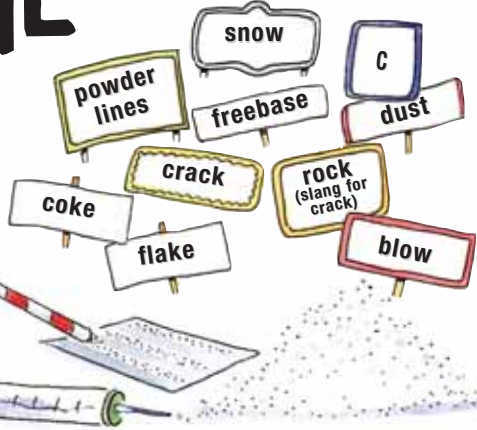


about

# COCAINE

## Street names



## What is cocaine?

Cocaine is a very addictive stimulant drug. Stimulants make people feel more alert and energetic. Cocaine can also make people feel "high." Crack is cocaine in a form that can be smoked.

Cocaine comes from the leaves of the coca bush, which grows in the Andes Mountains in South America. Today, most of the world's coca is grown and made into cocaine in South America.

## What does cocaine look like? How is it used?

Cocaine can be:

- a powder (for snorting)
- a liquid (for injecting)
- crystals or chunks (for smoking).

White cocaine powder is sometimes "cut" (mixed) with things that look like it, or with other drugs. What may be added:

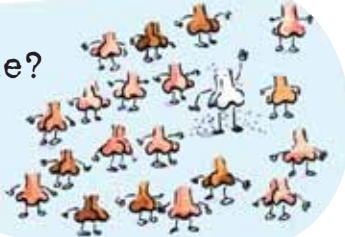
- sugars
- local anesthetics (drugs that numb part of the body)
- caffeine
- other unknown substances.

## DID YOU KNOW?

For at least 4,500 years, people in Peru and Bolivia have chewed coca leaves to make them feel less hungry and tired, when working hard without much food at high altitudes.

## Who uses cocaine?

- In 2005, about one Ontario student in 20 (4.4%) in grades 7 to 12 said he or she had used cocaine at least once in the past year. This is almost 43,000 students.
- Cocaine use is about the same in male students (4.5%) and females (4.3%).
- About one Ontario student in 50 (2%) said he or she had used crack at least once in the past year. This is about 19,300 students.
- Cocaine and crack use among students decreased during the 1980s, but since 1993 it has been rising again.



- Cocaine use varies by grade. Use is the lowest among grades 7 and 8 students (about 2%) and highest among those in grades 11 and 12 (about 7%).
- In 2003, about one in 14 Ontario adults (7%) said they had used cocaine at least once.
- Two per cent of Ontario adults said they had used cocaine in the past year.

## FAST FACTS

Pure cocaine was first isolated from the leaves of the coca bush in 1860.

## DID YOU KNOW?



In the 1880s, psychiatrist Sigmund Freud wrote scientific papers that praised cocaine as a treatment for many ailments, including depression, and alcohol and opioid addiction. After this, cocaine became widely and legally available in patent medicines and soft drinks.



## true or false

1. Kids can't die from snorting cocaine.
2. More people die using ecstasy than from using cocaine.
3. When someone wants to smuggle cocaine, they sometimes swallow a balloon filled with cocaine to hide it.
4. It's easy to know what a dealer looks like.

1. FALSE: Cocaine can kill, even when it's snorted. Even people who have used cocaine only once have died from it.
2. FALSE: More people die from using cocaine.
3. TRUE: This is called bodypacking. If the balloon bursts, the person can die of an overdose. If caught, the person will be arrested.
4. FALSE: Dealers don't always look like bad guys in the movies or on TV. They can look just like people you see on the street or at school.

Answers

## Is cocaine addictive?

Yes, cocaine is a very addictive drug.

Not everyone who uses cocaine becomes addicted. But if you do, it can be one of the hardest drugs to quit. It is also hard to stay off cocaine if you do quit, because the memory of the "high" feeling is so powerful.

People who become addicted to cocaine feel a strong need for the drug, even when they know it causes them problems. Getting and taking cocaine can become the most important thing in their lives.

Crack is the most addictive form of cocaine. But any form of cocaine can lead to addiction. It partly depends on how much you use, and how often you use it.



## How does cocaine make you feel?

How cocaine makes you feel depends on how much you use, how often you use and what form you use. It also depends on whether you have taken any alcohol or other drugs.

Cocaine can make you feel:

- energetic, confident, alert, talkative, excited and less sleepy
- agitated, nervous, irritable, unable to relax or sleep
- paranoid (e.g., imagining things, believing people want to harm you).

People who use cocaine regularly may get used to its effects. This means they need to take more and more of the drug to feel the same way. They may also become more sensitive to negative effects such as anxiety, psychosis (losing contact with reality) and seizures.



## How long does the feeling last?

Not long. Cocaine acts quickly, but the effects don't last long.

- When snorted or injected, cocaine takes effect in minutes, and the effect may last up to one hour.
- When smoked, cocaine takes effect in seconds, and the effect lasts only five to 10 minutes.

### FAST FACTS

The faster the cocaine gets to the brain, the more addictive it is.

### FAST FACTS

Users often combine cocaine with other drugs, especially alcohol and marijuana. Sometimes cocaine and heroin are injected together. This is called a "speedball."

### DID YOU KNOW?

When you use cocaine, you just don't know what you're getting. There are a lot of substances that look like a white powder and testing kits are not accurate, so there is no way to know exactly what other substances are mixed in.

