

## WHAT IS METH?

"Meth" is methamphetamine, a relatively new drug to Indiana. It is extremely dangerous because of its highly addictive nature, the havoc it wreaks in the brain and body of the user, and the explosive danger it poses to neighborhoods where meth is manufactured.

### **If you think meth is somebody else's problem, think again...**

- Indiana is on track to shatter the record of meth labs seized last year, and now ranks in the top 3 states with this problem <sup>1</sup>.
- Since 1994 meth lab seizures in Indiana have increased 3,500% <sup>1</sup>.
- As of March, 2006, Harrison County is #7 (of 92 counties) in Indiana in the number of meth labs <sup>2</sup>.

## WHY IS METH SO DANGEROUS...

### ...TO THE PUBLIC?

It is made in illegal makeshift "labs" set up in basements, bathrooms, garages, vehicles, luggage, and many other places. Common household chemicals and inexpensive, over-the-counter ingredients are used. Many of these are highly flammable or reactive when mixed together. Very often reckless practices of meth "cooks" result in explosions and fires that injure or kill not only the people involved, but innocent children in the homes, firefighters, and officers that respond to the scene.

Environmental damage is another problem. For every one pound of meth manufactured, 30 pounds of garbage is generated. Toxic chemicals are poured down drains, in ditches by roads, and in fields, sinkholes, and creeks.

Violence associated with meth trafficking and use is increasing. Child neglect, child and spousal abuse, sexual abuse, theft, mail fraud, and homicide have increased in areas where methamphetamine use is heavy <sup>3</sup>. Users are often paranoid as well.

Children are at risk of being "recruited" as the next generation of meth addicts.

### ...TO THE MANUFACTURER ("COOK")?

Many volatile and dangerous chemicals are used in the manufacture of methamphetamine.

Flammable chemicals:

- Rubbing alcohol
- Toluene (brake cleaner)
- Ether (engine starter)
- Methanol, kerosene, gasoline, camp stove fuel
- Trichloroethane, acetone, paint thinner
- Red phosphorous/matches/road flares

Poisonous chemicals:

- Iodine
- Sulfuric acid, muriatic acid
- Sodium hydroxide, lye
- Anhydrous ammonia

When these chemicals are mixed together, extremely toxic fumes can be released. Smoking near them can also cause explosions.



*Some of the chemicals used in meth manufacture*

### ...TO THE USER?

Methamphetamine is highly addictive. It causes the brain to release high levels of the powerful neurotransmitter, dopamine, causing users to experience intense pleasure. Users end up trying to recapture that first, intense "rush", needing more and more of the drug to cause the dopamine release. By vastly increasing the release of dopamine, methamphetamine soon leads to brain cell damage.

Meth is also a powerful stimulant, causing increased wakefulness and physical activity, and decreased appetite. When the body is stimulated by methamphetamine, the drug can cause irreversible damage. Increased heart rate and blood pressure can damage blood vessels leading to stroke, irregular heart beat, cardiovascular collapse and death.

In high doses, methamphetamine causes irritability, insomnia, confusion, hallucinations, anxiety, paranoia and increased aggression. In even higher doses, hypothermia and convulsions can cause death <sup>4</sup>.

## WHAT CAN I LOOK FOR...

### ...IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

If you notice many of these items, together or in large quantities, meth involvement may be indicated.

- Strong, unusual chemical odors
- Excessive trash with chemical containers
- Lots of pill blister packs or pill bottles
- Windows constantly blacked out with curtains, blankets, aluminum foil
- Unusual or threatening posters
- Homes with security cameras, guard dogs, booby traps or alarms
- Lots of traffic at a residence at odd hours, short visits
- Constant seclusion from the rest of the neighborhood



*Threatening signs, blacked-out windows, security cameras, excessive chemical trash*

## ...IN SHOPPERS?

Buying or stealing unusually large amounts of:

- Decongestants / cold / allergy medicines (ephedrine / pseudo-ephedrine)
- Rubbing alcohol
- Coffee filters
- Matches
- Iodine
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Table salt / rock salt
- Lithium batteries
- Drain cleaner
- Distilled water
- Chemicals listed elsewhere in this brochure

## ...IN USERS?

- Weight loss
- Dilated pupils
- Skin sores ("crank bugs")
- Nervousness ("tweaking")
- Profuse sweating, peculiar body odor
- Loss of teeth ("meth mouth")
- Sleeping disorders
- Keeping odd hours; sleeping all day, shopping in the middle of the night
- Confusion
- Anxiety
- Paranoia, hallucinations
- Aggressive behavior



"Crank bugs" and a meth user's teeth



Before and after only 2-1/2 years of meth use <sup>5</sup>

## WHAT CAN I DO?

- Without endangering yourself, try to get license numbers of cars with suspicious persons
- Report suspicious activity to:

**HARRISON COUNTY'S ANONYMOUS TIP LINE – 812-738-9678**

**METH FREE INDIANA – 877-855-METH (6384)**

**INDIANA STATE POLICE DRUG TIP LINE – 800-453-4756**



# METH LABS

## how YOU can help...



Users smoking methamphetamine often smoke it from a broken light bulb pipe



<sup>1</sup> [www.methfreeindiana.org](http://www.methfreeindiana.org)

<sup>2</sup> Indiana State Police Sgt. Paul Andry, March, 2006

<sup>3</sup> [www.in.gov/cji/drugfree/meth/awareness.html](http://www.in.gov/cji/drugfree/meth/awareness.html)

<sup>4</sup> [www.cbc.ca/fifth/darkcrystal/facts.html](http://www.cbc.ca/fifth/darkcrystal/facts.html)

<sup>5</sup> [www.justthinktwice.com](http://www.justthinktwice.com)