

The Devastating Effects of Meth Use

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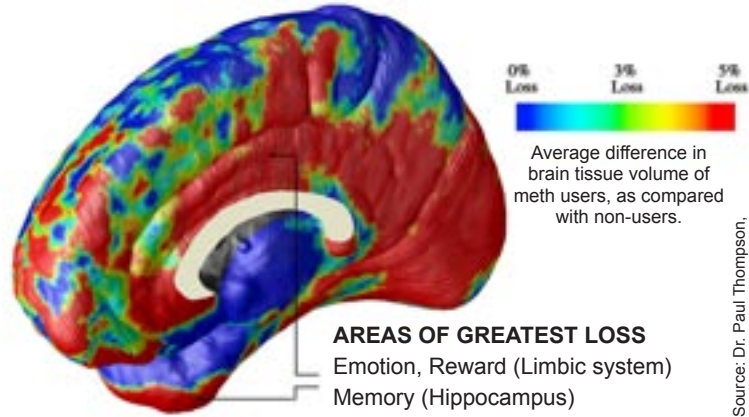
There is much talk and information in the news and papers about methamphetamine laboratories and making of meth. That is only part of the story. Meth use has a devastating effect on individuals' lives, families and communities.

Meth is one of the most addictive street drugs and is associated with serious health problems. Some of its many street names are: speed, chalk, crystal, crank, glass or ice. Meth can be injected, snorted, smoked, or taken orally — the method of use varies the time needed for the user to get high.

Meth users come from a variety of age groups, lifestyles and communities. Females make up a higher percentage of users. Young girls are drawn to meth for its ability to help them lose weight fast. The number of high school students using meth continues to rise. According to the National Youth Risk Behavior Survey of 2003, 6.3% of high school students surveyed in Nebraska have used meth.

Meth initially sends a message to the pleasure center of the brain to release dopamine, a natural and feel-good chemical. Dopamine is a reward for repeating activities needed to stay alive, such as eating. However, hours after taking meth, brain cells release an enzyme which stops the dopamine flow. Repeated meth use short-circuits the brain's reward system and a person can lose their ability to

Eroding the Mind
Researchers have mapped brain decay caused by meth use. The damaged affected memory, emotion and reward systems.



Source: Dr. Paul Thompson, University of California, Los Angeles

experience pleasure.

Made from chemicals such as drain cleaner, hydrochloric acid and anhydrous ammonia, meth is extremely toxic. Recent studies have shown meth causes more damage to the brain than alcohol, heroin or cocaine. Meth use may also cause:

Health Effects

- Acne or sores
- Tooth decay
- Hair loss
- Severe weight loss
- Self-inflicted wounds from removing hallucinatory "crank bugs"
- Liver damage
- Kidney and lung disorders
- Putrid body odor
- Convulsions or seizures
- Heart attack or stroke
- Death

Behavior Effects

- Hallucinations
- Aggression
- Paranoia
- Anxiety

- Confusion
- Mood swings
- Depression
- Insomnia
- Psychotic behavior

Meth users suffer the same addiction cycle and withdrawal reactions as those suffered by crack cocaine users. Although meth's relapse rate of 92% is worse than cocaine, addiction is a treatable, chronic illness.

Sources:

- "Methamphetamine — One of Rural Nebraska's Greatest Challenges" by UNL Extension Educators Sue Brown and Marilyn Fox
- "Life or Meth: What's It Cost?" Midwest HIDTA
- "Methamphetamine: Children at Risk" developed by the Kansas Methamphetamine Prevention Project
- U.S. Department of Justice; <http://www.usdoj.gov>

See related article on page 7, "Talking With Kids About Drugs"

Users are Not the Only Losers

Meth destroys not only those who use it, but also the people around them.

Families

Producers and users of methamphetamine many times become so preoccupied with the drug that they neglect their family and children. Impacts on families can include:

- Psychological impact
- Financial costs
- Safety concerns
- Rise in domestic disputes and/or domestic violence
- Breaks families apart

Children

Children of users often lack necessities such as food, water, shelter and proper medical care. They are at higher risk of:

- Physical, sexual and emotional abuse
- Delayed speech and language skills
- Hyperactivity and attention disorders
- Violent behavior
- Lack of boundaries/easy attachment to strangers
- Other developmental problems
- Increased risk for substance abuse in later life

Infants

Meth use during pregnancy or while breast feeding can cause major problems for babies. Levels of meth pres-

ent in breast milk are higher than levels in blood. Infants are at higher risk of:

- Premature birth
- Birth defects (six times more)
- Growth retardation
- Withdrawal symptoms, including abnormal sleep patterns, high pitched cry, poor feeding
- Sensitivity to stimuli including human touch and regular light
- Coordination problems

Communities

- Nearly 8% of Nebraska's budget — over \$291 million in 1998 — is spent on substance abuse* related costs. This does not include local and federal costs. State programs affected include justice, education, health, child/family assistance, mental health/developmental disabilities, public safety and state workforce.
- Federal sentences for meth-related drug convictions in Nebraska are five times the national average. In 2002, there were almost 12,000 arrests for drug abuse violations.
- Meth addicts commit several crimes each year to support their habit. These crimes range from check forgery, credit card fraud, and identity theft to shoplifting, stealing and assault.

