

 **Easy-to-Read Drug Facts**

National Institute on Drug Abuse

Effects of Cocaine on Brains and Bodies

These are just some of the problems cocaine can cause:

Sickness

Cocaine can cause stomach pain and headaches. It can make you shake, throw up, or pass out.

No Appetite

Cocaine can make you not want to eat. Over time, you might lose a lot of weight and get sick.

Heart Attack and Stroke

Cocaine raises your blood pressure and makes your heart beat faster. This can hurt your heart. It can lead to a heart attack or stroke (a “brain attack”). Some people die because of it.

HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis

People who inject drugs like cocaine can get HIV/AIDS or hepatitis (a liver disease) if they share used needles. People also get these diseases by having unsafe sex. They may forget to use condoms because they're high on the drug.

Overdose

An overdose happens when a person uses enough of a drug to have a very bad reaction or death. A cocaine overdose can cause a heart attack or stroke, and you can die. If someone you know has any of these signs, you should call 911 right away.

Signs of a cocaine overdose are:

- throwing up
- chest pain
- fast heartbeat
- shaking
- feeling hot
- panic
- hallucinations (seeing things that aren't there)

Addiction

It is easy to lose control over cocaine use and become addicted. Over time, it can change the way your brain works. If you stop taking the medicine, your body can get confused and you can start to feel really sick. This makes it hard to stop. This is called addiction.

People addicted to cocaine might take bigger doses or take it more often to get high. A cocaine high usually doesn't last very long. So people take it again and again to try to keep feeling good.

People who are trying to quit taking cocaine might:

- act nervous and restless
- feel very sad and tired
- have bad dreams
- be suspicious of people and things around them

They will feel a strong need to take the drug.

Fortunately, counseling can help someone with cocaine addiction.

If you get treatment, it can be hard to stay off the drug. People who stopped using cocaine can still feel strong cravings for the drug, sometimes even years later.