

# Emergency Room and First Responders

Learn more about meth.



Methamphetamine is produced using many hazardous chemicals and a meth user may exhibit strange and sometime aggressive behavior. The equipment and ingredients used to make meth could be contaminated with toxic fumes and chemicals and be a health hazard if touched or breathed. For the emergency medical technician responding to a home or automobile accident and for emergency room personnel, unknowing coming into contact with a meth user, the chemicals used to make meth (in the home or on the individual's clothing) or the unpredictable behavior of a meth user can pose a significant risk. Call law enforcement immediately if you suspect a meth user is present.

If you suspect you have come into contact with meth-making materials or meth contaminated clothing do not touch them - notify local law enforcement immediately for hazardous material removal and criminal investigation.

Meth manufacturers are unpredictable and may be violent. Do not approach suspected manufacturers.

## BE AWARE OF SIGNS OF A METH USER:

### Common signs of meth use include:

- Odor related to meth production. Chemical smells like ammonia, ether (sweet smell), vinegar (pungent, acrid or sour odors), or solvents (paint thinner, cleaning fluids).
- Chemical Stains. A person that has been cooking meth may have chemical stains (red, brown, black) on their hands and clothing.

### Common behavioral signs of meth use include:

- Incessant talking
- Extreme moodiness, irritability and severe depression
- Compulsive behavior, such as picking at skin or pulling out hair
- Repetitious behavior, like repetitively sorting or taking apart and putting together objects.
- Decreased appetite
- General agitation and increased levels of physical activity
- Intense paranoia – anxiousness and nervousness
- Occasional episodes of sudden aggressive and violent behavior
- Sight or sound hallucinations
- Disinterest in previously enjoyed activities

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**Common physiological signs include:**

- Grinding of teeth high blood pressure
- Increased body temperature
- Insomnia
- Irregular heartbeat or chest pain
- Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea
- Shortness of breath
- Tremors

**METH-MAKING MATERIALS INCLUDE:**

- Unusual amounts of empty containers of lye, acetone, de-natured alcohol, iodine, drain cleaner, Freon, ether, starting fluid, lighter fluid, camp fuel, paint thinner (toluene), white gas, cold tablet boxes or bottles, and batteries
- Glassware, funnels, tubing
- Buckets, coolers and plastic containers or bottles, possibly containing unidentifiable clear, red, white or sludgy layers
- Buckets of kitty litter
- Coffee filters or sheets with red staining, red sludge or white powder residue
- Burners or hotplates
- Propane tanks (possibly with blue-stained fixtures)
- Drug paraphernalia - syringes and needles, burnt foil, pipes, missing light bulbs or bulbs with the metal end removed - the bulbs may be used for smoking meth.
- Large quantities of cold pills or tablets

For more information, contact local law enforcement, or visit

[www.stoptribalmeth.org](http://www.stoptribalmeth.org)

Montana State University Extension Service  
Tribal Meth Education Training & Help Center

National Congress of American Indians

**METH.**  
In Tribal Communities



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