



Clinical Guidance: Stimulant Use

July 2024

Table 1: Characteristics of Commonly Used Stimulants	
Characteristics	Patient-Reported Reasons for Use and Slang [a]
<i>Cathinone, Synthetic [b]</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source and forms: Synthetic substance chemically similar to natural cathinone (khat plant); available as a white or brown crystal-like powder; less expensive substitute for cocaine and amphetamines • Administration: Intravenous, oral, intranasal insufflation, smoking • Onset of action: 30 to 60 minutes (oral) • Half-life: 3 to 6 hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for use: Produces euphoria and alertness; designed to imitate the effects of other stimulants such as cocaine, MDMA, and methamphetamines (see below) • Street names: Bath salts, Molly
<i>Cocaine</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source and forms: Hydrochloride salt derived from the coca plant; available as a powder. Freebase cocaine (crack) is a form of cocaine boiled with another substance, usually baking soda; available as a powder or rock. • Cocaine administration: Intravenous, intranasal insufflation, vaginal or rectal as a solution • Freebase cocaine (crack) administration: Can be smoked as a powder or rock; injectable if dissolved in acid solutions such as vinegar (acetic acid) or citric acid • Onset of action: Immediate • Half-life: 40 to 90 minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for use: Sexual enhancement, attenuate sedation from other substances (heroin, fentanyl, alcohol), mood enhancement, work enhancement, withdrawal avoidance, euphoria • Street names: Blow, bump, C, candy, coke, girl, Perico, Piedra, Scotty, rock
<i>MDMA</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source and forms: Synthetic; available as tablets, capsules, crystals, powder • Administration: Oral, intranasal insufflation, rectal (“boofing”) • Onset of action: 20 to 60 minutes • Half-life: 8 to 9 hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for use: Sexual enhancement, improving depression (including in low doses), interpersonal relationship enhancement (empathogenic effects), co-use or collective use • Street names: Ecstasy, Molly, XTC, E, X, Miley Cyrus • Slang for use: Raving, rolling, ate up (for long-term use)
<i>Methamphetamine</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source and forms: Synthetic; available as a white or clear odorless substance (powder, crystals, or pressed pills) that dissolves easily in water or alcohol • Administration: Intravenous, intranasal insufflation, smoked, oral ingestion, vaginal or rectal as a solution • Onset of action: Immediate • Half-life: 10 hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for use: Sexual enhancement, increased work duration and stamina, wakefulness, weight loss, improving depression, withdrawal avoidance, enhancement of other drug effects, improved function and self-image, sensory enhancement • Street names: Meth, crank, crystal, ice, Tina, speed, water • Slang for use: Tweaking, amping, spun, booty bumping (rectal administration)

Table 1: Characteristics of Commonly Used Stimulants	
Characteristics	Patient-Reported Reasons for Use and Slang [a]
<i>Prescribed: Amphetamines, Amphetamine Derivatives, Methylphenidate, and Other Stimulants [c]</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source and forms: Synthetic medications that may be prescribed for treatment of ADHD or narcolepsy [d]. Includes: Dextroamphetamine-amphetamine (e.g., Adderall, generics), dextroamphetamine sulfate (e.g., Dexedrine, generics), lisdexamfetamine (e.g., Vyvanse), methylphenidate hydrochloride (e.g., Ritalin, Concerta, generics) [e] • Administration: Oral, intravenous, intranasal insufflation • Onset of action: 20 to 60 minutes • Half-life: 6 to 13 hours (depending on formulation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for use: Performance enhancement, weight loss, improving depression, reductions in use of other amphetamines • Street names: Addies, bennies, dexies, crank, pep pills, ice, speed, uppers, Superman, vitamin R • Slang for use: Speeding, tweaking, spun, amping
<p>Abbreviations: ADHD, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder; MDMA, 3,4-methylenedioxy-methamphetamine.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Common names and slang for stimulants vary widely and evolve constantly. Cathinones are not routinely included in toxicology testing. Often purchased online; purchasers may not get pharmaceutically produced products. Concerta is indicated for ADHD treatment, not narcolepsy. Lisdexamfetamine (Vyvanse) is also indicated for the treatment of moderate to severe binge eating disorders in adults. Methylphenidate (e.g., Ritalin, Concerta, generics) is not an amphetamine. It is metabolized to ritalinic acid and will not be identified by laboratory testing for amphetamines. 	