

KNOW YOUR STUFF

COCAINE

AKA: blow, Charlie, coke, flake, sniff, snow, white, chang
(Drug names vary hugely, these are just a few examples)



WHAT IS IT?

A white powder with a bitter taste and smell. Usually further crushed into a fine powder, divided into lines, then inhaled through the nose (snorted). Other forms include crack or freebase, which is usually smoked. It may also be injected.

THE HIGHS

As a stimulant, cocaine can make the user feel alert, energised, confident and excited. Effects kick in quickly, but also subside fast, within half an hour or so.

THE LOWS

Cocaine can make people feel restless, over-confident, impulsive and aggressive, which can result in them behaving in ways they normally wouldn't (which could pose risks to them and others). Nausea, diarrhoea, and panic attacks can also occur. Heart rate can become faster or irregular, which can feel unpleasant as well as be dangerous for someone with a heart condition or high blood pressure, and may even cause a heart attack. Body temperature may rise, which can cause seizures and put a strain on the body's organs.

The comedown can be harsh, with many users experiencing anxiety, paranoia and low mood and energy the next day or for longer. Mixing anything with cocaine is risky. Combining cocaine with alcohol, for example, causes a chemical to be produced that stays in the body much longer than either of the individual drugs, and this increases the damage to the heart and liver, and can be fatal.

Over time, snorting cocaine damages the inside of the nose, which can be irreversible. Regular use can lead to depression, tiredness, anxiety and paranoia, and previous mental health problems may resurface. Cocaine is also highly addictive, because repeated use changes the way the brain releases the feel-good hormone dopamine. This means users sometimes continue using it to avoid unpleasant withdrawal symptoms, which in turn can set up binge patterns of use and further fuels dependence.

Cocaine is a Class A drug, meaning that possession can result in a seven year prison sentence, and/or unlimited fine, with a life sentence a possibility for supply. It is also illegal – and dangerous – to drive under the influence.

Cocaine doesn't only harm the people who take it and those in their lives, but the impact on the communities it is grown in – including on the environment – is hugely damaging. Furthermore, as it is an illegal drug, the strength, purity and what else might be in it are hugely variable and unpredictable... and hence the effects and risks are too.



For more information go to:

TALK TO FRANK

<https://www.talktofrank.com/drug/cocaine>



DSM foundation
The drug education charity

www.dsmfoundation.org.uk

The Wellbeing Hub
— from Teen Tips —



www.teentips.co.uk