



SAFER USE STRATEGIES: STIMULANTS

Stimulants are “uppers” and include cocaine, crack, meth, MDMA (molly), and bath salts, as well as prescribed drugs like Ritalin and Adderall. Here are some tips to help you stay safer and healthier no matter how you choose to change your use. Using safer does not mean that you remove all risks, including death, but it can help reduce substance-related harm. You are worth it!

<i>Ways to be safer and healthier without changing use</i>	Prepare for safer sex	WHY? Stimulant use can lower your inhibitions and turn up your sex drive. HOW? Think ahead and carry condoms, dams, lube, and gloves with you. These barriers can prevent unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections like HIV and hepatitis C.
	Test your drugs	WHY? You can find out if your drugs are cut with other drugs (e.g., fentanyl) or fillers (e.g., levamisole) that could harm you. HOW? Talk to providers about getting urine drug testing kits/testing liquids before you shoot. Check out dancesafe.org for kits. Some syringe service programs have more accurate testing.
	Try to eat	WHY? Stimulants can drain your body and dull your appetite. Food and water replenish these important nutrients to help you stay healthy. HOW? Eat nutritious foods before using. Pack snacks and water on the go. Avoid using over a long time. Let your body rest for at least a day after using.
	Take care of your mouth	WHY? Some stimulants cause mouth dryness, sores, cracks, teeth clenching. HOW? Drink water to stay hydrated and chew gum to keep your mouth moist and your teeth from grinding. Brushing your teeth can help control increased bacteria due to dry mouth. Use chapstick to prevent lip and mouth cracking.
<i>Ways to use more safely</i>	Choose safer ways of using	WHY? Some ways of using drugs are less risky to your health. HOW? Taking drugs orally is safer than smoking which is safer than shooting. If you smoke crack, use your own mouthpiece for your pipe to avoid burns and germs.
	Shoot safer	WHY? Avoid overdose, blood-borne illness (HIV, hep C), bacterial infections. HOW? Pace yourself until you know the strength of your stash. Shooting into arm or hand veins is safer than hitting blind into your groin or neck. Rotate sites, shoot downstream if possible. Using new, clean needles and works can help prevent blood-borne illnesses and other infections.
	Avoid mixing drugs	WHY? Using stimulants and depressants (opioids, alcohol, benzos) at the same time can have unexpected effects, stress your heart, and lead to overdose. HOW? Try to stick to one drug at a time, especially when you are unsure of its strength or content.
	Use with safe people in a safe place	WHY? Heavy stimulant use can cause paranoia or aggression that can lead to fights, hassles, arrests. People can take advantage of you when you're high. HOW? Avoid using with people you don't know or trust. Use where you feel safe and in control of surroundings. Do not drive or bike when you are high.
<i>Ways to change how much you use</i>	Less is more	WHY? You can avoid overdosing or experiencing drugs' toxic effects. HOW? You can decide how you want to limit your use (buy only a certain amount or set a spending limit). Leave the rest of your money at home or in a safe place. You might ask a trusted friend to remind you of your limit.
	Choose not to use	WHY? Not using—even for a few hours or days—gives your body a rest and may help you avoid your body or mind becoming dependent on depressants. HOW? If you are not yet dependent and don't get strung out, try to not use for long periods of time and take days off from use every week to avoid getting hooked. Check in with your provider if you want to stop altogether.
	Talk to a provider about withdrawal	WHY? Alcohol/benzo withdrawal can be deadly. However, other drugs may have uncomfortable withdrawal symptoms that can harm vulnerable people. HOW? Talk to your provider if you are worried about withdrawal or if you have HIV or are pregnant. They may be able to help lessen symptoms.