Cocaine

Quick Facts

• Powdered cocaine is a stimulant that is extracted from the leaves of the coca plant, which is native to South America.
• Today, powdered cocaine is abused for the intense euphoric effects it produces.
• Crack cocaine is a highly addictive and powerful stimulant that is derived from powdered cocaine using a simple conversion process.
• It is abused because it produces an immediate high and because it is easy and inexpensive to produce, rendering it readily available and affordable.

Effects

• Cocaine in all its forms stimulates the central nervous system.
• It causes the heart to beat more rapidly and blood vessels to constrict. This results in the demand for a greater supply of blood.
• The narrowed blood vessels are unable to deliver the volume of blood demanded, which significantly increases the risk of cardiovascular incidents or strokes.
• Initially, use of these drugs reduces appetite and makes the user feel more alert, energetic, and self-confident—even more powerful.
• With high doses, users can become delusional, paranoid, and even suffer acute toxic psychosis.
• Blood pressure increases, which can cause strokes or heart attacks.
• In some cases these effects have proven fatal. As the drug's effects wear off, a depression, often called a “crash”, can set in and leave the user feeling fatigued, jumpy, fearful, and anxious.

Risks

• Users become restless, irritable, and anxious
• Constricted blood vessels
• Increased body temp and heart rate
• Higher blood pressure
• Heart attack
• Respiratory failure
• Strokes, seizures, and sudden death (if mixed with alcohol)
• Build a tolerance leading to increase usage and frequency
• Aggressive and paranoid behavior