

P

'P' – or Methamphetamine is a highly addictive synthetic drug manufactured from commonly available medications. It is also referred to as: burn, crank, crystal, goey, go-fast, ice, meth, pure, shabu, speed, whiz, and yaba.

Its appearance is often like small shards of glass or crystal rocks – usually opaque cream in appearance with, sometimes, pink, blue, green, brown, or yellow shades.

'P' is very easy to get in Taranaki. The ability for the criminal fraternity to cash in on the ever-increasing range of mind-altering drugs far outweighs the ability of the law enforcement agencies and alcohol and drug services to counter the harm drugs such as 'P' do.

It is made illegally. As such, there is no guarantee of the quality, strength, safety, or even its ingredients. 'Quality control' is not a number one priority - profit is. Truly - 'P' producers are parasites on the vulnerable.

It is a Class A controlled substance under the Misuse of Drugs Act. It is illegal to use, possess, supply or manufacture 'P' – but profits outweigh risks. With the increasing availability of 'P' on the street, an increasing number of people will continue to be 'sucked' in to 'buy and try'.

Using 'P' is a costly habit that requires significant cash – to be obtained from someone...somewhere...somehow.

Yet, the demand for 'P' is growing.

It can produce euphoria; reduced appetite; increased alertness; hyperactivity; talkativeness; increased energy; improved sense of well-being and wakefulness. Sounds too good to be true? It is.

Short term – some people think the 'highs' may outweigh the 'lows' however...

Signs of long term, regular use (depending on quality and quantity of intake) include:

- Changes in mood from euphoria to irritability, anxiety, sweating, depression and paranoia
- Weakened immune system
- Obsessive repetitive behaviour
- Irregular heartbeat, burst blood vessels in the brain and potentially a stroke
- Psychotic episodes – known as amphetamine psychosis - particularly dangerous for someone with a history of violence
- Teeth and mouth problems
- Malnutrition due to poor eating habits
- Weight loss
- Pimples, acne and other unpleasant skin conditions
- Blood borne diseases such as HIV, Hepatitis – if injecting 'P'
- Borrowing large sums of money to fund supplies
- Secretive behaviour, unexplained absences and, often, withdrawal from family and friends.

Coming off 'P' can be a very unpleasant experience. Feelings of irritability, mood swings, depression, and, sometimes, violence are usual side effects.

The good news is – that treatment for 'P' addiction works – and is available in Taranaki. There are a number of quality services available locally – eg Mahia Mai A Whai Tara – (06) 754-4669, Taranaki Alcohol and Drug Service (06) 753-7838 or go on line to alcoholdrughelpline – (0800-787-797) or visit their site – www.alcoholdrughelp.org.nz or www.nzdf.org.nz .

But, if faced with an emergency – call 111 immediately.

Simply, the price of using 'P' is too high...

First published – Midweek – 14th/February/2007

By Gordon Hudson, Manager, Like Minds Taranaki