*This includes all drugs, not just meth.

Can You Guess It?

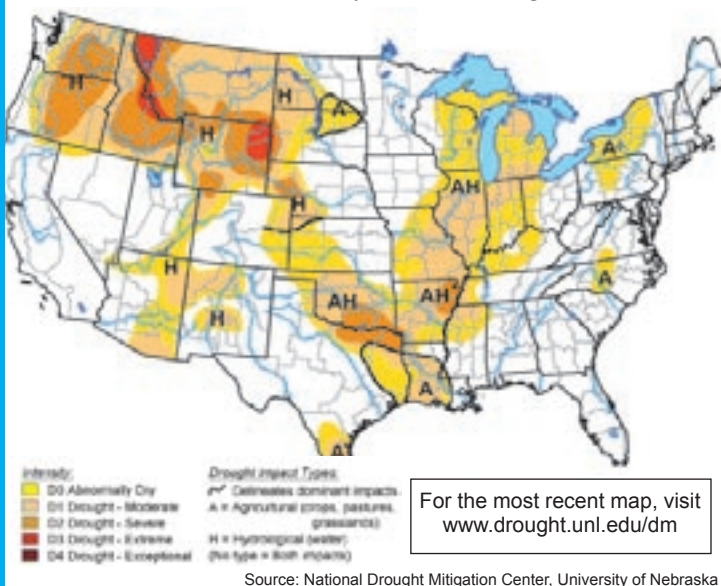


Did you guess it? Find out at <http://lancaster.unl.edu>

Did you guess it from the June NEBLINE?
The answer was a Musk Thistle Flower.

U.S. Drought Monitor Map

As of June 7, Lancaster County was not in drought conditions.



4-H Summer Camps in Full Swing!



There are still numerous adventures waiting for all youth ages 5-19 at 4-H Summer Camps! Meet new friends and experience a wide variety of exciting activities such as canoeing, mountain biking, horseback riding, rappelling or climbing, volleyball, basketball, art, dancing, backpacking, shooting sports, water skiing and fishing!

EASTERN NEBRASKA 4-H CENTER, NEAR GRETNA

- July 5-9 — **Discovery Camp** for ages 11-15; \$280
- July 11-15 — **Outdoor Skills** for ages 11-15; \$280
- July 12-14 — **Take a Friend, Make a Friend** for ages 8-11; \$110
- July 25-27 — **International Camp** for ages 11-15; \$132
- July 28-29 — **Staff Reunion Camp** for all former staff members & friends; \$55
- August 1-5 — **Wet-N-Wild** for ages 8-11; \$280
- August 1-5 — **Wet-N-Wild** for ages 11-15; \$280

SOUTH CENTRAL 4-H CENTER, NEAR ALMA

- June 27-30 — **Elementary Explorer** for ages 8-11; \$177
- July 5-9 — **Technomania Camp** for ages 11-15; \$210

NEBRASKA STATE 4-H CAMP, NEAR HALSEY

- June 24 — **State Connections Day Camp** for ages 5-8 & chaperone; \$25
- June 27-July 1 — **Outback Halsey** for ages 11-15; \$233
- July 5-7 — **Take a Friend, Make a Friend** for ages 8-11; \$121
- July 7-9 — **Take a Friend, Make a Friend** for ages 8-11; \$121
- July 12-15 — **Niobrara Tube Trip I** for ages 1-15; \$203
- July 19-22 — **Niobrara Tube Trip II** for ages 11-15; \$203
- July 25 — **Kearney Connections Day Camp** for ages 5-8 & chaperone; \$25
- July 23-27 — **Explorer Camp for Girls** ages 11-15; \$233
- July 28-August 1 — **Explorer Camp For Boys** ages 11-15; \$233
- August 2-4 — **Challenge 360 Degrees** for grades 9-12; \$137

Brochures with camp descriptions, registration forms and more information are available online at <http://4h.unl.edu/camp/youth/> or at the extension office.

