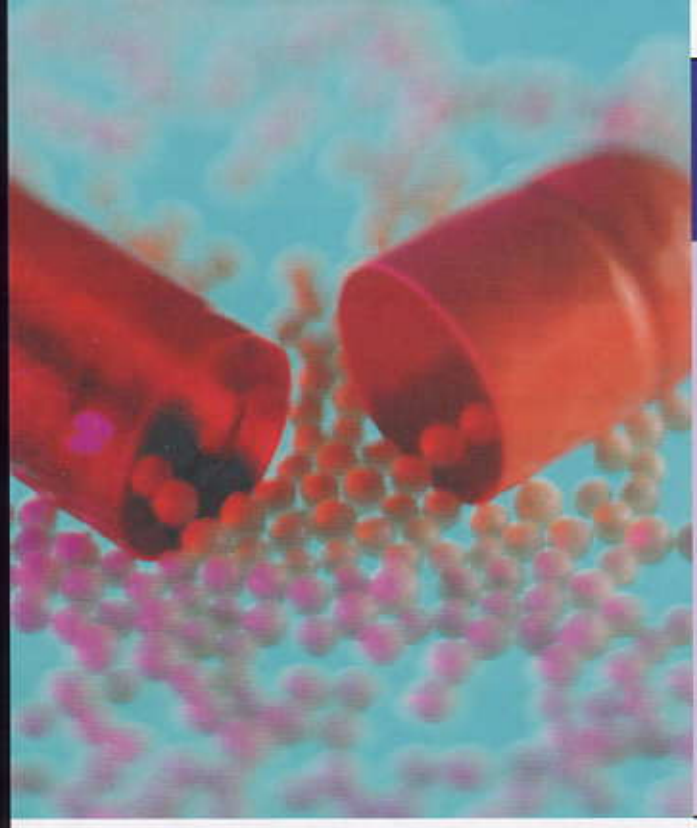

What are Stimulants?

Stimulants, sometimes referred to as "uppers," reverse the effects of fatigue.

All stimulants increase alertness, cause excitement, reduce appetite, increase activity, and can promote euphoria.

One mild stimulant is caffeine. Examples of stronger stimulants are, amphetamines, methamphetamines, cocaine, and crack. (See Feature Article on Methamphetamines, p. 4-7)

What Are Amphetamines?

In the 1930's, amphetamine was marketed as Benzedrine in an over-the-counter inhaler to treat nasal congestion for asthmatics, hay fever sufferers, and people with colds. During the Depression and Prohibition, the drug was used and abused by non-asthmatics looking for a buzz. By 1937 amphetamine was available by prescription in tablet form.

Amphetamines, like other drugs, have been promoted as miracle drugs — *the perfect diet pill or the greatest relief for fatigue.* In 1967, at the height of the American Amphetamine Epidemic, physicians wrote 31 million prescriptions for diet pills. Today, the Food and Drug Administration restrictions limit the use of amphetamines to three medical conditions:

Narcolepsy — a rare disorder in which people fall asleep as many as 50 times a day if they stay in one position too long. Low doses of amphetamines help keep narcoleptic persons awake.

Hyperkinesia — also called Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Short-term weight programs — to curb appetite.

Ritalin And Adderall

Ritalin and Adderall are prescribed for ADHD. Four out of every 100 school children have ADHD. These children have an abnormally high activity level and an extremely short attention span. They are aggressive, talkative, restless, impulsive, and lack clear direction. Oddly, Ritalin and Adderall have a calming effect on these children.

Availability of Ritalin and Adderall has promoted abuse among adolescents who crush these tablets and snort the powder to get high. Abusers have little difficulty obtaining the drugs from classmates who have been prescribed them. Ritalin and Adderall increase heart and respiratory rates, elevate blood pressure, and decrease appetite. In addition, users may experience sweating, headaches, blurred vision, dizziness, sleeplessness, and anxiety. Extremely high doses can cause rapid and irregular heartbeats, tremors, loss of coordination, and exhaustion.

What Is Ephedrine?

Ephedrine, a common substance in over-the-counter and health food products, is a synthetic version of ephedra. Found in many decongestants, antihistamine, and weight loss products, it is the main ingredient in the production of methamphetamine and many designer drugs.

Today, many individuals use large doses of ephedrine to get high. Some of the ephedrine-containing products available over-the-counter include 40 or 50 milligrams of ephedrine as well as substantial quantities of caffeine. Sometimes called "herbal ecstasy," ephedrine is touted as "safe" or "legal" MDMA. Small amounts of ephedrine stimulate and constrict blood vessels. Adverse effects of ephedrine include restlessness, muscle spasms, chills, increased heart rate and heart palpitations, dry throat and fainting. The physical effects last three to four hours, but users may feel out of touch with reality for several days.

