be physically damaging because the participants do not know when they are hurt. Repeated use can lead to physical and psychological dependence. Amnesia may occur which prevents users from remembering how or why they took the drug. Withdrawal symptoms range from headache, muscle pain, and confusion to hallucinations and convulsions. Seizures may occur a week or more after cessation of use. Thus, medically supervised detoxification using diminishing doses of other benzodiazepines is essential.

## WHERE TO CALL



For more information or to schedule a presentation on drug abuse, contact:

**Orange County Sheriff's Office  
Crime Prevention Unit  
407-254-7106**

**Emergency 9-1-1**

**Non-Emergency  
407-836-HELP (4357)**



**ORANGE COUNTY  
SHERIFF**

*Sheriff Jerry L. Demings*



# UPPERS & DOWNERS