

# What is Cocaine?

Cocaine is a white powder made from the leaves of the South American Coca plant. Cocaine is more commonly taken by dividing the powder into lines and snorting up the nose; it can also be rubbed into gums. Some people dissolve the powder and inject it into the blood stream.

Cocaine is a stimulant drug.

When cocaine is taken into the body, it sends high levels of dopamine (a natural chemical messenger in your body) into the parts of your brain that control pleasure. This build up causes intense feelings of energy and alertness, which last for a short period of time.

Cocaine can be mixed with other substances and processed to make a waxy rock crystal ('Crack') or powder ('Freebase'), which is then smoked in a pipe.

Some people will mix drugs, for example using cocaine alongside other substances such as alcohol (a depressant drug) or ecstasy (a psychoactive stimulant). Mixing drugs increases the risk of overdose.

## The Law

- Cocaine is a Class A substance.
- Being in possession of cocaine can result in up to 7 years in prison.
- Supplying cocaine, which includes giving or selling cocaine to your friends, can result in a life prison sentence and an unlimited fine.
- A conviction for a drug-related offence may stop you from visiting certain countries, such as the United States, as well as making it harder to get a job.

# Catch22 Surrey Young People's Substance Misuse Service

Catch22 Surrey Young People's Substance Misuse service is a service for young people aged between 11 and 25.

We offer free confidential advice and support.

If you would like to know more about the risks and effects of alcohol or drugs, and/or would like to access support - we will listen and work with you with to achieve the changes you would like to make.

## Please contact

**24/7 helpline: 08006226662**

T: 01372 832905

Text: 07595088388

Email: [ypsm@catch-22.org.uk](mailto:ypsm@catch-22.org.uk)

Website: <https://www.catch-22.org.uk/services/surrey-young-peoples-substance-misuse-service/>

Instagram: [sypsms\\_c22](https://www.instagram.com/sypsms_c22)

**catch  
22**

**catch-22.org.uk  
01372 832905**

catch  
22

# COCAINE

**AKA:** 'Coke', 'C', 'Snow', 'Powder', 'Blow', 'Crack', 'Charlie', 'Sniff', 'Rock of Crack' or 'Freebase'

## UNDERSTANDING THE RISKS

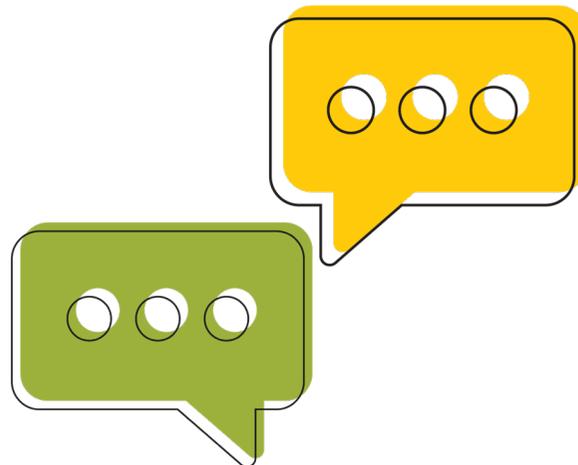
There is no safe level of drug use. It is important to be careful when taking any type of drug.



# 10 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. High doses of cocaine can raise body temperature and cause convulsions, breathing difficulties, heart attack and heart failure. This could put you in a coma and even lead to death.
2. Snorting cocaine can damage the structure of your nose. People who regularly use cocaine may experience nose bleeds, frequent runny nose and difficulty swallowing.
3. People may experience a come down after using cocaine. This can involve feeling like you have a cold, feelings of tiredness and low mood.
4. Injecting any type of drug can damage veins, cause abscesses and blood clots. Sharing needles and other injecting equipment can also spread blood borne viruses such as HIV and Hepatitis.
5. Snorting cocaine and sharing equipment can place people at risk of contracting blood borne viruses. Blood and mucus are easily transferred onto straws and bank notes, added to which, cocaine damages the lining of your nose, making it more open to infection.
6. Cocaine use can cause people to feel depressed, anxious and suffer from panic attacks. It can make existing mental health issues worse.
7. Cocaine can suppress your appetite, causing weight loss and diarrhea. Regular use can also lead to other digestive problems such as bowel decay from reduced blood flow.

8. The risk of overdosing increases when cocaine is mixed with other drugs. When mixed with alcohol it forms a toxic substance in the liver called cocaethylene, which stays in the body longer and increases the impact on the heart and liver. Mixing cocaine with alcohol increases the risk of sudden death.
9. Cocaine changes the way your brain works, and people can experience intense cravings. Regular use can increase a person's tolerance to cocaine, which means they need more of the drug to achieve the same effect. This can increase the risk of harm, including overdose. It takes away the body's natural supply of dopamine (happy chemical), which can also lead to mental health issues and drug dependency.
10. Drug dependency can impact on all areas of a person's life including work/education, money, and relationships with partners, family and friends.



## Symptoms of withdrawals Include:

Psychological symptoms: Mood swings, depression and anxiety, inability to feel pleasure, increased desire to sleep, cravings for cocaine, restlessness, difficulty concentrating, unpleasant dreams and agitation.

Physical symptoms: chills, tremors, muscle aches, insomnia and nerve pain.

Symptoms of cocaine overdose include: Difficulty breathing, high body temperature, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, confusion, irregular heart rhythm, altered mental state, chest pain, head-ache, hypothermia, restlessness, blurred vision, vision loss, extreme sweating, loss of consciousness, delirium, heart attack, stroke and death.

**If using cocaine and you begin to feel unwell, or notice someone is unwell whilst using, seek immediate medical attention. Go straight to A&E or for urgent medical advice contact 111 or 999 in an emergency.**