

Effects on your body may include that:

- your heart beats faster
- you breathe faster
- you feel less hungry
- your blood pressure rises
- the pupils in your eyes get bigger
- you move more quickly
- it is hard to sleep.



Large amounts

If you take a large amount of speed you might:

- get headaches
- feel dizzy
- feel restless
- shake
- have irregular breathing
- have a very fast or irregular heartbeat
- become pale
- feel very powerful or better than others
- become hostile or aggressive
- have psychosis — a serious psychological problem where you hear voices, imagine things, fear that others want to hurt you.

Long-term effects

If you use speed often and for a long time you may:

- become dependent on speed (see 'Tolerance and dependence', page 3)
- often become violent for no reason
- get sick more often because your body can't resist disease properly
- be upset or depressed
- have periods of psychosis
- have relationship, work, money, legal or housing problems.

The way a person takes speed over a long time can also cause some problems such as:

- Snorting speed can lead to nosebleeds, sinus problems and damage inside the nose.
- Injecting speed with used or dirty needles or other equipment makes you more likely to get infected with hepatitis C, hepatitis B and/or HIV, get blood poisoning (septicaemia) and skin abscesses (sores with pus).
- Injecting speed over a long time can result in:
 - blocked blood vessels (caused by the things sometimes mixed with speed) leading to serious damage to the body's organs such as the liver, heart etc.
 - inflamed blood vessels and abscesses.
- Injecting speed also increases the risk of becoming dependent on the drug and of getting other health problems.

Overdose

Overdose of speed can happen to anyone. Even small amounts may cause overdose with some people who have an especially strong reaction to it.

When a person overdoses, it may cause:

- amphetamine psychosis
- faster, irregular or weak heartbeat
- heart attack
- bleeding blood vessels in the brain
- very high fever
- death (rarely).

Mixing speed with other drugs

People who use speed sometimes take other drugs at the same time to cope with some of the things speed does to the body. Some people take drugs such as minor tranquillisers, alcohol, marijuana or heroin to help them sleep.

This can make you dependent on several drugs at once. For example, some people need speed each day to get them going and minor tranquillisers each night to get to sleep. This type of dependence can lead to many serious physical and psychological problems.

Mixing different drugs can also make you more likely to overdose.

Speed and pregnancy

Using speed when you are pregnant may increase the chance of losing the baby before it is born, having the baby too early and other problems. Babies of speed-using mothers may weigh less and may get withdrawal symptoms from the mother's speed use. Little is known about the long-term effects on the child as it grows.

Tolerance and dependence

Anyone can develop a 'tolerance' to speed. Tolerance means that you must take more of the drug to feel the same effects you used to have with lower amounts.

'Dependence' on speed means that it takes up a lot of your thoughts, emotions and activities.

Dependence on speed can lead to a variety of health, money, legal, work and relationship problems.

Not all people who use speed are dependent.

Withdrawal

People who are dependent on speed may find it very hard to stop using or cut down because of withdrawal symptoms.

These can include:

- tiredness
- hunger
- feeling anxious
- feeling irritable
- deep depression (feeling very down or sad)
- being 'nervy' or restless
- feeling angry or upset
- long but disturbed sleep
- wanting speed very badly (cravings).

These symptoms are usually fairly short-lived and most withdrawing people don't need medication. However, if you are worried about withdrawal, contact your doctor or health centre.



Speed and the law

Using speed is illegal. If you use, sell or give speed to someone else and get caught, you could face substantial fines and penalties including a prison sentence.

Speed and driving

Speed can make you feel more confident when you drive. This can make you take dangerous risks and have accidents. It is illegal to drive under the influence of drugs, including speed. Penalties include losing your licence, a fine and/or jail.