Methcathinone Or "Cat"

Methacatinone known on the streets as "Cat," is an analogue of methamphetamine and cathinone. Clandestinely manufactured, methcathinone is almost exclusively sold in the powder form. It is most commonly snorted, but can be taken orally by mixing it with a drink, or diluted in water and injected. It has the abuse potential of methamphetamine.

KHAT

For centuries, Khat, the fresh leaves of the Catha Edulis plant, has been consumed and cultivated in East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. Chewing Khat predates the use of coffee and is used in similar social settings. Growing over 6 feet tall, this flowering evergreen shrub's leaves are chewed to alleviate fatigue. Chewed in moderation, they also reduce appetite. Compulsive use may result in manic behavior with grandiose delusions, hallucinations, and paranoia. It contains a number of chemicals, among which are two controlled substances, cathinone and cathine.

WHAT IS COCAINE?

Cocaine is one of the strongest natural stimulants and is powerfully addictive. It is distributed on the street as a white crystalline powder and "crack," a treated version that takes the form of chips, chunks, or rocks. Cocaine can be inhaled, smoked or injected.

Cocaine is obtained from the leaves of the coca plant. The plant or bush grows naturally in Chile, Peru and Bolivia, but is also cultivated in other countries.

What Are The Effects Of Cocaine?

Due to cocaine's highly addictive quality, an individual cannot predict or control the extent to which he or she will continue to use it. The intensity of the effects of cocaine, as with most drugs depends on the dose and rate of entry to the brain. Cocaine reaches the brain in three to five minutes when snorted. When inhaled or injected the drug reaches the brain faster. Cocaine triggers the brain to release dopamine, a chemical messenger associated with pleasure and movement. Unlike the natural release of dopamine, cocaine prevents the brain from reabsorbing the dopamine. An overload of dopamine occurs and the user experiences feelings of extreme euphoria. The brain is depleted of dopamine, leading to severe depression after the cocaine has dissipated. The severe depression that follows the euphoria leaves many users wanting to regain the euphoric "high."

The euphoric effects of cocaine are similar to those of amphetamine. Immediate effects are hyper-stimulation, reduced fatigue, and mental clarity. To avoid the fatigue and depression of coming down, many users frequently repeat doses. Excessive doses of cocaine may lead to seizures and death from respiratory failure, stroke, or heart failure. In some instances, sudden death can occur the first time cocaine is used.

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What Are Crack And Freebase?

Crack and freebase are purer, cheaper forms of cocaine that look like chips, chunks, or rocks. Crack and freebase are made by using chemical reactions to FREE the cocaine BASE from cocaine hydrochloride (regular cocaine). Flammable solvents mixed with cocaine are heated during the separation process leading many users to be at risk of being burned or killed. Crack, the chunk or "rock" form of cocaine, gets its name from the popping and "cracking" sound occurring while the mixture is being heated.

Crack and freebase are more lethal than cocaine. Smoking delivers large quantities of cocaine to the lungs, producing effects close to that of injecting the drug. The effects of the cocaine are felt almost immediately, are very intense, and are quickly over. In addition to the other dangers associated with cocaine, crack users suffer from respiratory problems including coughing, shortness of breath, severe chest pains, and lung damage and bleeding.

CRACK COCAINE ROCK

THE EFFECTS OF STIMULANTS

- Increase in blood pressure, heart rate, breathing rate, and body temperature
- Increased risk of heart attack, stroke, seizures and respiratory failure
- Increased risk of hepatitis or HIV through shared needles
- Dizziness, headache, insomnia, and lack of coordination
- Reduction of the body's ability to fight infections
- Dependence, addiction psychosis
- Violent, erratic, or paranoid behavior
- Confusion, anxiety and depression
- Hallucinations, mood disturbances
- Loss of interest in food or sex

Heartbreak of Cocaine Abuse

Cocaine abusers believe they can hide their addiction. However, physical signs soon become noticeable.

Cocaine users typically have runny noses and frequent upper respiratory infections. Prolonged cocaine snorting can result in sores in the nose and can damage it enough to cause it to collapse.

When ingesting cocaine, individuals may have severe mood swings and stay awake for hours or even days. Some cocaine users spend hundreds or thousands of dollars on cocaine and crack each week and will do anything to support their habit.

Many turn to drug selling, prostitution, or other crimes. Cocaine becomes the most important thing in their lives. This obsession overrides everything — *family, friends, career, everything but, perhaps, the money they need to buy more cocaine.*