

What's Driving Meth Use in Utah?

There is a lot of attention in the media in the past few years about the rise of methamphetamine use nationwide. According to recent studies, Utah is one of the national leaders per capita in meth production and use, and women comprise 64 percent of individuals who have used meth in the past 12 months. Of the women in treatment for meth addiction in Utah, nearly three-quarters of them are mothers.

But why do people start using meth?

- For some, they may be told by a friend that it will make them feel good, get more done during the day or perform better.
- Shift and service workers may use the drug to stay awake to work extra shifts.
- Women often begin using meth to lose weight.
- Meth is less expensive and more accessible than other drugs
- Users often start with the misconception that methamphetamine is not really a “drug.”

What are the early warning signs of meth use or addiction?

- Hyperactivity
- Erratic sleep patterns
- Irritability
- Isolation from friends and family
- Mood changes (includes hostility, abusive behavior, depression)
- Loss of appetite and weight loss
- Lack of interest in normal activities
- Poor judgment

What should I do if I suspect a friend or loved one is using?

The local campaign by the Utah Methamphetamine Joint Task Force, “End Meth Now” gives the following advice:

1. Call 2-1-1 to find a local substance abuse treatment center.
2. Contact the treatment provider, who can help with ways to get the user into treatment.
3. Give the treatment provider basic information about the user, such as his/her whereabouts and physical or psychological condition.