Positive Choices
Drug and Alcohol Information
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Drugs a-to-z

Cocaine: Factsheet



Evidence ratings:

This resource has undergone expert review. See our Help/Q&A section for more details.

Year: Year 9–10, Year 11–12

Targeted Drugs: Cocaine

Tags: coke, Charlie, crack, snow, freebase

Time Allocated: Partial lesson (under 45mins)

Origin: Australian

Cost:
Free

What is Cocaine?

In Australia, Cocaine is known as coke, blow, charlie, C, dust, flake, nose candy, snow, white, crack, rock, freebase.

Cocaine is produced from the leaves of *Erthroxylon coca* plant, and comes in three main forms:

- A paste which is often off-white or light brown
- A powder which is often white or off-white
- A white or off-white crystal rock known as crack cocaine.

In Australia, cocaine is most commonly in a powder form which is often snorted. As with all powder drugs, it is often sold 'cut' (mixed) with other white powder substances which can sometimes be harmful in their own right.

Personal Stories

"It started off only occasionally. But soon I was taking cocaine in the morning just to get through the day. My friends stopped talking to me. My girlfriend left me and I had to steal from my own family just to pay for drugs."
–Francis, 17

How many young people have tried Cocaine?

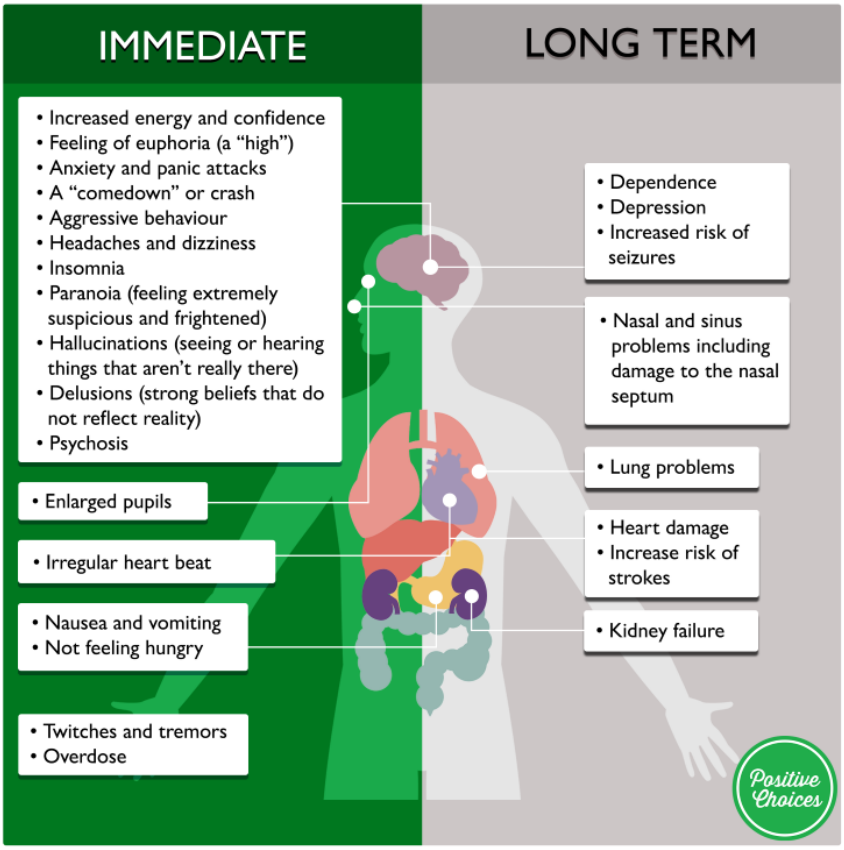
According to the 2022-2023 Australian secondary schools' survey, 1 in 100 students (1%) aged 12–17 used cocaine in the past month.

What are the effects of Cocaine?

When snorted or injected, cocaine quickly produces an intense 'rush'. This feeling or 'high' doesn't last very long — usually around 30–45 minutes if snorted.

The effects of cocaine can be immediate or long-term, as listed in the table below.

Immediate	Long-term
Enlarged pupils	Dependence (see glossary)
Irregular heart beat	Nasal and sinus problems including damage to the nasal septum
Not feeling hungry	Depression
Increased energy and confidence	Heart damage
Feeling of euphoria (a "high")	Lung problems
Nausea and vomiting	Kidney failure
Anxiety and panic attacks	Increased risk of strokes and seizures
A "comedown" or crash (see glossary)	
Aggressive behaviour	
Headaches and dizziness	
Twitches and tremors	
Insomnia	
Paranoia (feeling extremely suspicious and frightened)	
Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that aren't really there)	
Delusions (strong beliefs that do not reflect reality)	
Psychosis (see glossary)	
Overdose	



Evidence Base

This factsheet was developed following expert review by researchers at the Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use at the University of Sydney, the National Drug & Alcohol Research Centre at the University of New South Wales, and the National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University.

- Credit to the Home Office for quotes adapted from Talk to Frank

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