Powder cocaine can be changed into crystals called "freebase" or "crack." These crystals can be smoked in a pipe or mixed with tobacco in cigarettes.

### FAST FACTS

The chemicals used in making crack can catch fire easily, which adds to the danger.



### FAST FACTS

If you mix cocaine with alcohol or other drugs, it makes an overdose more likely.



## How do you feel after you have used cocaine?

When the cocaine high fades, people can have a big low (a "crash"). They may feel anxious, depressed, tired, hungry or even suicidal.

People may also crave more of the drug, and take more cocaine to come out of the crash. Some people stay high by using cocaine for hours or days ("bingeing").

Bingeing to stay high leads quickly to addiction.



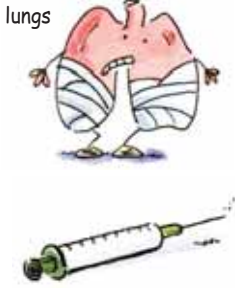
## Is cocaine dangerous?

Yes! Cocaine can be very dangerous, even if you use it just once.

- A person can overdose on even a small amount of cocaine.
- Cocaine can cause a heart attack or stroke, even in healthy people.



- Smoking crack cocaine can hurt your lungs.



- Using cocaine in pregnancy may hurt the unborn baby. The mother is more likely to have a miscarriage, to have the baby born too early or to have a smaller baby.
- Using cocaine while breastfeeding can make the baby sick.



- Cocaine use is linked with risk-taking and violence. It is also linked to problems with thinking, judgement, increased chance of getting hurt, and getting a sexually transmitted disease.
- Using cocaine for a long time can lead to mental health problems, including psychosis, anxiety, depression and paranoia.
- Long-term cocaine use can also cause weight loss, malnutrition, poor health, sexual problems (like difficulty getting an erection), and loss of friends and money.

- Snorting cocaine can cause sinus infections, loss of smell and nosebleeds. It can damage tissues in the nose forever.



**DO YOU KNOW?**

Snorting cocaine can really mess up your nose. In fact, it can cause so much damage to the mucus membrane inside your nose that you could have a runny nose most of the time—or even worse, a hole in the middle of your nose! If this happened, you could need surgery.



## Is cocaine legal?



No. Cocaine possession is a serious criminal offence in Canada.

THE CONVICTION	THE SENTENCE
Having a small amount of cocaine for personal use	Up to \$2,000 fine and/or up to seven years in prison
Possessing cocaine for the purpose of trafficking (selling or giving)	Up to life in prison
Bringing cocaine in from another country	Up to life in prison



**DO YOU KNOW?**

In 2004, about 3,416 kg of cocaine was seized either in or on route to Canada—that's the equivalent of the weight of a fully grown female African elephant!



# How can I reduce my risks?



CHOOSE NOT TO USE COCAINE!



TRY TO QUIT!



DON'T GET INTO A CAR WITH SOMEONE WHO IS HIGH.

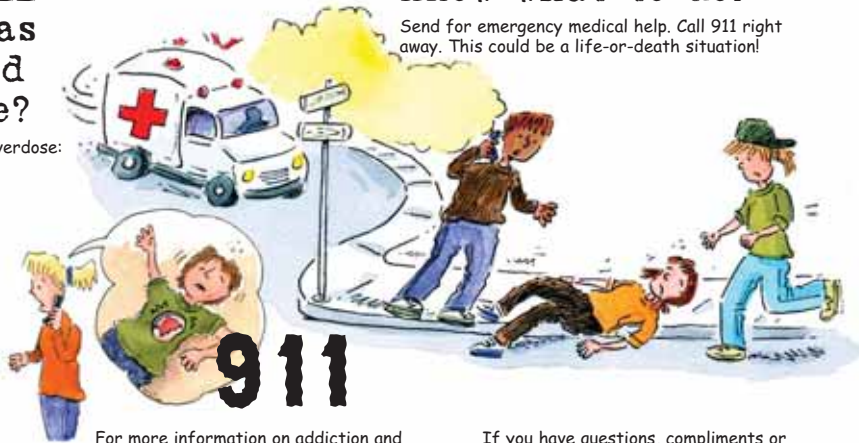


DON'T MIX COCAINE WITH OTHER DRUGS (INCLUDING ALCOHOL AND PRESCRIPTION DRUGS).

## How can I tell if someone has overdosed and is in trouble?

These are the signs of cocaine overdose:

- loss of consciousness or coma
- faster breathing
- seizures or uncontrollable twitching
- overheating
- racing or irregular heartbeat
- chest pain.



## Know what to do!

Send for emergency medical help. Call 911 right away. This could be a life-or-death situation!

## How can I get help?

Do you, a family member or a friend have a problem with substance use? If you want help, you may want to talk to someone you trust, such as your doctor, a teacher, a health nurse, or a guidance or addiction counsellor. You might also want to contact an addiction assessment centre or a self-help group such as Cocaine Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous (look in the Yellow Pages of your phone book under "Addictions"). Here are some other places to look for help:

- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's Information Centre at 1 800 463-6273
- Kids Help Phone at 1 800 668-6868
- Ontario Drug and Alcohol Registry of Treatment at 1 800 565-8603 or [www.dart.on.ca](http://www.dart.on.ca).

For more information on addiction and mental health issues, or a copy of this resource, please contact CAMH's R. Samuel McLaughlin Addiction and Mental Health Information Centre: Ontario toll-free: 1 800 463-6273 Toronto: 416 595-6111

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