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What are stimulants?¹

Stimulants are drugs that can cause someone to feel full of energy and awake. They can be used for enjoyment (e.g., methamphetamine, cocaine, ecstasy) or to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and narcolepsy (e.g., Provigil®, Adderall®, Ritalin®).

Common Stimulants:¹

- Caffeine (found in coffee, energy drinks, tea, and chocolate)
- Methamphetamine (“crystal”, “ice”, “crank”, “speed”)
- Cocaine (“coke”, “nose candy”, “flake”)
- Ecstasy (“molly”, “E”, “X”)
- Provigil® (modafinil)
- Adderall® (dextroamphetamine and amphetamine)
- Ritalin® (methylphenidate)

What is a Stimulant Use Disorder?²

A stimulant use disorder is diagnosed when the use of a stimulant is continued even when it causes harm or problems in someone’s life, which can include issues at work, damage to important relationships, poor health, and continuing to use a stimulant even if there is the desire to quit or use less.

What is Stimulant Withdrawal?³

Stimulant withdrawal is when someone has not used a stimulant and their body starts craving it. Signs of stimulant withdrawal include poor mood, more stimulant craving, agitation, trouble sleeping, tiredness, and feeling ill.

Stimulant Use Disorder Treatment⁴⁻⁷

- Stimulant use disorder is best treated with **both** non-drug therapy and drug therapy.⁴
- **Withdrawal Treatments^{5,6}**
 - Benzodiazepines (e.g., lorazepam, diazepam, midazolam): These help with agitation and trouble sleeping due to stimulant withdrawal
 - Antipsychotics (e.g., olanzapine, haloperidol, quetiapine): These help with agitation, trouble sleeping and if someone is having hallucinations (i.e., seeing things that no one else sees) from stimulant withdrawal
 - Antidepressants (e.g., sertraline, citalopram, paroxetine): These help with any poor mood that can happen from withdrawal
 - Support groups: These groups can help people with common issues. They support and help each other through withdrawal, sobriety, recovery, and treatment.
 - Exercise: Helps to improve sleep, mood, quality of life and decrease substance use.

- **Medications That Help with Cravings⁵**
 - Topiramate (Topamax[®])
 - Dextroamphetamine/amphetamine (Adderall[®])
 - Bupropion + Naltrexone (Suboxone[®])
 - Mirtazapine (Remeron[®])
 - Methylphenidate (Ritalin[®])
 - Citalopram (Celexa[®])
- **Side Effects⁵**
 - Antipsychotics: tiredness, weight gain, uncontrolled movements, high cholesterol, high blood pressure
 - Benzodiazepines: tiredness, trouble concentrating, misuse/abuse, dependence
 - Antidepressants: weight gain, upset stomach, diarrhea, dizziness, lower sex drive
 - Topiramate (Topamax[®]): weight loss, kidney stones, tiredness, dizziness
 - Dextroamphetamine/amphetamine (Adderall[®]): weight loss, fast heartbeat, high blood pressure, aggression
 - Bupropion + Naltrexone (Suboxone[®]): misuse, tiredness, upset stomach
 - Mirtazapine (Remeron[®]): weight gain, upset stomach, diarrhea, dizziness, lower sex drive
 - Methylphenidate (Ritalin[®]): weight loss, fast heartbeat, high blood pressure, aggression
 - Citalopram (Celexa[®]): weight gain, upset stomach, diarrhea, dizziness, lower sex drive
- **Side Effect Treatment**
 - For some side effects, giving the body more time to get used to the medication can help
 - For upset stomach or diarrhea, taking the medication with food can help
 - If a medication is making you feel tired or makes it hard to concentrate, taking the medication at night before bed can help
 - If a medication is causing weight gain, high cholesterol and/or high blood pressure, increasing exercise and working on diet can help
 - For dizziness, slowly changing from laying down to sitting or sitting to standing can help
 - Otherwise, talk with your healthcare provider about reducing the medication dose
- **Other Supportive Care⁷**
 - Support Groups
 - Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings, Church Organizations, 12-Step Programs, and many more local organizations
 - Harm Reduction Organizations
 - These groups help keep people healthy while they are using a substance or a stimulant. They can help with providing clean supplies, safe needle disposal, treatment resources, HIV/Hepatitis testing, housing resources, and much more.
 - Inpatient Treatment
 - Inpatient treatment is when a person stays and lives at a treatment center for a while and receives treatment.
 - Outpatient Treatment
 - Outpatient treatment is when a person visits the treatment center and receives treatment.
 - Individual Therapy Options:
 - Help a person overcome cravings and work on coping strategies to help control cravings for stimulants.
 - Types of specific therapy options include:
 - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
 - Intensive Outpatient Therapy (IOT)
 - Contingency Management
 - Motivational Interviewing

How Do I Know if Treatment is Working?⁵

The goal is to reduce cravings and decrease how much a person is using or help them stop using. If this is successful, then treatment continues but if this does not happen, then a new treatment can be attempted.

Additional Resource

If you or someone you know needs help with a stimulant use disorder, try the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Helpline at 1-800-622-4357.⁸



Go online to find more information and to view the references for this toolkit.

aapp.org/591925

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