



DRUG FACT SHEET

# Cocaine and Crack

**Cocaine use results in more emergency room visits in the United States than any other illicit drug.**



Class of drug:	Stimulant
Main active ingredient:	Cocaine hydrochloride is extracted from the leaf of the Erythroxylon coca bush. Crack is processed from powdered cocaine (hydrochloride is removed).
What it looks like:	<b>Cocaine:</b> fine crystalline powder <b>Crack:</b> light brown or beige pellets or crystalline rocks (often packaged in small vials)
Street names:	<b>Cocaine:</b> Coke, Snow, Blow <b>Crack:</b> Freebase Rocks, Rocks
How it is used:	<b>Cocaine:</b> sniffed or injected <b>Crack:</b> smoked
Duration of High:	<b>Cocaine effects</b> appear almost immediately and disappear within a few minutes or hours (depends on route of administration). <b>Crack effects</b> are felt within 10 seconds and disappear within five to 10 minutes (very intense high). It is not uncommon for users to binge on crack to try to sustain the short, but intense high.
Withdrawal symptoms:	Mood swings/changes, depression, anxiety—unpleasant but not life threatening
Detection in the body:	Three to five days
Effects:	<b>Physical</b> —increased energy, dilated pupils, increased pulse rate, elevated blood pressure, insomnia, loss of appetite, sudden death <b>Mental</b> —euphoria, tactile hallucinations, large amounts can cause bizarre and violent behavior <b>Long-term</b> —mood disturbances, paranoia, heart attacks, respiratory failure, heart disease, strokes, seizures, death

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, cocaine was used primarily as medicine. The drug was officially banned in 1922. More than 50 years later, a new variation of the substance emerged. This substance, crack (above), became enormously popular in the mid-1980s due in part to its almost immediate high and that fact that it is inexpensive to produce and buy.

## U.S. information

During FY 2015, 31.9 percent of the federally-sentenced defendants in the United States had committed a drug offense. One-quarter of the drug cases involved powdered or crack cocaine.

In 2015, 5.2 percent of high school students in the United States reported using cocaine at least once in their lifetime, compared to 7.6 percent a decade ago.

(U.S. Sentencing Commission, FY 2015 Federal Sentencing Statistics; U.S. Centers for Disease Control Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015)

Sources: American Medical Association, National Institute on Drug Abuse, Drug Abuse Warning Network, National Drug Intelligence Center, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Office of National Drug Policy