

“Catching Up to Speed”

Accelerating Your Understanding of “Meth Mouth”

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Learning Outcomes: At the end of the presentation, the dental professional will be able to:

- Recognize the signs and symptoms of methamphetamine misuse, including the oral, physical and behavioral effects of the drug
- Control patients’ safety and professionals’ risk by adopting principles of harm reduction
- Treat the oral effects of methamphetamine using a caries-risk assessment

Key Concluding Points:

- The use of methamphetamine has become a ***global epidemic***.
- Methamphetamine ***negatively impacts*** the oral health of users.
- Multiple teeth that are blackened with decay, fractured and/or missing are ***diagnostic indicators*** of methamphetamine use.
- The delivery of safe, effective, and realistic care requires that the dental team ***know the drug use status of each patient*** to:
 - Prevent drug to drug interactions
 - Develop appropriate treatment plans and realistic patient expectations
 - Avoid dental malpractice associated with drug-related treatment failures and prescription-related relapses

Methamphetamine is...

- A powerfully addictive stimulant that dramatically affects many areas of the central nervous system.
- Sometimes referred to as "speed," "meth," and "chalk." In its smoked form, it is often referred to as "ice," "crystal," "crank," and "glass."
- Comes in many forms and can be smoked, snorted, injected or orally ingested.

Populations using methamphetamine...

- Traditionally associated with white, male, blue-collar workers, is now reportedly being used by diverse groups in all regions of the country.
- Use is increasing among men who have sex with men and use other drugs, making this population more vulnerable to contracting and spreading sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS.
- Young adults who attend "raves" or private clubs also are increasingly using methamphetamine.
- Include notable increases among homeless and runaway youth.
- Increasing use of methamphetamine is reported among male and female commercial sex workers who also trade sex for drugs and among members of motorcycle gangs. Also, people in occupations (such as long-haul truckers) that demand long hours, mental alertness, and physical endurance, have been using this drug at increased rates.

Meth Mouth is...

The rapid development of dental decay that is seen in individuals who use the drug methamphetamine.

- Unaccounted for and accelerated decay in teenagers and young adults
- Distinctive pattern of decay on the buccal smooth surface of the teeth and the interproximal surfaces of the anterior teeth that is blackened
- Color (blackened), Age (young adults), Surface Location (Class II/III/V), Teeth (anterior and posterior)



3 years of meth use



5 years of meth use



15 years of meth use

Where to get help for a substance use disorder...

- CIUSS West-Central Montral: Offers psychosocial support and addiction prevention services for individuals aged 14 and older. Contact Info-Social at 811, option 2 for assistance
- Drugs: Help and Referral (DHR) provides support, information and referrals to anyone worried about their use of drugs, alcohol and/or medication, as well as, to their loved ones.
 - Counselors available 24/7 via telephone or chat in Montral area at 514-527-2626 and everywhere in Québec at 800-265-2626

Resources...

- Brown R., Chan WY, Whyte F. (2023) C.E. Credit. **Harm Reduction: A Strategy to Improve Outcomes for Dental Patients with Substance-Use Disorders**, Journal of the California Dental Association 51:1, DOI: [10.1080/19424396.2023.2242570](https://doi.org/10.1080/19424396.2023.2242570)
- Brown RE, Morisky D, Silverstein SJ. **Meth Mouth Severity in Response to Drug-use Patterns and Dental Access in Methamphetamine Users**, Journal of the California Dental Association, 41:6, 421-428, DOI: [10.1080/19424396.2013.12222319](https://doi.org/10.1080/19424396.2013.12222319)
- **A State of Decay, Your Dental Guide to Understanding and Treating “Meth Mouth,”** by Ronni Brown, DDS, MPH. Available at: www.DrRonniBrown.com
- **Meth Mouth Treatment Plan Assessment Form©** by Ronni Brown, DDS, MPH, FADI. Available at www.DrRonniBrown.com
- **Patient Drug Use-How to Be Caring**, by Ronni Brown DDS, MPH. Dental Product Shopper, 19(6),2025. <https://www.dentalproductshopper.com/blog/patient-drug-use--be-curious--be-caring>
- **Patient Brochures on the Oral Effects of Methamphetamine** www.PreventMethMouth.com

Additional Resources (continued)...

- **Ending the Silence: Can We DeW Better**, by Ronni Brown, DDS, MPH. DeW Life Magazine 2020. DeW Life Autumn 2020 by DewLife Magazine - Issuu
- **How to use fluoride varnish in patients with “meth mouth.”** by Ronni Brown, DDS, MPH. Dental Products Report 51(9), 2017. How to use fluoride varnish in patients with ‘meth mouth’
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, SAMHSA - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration