

## Cocaine: Basics

Other names: 'Charlie', 'Coke', 'Snow'. Crack: 'Rock', 'Stones'

- Cocaine is derived from the leaves of the coca plant, which is native to South America.
- It is a stimulant drug, and increases adrenaline levels, causing increased heart rate, faster breathing, sweating and dilating pupils.
- In the UK, it usually takes the form of a white crystalline powder which may be snorted, rubbed on the gums or injected.
- Crack cocaine is made when cocaine hydrochloride is combined with sodium bicarbonate (baking soda), as part of a process known as 'washing' or 'cooking'. The resulting crystalline 'rocks' are then smoked or injected.
- Cocaine is usually finely chopped and snorted using a tube or a rolled-up bank note. When snorted, the effects are felt very quickly and last for about 30 minutes.
- Crack is often smoked using a home-made pipe, The effects of crack are felt within seconds and the high lasts for 5-10 minutes.

### The effects:

- Increases sense of confidence and alertness,
- May also increase sense of physical strength.
- Profound sense of well-being.
- When smoked in the form of Crack, the experience is usually more intense but shorter lasting.



### Risks

- If cocaine is snorted it can cause damage to nose tissues
- Increase heart rate to cause heart problems and chest pains.
- Severe anxiety, agitation and restlessness. paranoia and hallucinations
- Weight loss as Cocaine is an appetite suppresser

• Need more advice  
[www.drugscope.co.uk](http://www.drugscope.co.uk)  
[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

• Legal status  
Please refer to [http: www.release.org.uk](http://www.release.org.uk)  
where information is kept up-to-date

## Cocaine: -More Information

### • Side effects and risks

**Respiratory:** including bronchitis, tuberculosis (T.B), risk of lung collapse, and 'crack-lung', a potentially life-threatening condition if not properly treated.

**Cardiovascular:** chest pains, high blood pressure, risk of heart attack.

**Seizures and strokes:** cocaine constricts blood vessels and increases blood pressure, which may lead to seizures or a stroke. Cocaine also increases body temperature, which may also increase the risk of seizures.

**Nasal:** nosebleeds, damage to the nasal membranes through prolonged use, possibility of perforating the septum which divides the nostrils

**Liver damage:** combining cocaine and alcohol increases the risk of liver damage, as together they produce a liver-toxic substance called **cocaethylene**.

**Weight loss:** cocaine suppresses the appetite, so regular use is likely to result in weight loss, and vitamin/mineral deficiencies which in turn compromises the immune system.

**Immune system:** cocaine causes damage to white blood cells which are crucial to the immune system.

**Pregnancy:** increased risk of miscarriage and premature birth. Low birth weight baby.

**Psychological/emotional:** agitation, paranoia, hallucinations. Risk of drug-induced psychosis, particularly with frequent/heavy use.



**Driving** is dangerous on this substance

For further information please refer to

<http://www.brake.org.uk/index.php?p=913>

[www.drugdrive.co.uk](http://www.drugdrive.co.uk)

<http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/drinkdriving/drugs/index.html>



# The Matthew Project, Norfolk

■ Cocaine: Basics

■ Cocaine: : More

■ Harm Minimisation

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## Harm Minimisation

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