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Επιστρέψτε στην - AGWS, 7 Union Street, Brunswick Victoria

## In case of emergency

If someone is intoxicated or they seem to be seriously ill - dial 000 and ask for ambulance assistance.

### Bibliography:

- \* "This book: the Truth About drugs", Michael Rock
- \*\* "Better Life", Konstantine Petsinis
- \*\*\* "You can free Yourself from Alcohol & Drugs, Doug Althausen
- \*\*\*\* "When I say No, I feel Guilty, Dr. Manuel J. Smith
- \*\*\*\*\* "When Good things become Addictions, Dr. Grant Martin
- \*\*\*\*\* "How to behave so your children will, too, Dr. Sal Severe
- \*\*\*\*\* "Become the Person you dream of Being, Wes Beavis

# Cocaine



**Australian Greek Welfare Society**

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Australian Greek Welfare Society

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## *What is cocaine?*

Cocaine is a stimulant that derives from the leaves of the shrub *Erythroxylon*, a native of South America. It has anesthetic qualities. It is sold in a powder form and users sniff it even though it is possible to inject it and use it intravenously as well. Some users rub it on their lips and gums. In Australia it is most commonly distributed as a white powder known as cocaine hydrochloride. Cocaine hydrochloride can be inhaled into the nostril and absorbed into the bloodstream across the nasal mucosa. It may also be available as a coca paste. Crack is a form of cocaine that has been further processed to remove the hydrochloride. Some of its common names are coca, snow, powder and many others. The cocaine powder can also be converted to the free-base of cocaine with volatile solvents which must then be carefully removed. The free-base cocaine is then burnt, with inhalation of the smoke resulting in the very rapid and efficient absorption across the alveolar membranes of the lungs. It is generally considered that most cocaine users begin with intra-nasal administration and later progress to injecting use or inhalation of smoke. \*

## *Effects of cocaine.*

Cocaine stimulates the brain by affecting and altering its dopamine levels. It produces a sense of liveliness and exhilaration. It stimulates the thinking process. It is an illicit drug and users can develop dependency on it if they use it on a regular basis. Its effects become evident straight away and last for about 30 minutes. If taken on a daily basis, it weakens the system and produces physical fatigue, tiredness, loss of weight and premature aging. The intensity, and sometimes the nature, of cocaine effects are governed by the form of the drug; the route of administration; the dose of the drug; the timing, as well as the chronicity of dosage. Low dose effects include improved performance, increased confidence, increased energy, exhilaration, enhanced physical and mental well-being, increased rate of respiration resulting in rapid shallow breathing, increased temperature, spasm of local blood vessels, enlarged pupils, cardiac arrhythmias, suppressed appetite, insomnia.” \*\*

Cocaine can have some acute and chronic adverse health effects. “High dose effects include loss of coordination, tremors, dizziness, muscle twitches, severe agitation, confusion, paranoid symptoms, headaches, cold sweat, pallor, nausea and vomiting, weak and rapid pulse, and anxiety. Some of chronic effects are heightened reflexes, muscle twitching, loss of appetite, insomnia, chest pain, heart attacks, cocaine psychosis, paranoid delusions, auditory and visual hallucinations, tactile hallucinations, violent or aggressive behavior and decreased libido/impotence.” \*\*\*

## *Associated dangers.*

If used on a regular basis it can damage the nasal passage. Cocaine is a toxic drug and in big quantities it can be lethal. Because it is sold in a powder form, users do not know its purity levels as it can be mixed with many other poisons. If the user is pregnant, it can harm the embryo. Users may suffer from liver failure due to prolonged use. If cocaine is used intravenously, and users share needles the transmission of deadly viruses like HIV(AIDS) and Hepatitis B and C is a real possibility.

## *Precautions.*

Substances that are found in powder form are easily mixed with other things. Dealers usually mix them in order to increase the quantity as these drugs are sold by the weight. This is called “cutting”. Some of these cuttings are harmless, like lactose (the sugar that is found in the milk), starch, and various amino acids. Other cuttings may be some less safe substances, like rat poison, batteries, talcum powder, washing powder etc. These substance can be very dangerous, especially if users inject them.

The reality is that with drugs like cocaine it is indeed very hard for the users to know what they are really using. Being a stimulant, cocaine can be very dangerous for people with heart problems and high blood pressure. In high doses or if taken in combination with other drugs or alcohol it can be lethal. \*\*\*\*

Stimulants include legal drugs like nicotine (cigarettes), caffeine (coffee, cola drinks, chocolate, cocoa, weight loss pills) and ephedrine (which can be found in some medications like cough syrups) and illegal drugs such as cocaine, amphetamines (speed), LSD and ecstasy. Users may develop chronic fatigue due to the lack of sleep and food.