

What it looks like

It's usually sold in wraps.

The powder is off-white or pinkish and can sometimes look like small crystals. Base speed is purer. It is a pinkish-grey colour and feels like putty.

Prescription amphetamines like dexamphetamine are usually small white pills.

How it's taken

Either dabbed onto the gums or sniffed in lines like cocaine. It is chopped into smaller particles and then snorted through something like a banknote or a straw. Sometimes it's rolled up in cigarette paper and swallowed. This is called a 'speedbomb'. It can be mixed in drinks, or injected through syringes. It's often taken along with ecstasy.

What it does

It makes people feel

wide awake, excited and chatty. Clubbers are known to take it because they believe it gives them the energy to dance.

Speed stops people feeling hungry.

How long the effects last

The effects kick in after about half an hour if swallowed, but much quicker if injected, and can last for up to 6 hours. The high is followed by a long, slow comedown.



Addiction

You can get addicted to speed. The more speed you take, the greater the chance you'll need to take more to get the same buzz.

Risks

Dangers

Users have died from an overdose.

Speed often contains only 5 to 10% amphetamine. It can be cut (mixed) with various other substances, so you don't know what may be in it.

A mix of speed and antidepressants or alcohol has been known to kill. Taking speed with alcohol or other drugs puts an extra strain on your liver and kidneys.

Physical effects

It's very difficult to sit still or sleep on speed. Memory and concentration are affected.

The comedown can make users feel irritable and depressed, and can last for one or two days.

Speed makes some people panicky. Sniffing a lot in a short space of time can also lead to hallucinations.

Speed puts a strain on your heart. It's bad news for people with high blood pressure or a heart condition. An overdose can kill, and injecting increases the chances of overdose.

Injecting speed, like injecting any drug, can damage veins and cause ulcers and gangrene. Dirty or shared needles and injecting equipment can spread hepatitis B or C and HIV or AIDs.

Injecting speed is particularly dangerous because it's cut (mixed) with so much rubbish.

Speed can lead to anxiety, depression, irritability and aggression, as well as mental illness such as psychosis and feeling paranoid.

Sniffing a lot of speed too often can destroy your nasal passages.

Because speed stops you feeling hungry, it can cause the user's health to suffer and makes them more likely to suffer from other illnesses.

What to do in an emergency

Don't delay – phone 999 immediately.

If you think someone has overdosed on drugs, tell the operator what drugs they've taken (if you know).

What not to do

- Don't cause pain or another injury.
- Don't give them other drugs.
- Don't put them in a shower or bath.
- Don't walk them around.
- Don't leave them on their own.

Always follow the operator's instructions.

And remember, if you have any doubt **always call 999**. It could save the person's life.

What the law says

Speed is a classified drug. For the current classification and information about the consequences of using and supplying speed, go to www.knowthescore.info.

Fact: by law, passing drugs to someone else, including friends, is classed as supplying.

Fact: some countries may refuse visas to people who have drug convictions.

Getting more information

Phone the free and confidential 'Know the Score' information line on **0800 587 587 9**, to speak to a trained advisor. Someone is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Calls from landlines are free and will not show up on the phone bill. Or, you can visit the 'Know the Score' website at www.knowthescore.info.

Both the information line and the website can provide information about local services. Also, you can ask your GP to refer you to a specialist drugs service. To find a drug service in your area visit www.scottishdrugservices.com.

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