Crystal Meth (methamphetamine) is a highly addictive stimulant that speeds up parts of the brain and the body's functions & may result in addiction sooner than other drugs

The drug is often smoked or injected - the quickest routes to affect the brain & body (within a few minutes). Other routes are snorting (3-5 minutes) & swallowing (20-30 minutes)

Effects can last 10+ hours & may result in:

- Feeling irritated or panicky
- Feeling dizzy, shaky, twitching
- Feeling paranoid or thinking people want to hurt them
- Increased alertness & energy - fast heart rate & breathing, nose bleeds
- Taking more risks than usual
- Yelling or being aggressive
- Possible violent behaviours
- Enlarged pupils, dry mouth, cracked skin
- Teeth grinding & lots of sweating
- Feeling less hungry, weight loss
- Over-sensitive skin - causing repeated scratching
- Feeling very happy
- Increased desire to have sex

Coming Down - Withdrawal - Crash

While it can take a few days to “come down” from using Crystal Meth, the effects may linger for a few weeks. A person can experience:

- Difficulty sleeping including twitching arms & legs
- Exhaustion, tiredness – needing sleep
- Headaches, dizziness & blurred vision
- Paranoia (fearful, mistrustful)
- Hallucinations (see things or hear things) & confusion
- Short tempered & feeling ‘down’
- Short-term memory loss
- Depression, cravings & suicidal thoughts

EMERGENCY SERVICES may be required while using or withdrawing from the drug - if the person becomes violent or threatens to hurt themselves or someone else - move to safety - Call 911

Reactions to Crystal Meth can vary depending on many factors (e.g., purity, how it is used, if the person is a new user). Dangerous reactions can happen when small amounts of the drug are used

Crystal Meth use does disrupt the brain for a period of time. The good news is the brain often repairs itself with treatment & strong support
Helping someone who is having a bad reaction to Crystal Meth

Stay calm
- Keep your voice low, calm and steady
- Try not to make too much eye contact
- Give the person space
- Move children, older people & others away for safety
- Make the area as safe as you can, remove anything they could hurt themselves with
- Encourage them to drink some water (Meth causes a lot of sweating – the body needs to replace the water it lost)
- Don’t ask too many questions. Use the person’s name. Say things like, “Jason, I just want to make sure you are safe”

Reassure
- Be supportive. Tell them that they will be okay, and that what they are experiencing will pass when the Meth wears off
- Help them calm down by moving them to a quiet place where they can rest
- Listen to them and respond with calming comments. This isn’t a time to argue

Respond
- Call an ambulance if the person has:
  - Unconsciousness
  - Breathing problems
  - Seizures or uncontrolled jerking
  - Extreme agitation or confusion
  - Sudden, severe headache
  - Racing heartbeat & chest pain

If the person becomes violent or threatens to hurt themselves or someone else, move yourself and others to a safe place and call the police - 911

When things calm down
- Choose a time to talk when the person isn’t using Crystal Meth. Don’t force the conversation.
- It helps just to listen. If the person wants to talk to you about their drug use, try to listen without interrupting, judging or becoming upset.
- When they’ve finished talking, repeat what they’ve said back to them in a calm voice – this helps to check in and see that you have understood what they are telling you.
- Doing this creates a ‘safe space’ for them to talk, they know that they can come to you and not be judged.
- You can help them think about change by being there and supportive.
- Ask calm, respectful questions, such as, “What do you like about using crystal meth”... “What don’t you like.”

What to do for yourself & others
Be clear to the person what is and isn’t acceptable behavior & also what will happen if they break your rules. Look after yourself, set limits & boundaries - they are important for you both.

It’s difficult to see someone you love getting into debt or breaking the law, but think about how giving them money may help them continue using Crystal Meth.

If you do give them money, make sure you don’t give them more than you can afford to not get back.

It’s important to stay safe, and get support for yourself and your family. Have a plan ready! This can include having a list of emergency phone numbers, such as health care professionals (including mental health & addictions) & responsible adults to care for children or older adults during a crisis.

Some contact options:
- Crisis Response Centre (adults only) (open 24/7) (204) 940-1781 (817 Bannatyne Avenue at Tecumseh)
- Klinic Crisis Line (adult & youth) (24/7) - (204) 786-8686 or 1-888-322-3019
- Rapid Access to Addiction Medicine (RAAM) - Call for information: 1-855-662-6605 (8:30-4:30 Monday-Friday) or visit: MBAddictionHelp.ca

Supports & Resources

There is hope...
You may be feeling anxious, helpless and desperate for a solution. Be patient. Real long term change takes time.

There are things you can do to support yourself and others including:
- Talking with a trusted friend or family member
- Talking to a local doctor
- Joining a support group or connecting with services
- Doing activities that you enjoy
- Making sure you ‘have a life’, and stay connected to your family and friends

If the person is talking about giving up Crystal Meth, make sure you have information on treatment options. Support services are also available for families affected by another person’s drug use:

Call Manitoba Addictions Helpline 1-855-662-6605 (8:30-4:30 Monday-Friday) or (MBAddictionHelp.ca).

For more information on Crystal Meth visit: afm.mb.ca (click Crystal Meth) or call the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba’s Knowledge Exchange Centre at 1-866-638-2568