

What is powdered cocaine?

Powdered cocaine (cocaine hydrochloride) is a stimulant that is extracted from the leaves of the coca plant, which is native to South America. In the late 19th century cocaine was used as an anesthetic, but the availability of safer drugs rendered many of its medical applications obsolete. Today powdered cocaine is abused for the intense euphoric effects it produces.

What does it look like?

Cocaine typically is sold to users as a fine, white, crystalline powder.

How is powdered cocaine abused?

Powdered cocaine typically is snorted (inhaled through the nose), although it may be dissolved in water and injected. When snorted, the drug is absorbed into the bloodstream through the nasal membranes. The drug reaches the brain—and produces its euphoric effect—within 3 to 5 minutes. When injected, the drug is released directly into the bloodstream and reaches the brain within 15 to 30 seconds.

Who uses the drug?

Individuals of all ages use cocaine—data reported in the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse indicate that an estimated 27,788,000 U.S. residents aged 12 and older used a form of cocaine at least once in their lifetime. (Slightly more than 6 million of these individuals used crack cocaine.)

Powdered cocaine use among high school students is a particular concern. Seven percent of high school seniors in the United States used the drug at least once in their lifetime, and 2 percent used the drug in the past month, according to the University of Michigan's Monitoring the Future Survey.

What are the risks?

Powdered cocaine is a powerful central nervous system stimulant. Individuals who use the drug may become restless, irritable, and anxious. Use of powdered cocaine also can result in constricted blood vessels and increased temperature, heart rate, and blood pressure. Heart attack, respiratory failure, stroke, and seizure also may result from cocaine use. Using cocaine at the same time as alcohol is consumed is particularly dangerous because it heightens the cocaine's euphoric effect and potentially increases the risk of sudden death.

Cocaine is a very addictive drug. Chronic users risk developing tolerance

to cocaine's effects. Many addicts report that as tolerance develops they fail to achieve the positive effects they experienced when they first began using the drug; thus, they begin to use cocaine with greater frequency and in larger doses.

Cocaine users who inject the drug expose themselves to additional risks, including contracting human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B and C, and other blood-borne viruses.

What is it called?

The most common names for powdered cocaine are blow, nose candy, nose powder, powder, and white powder. (Please see the Street Terms text box below for additional names.)

Street Terms for Powdered Cocaine

Aspirin	Joy powder
Aunt	Marching powder
Birdie powder	Pariba
Bolivian marching powder	Powder diamonds
Bouncing powder	Shake
Candy sugar	Shrile
Devil's dandruff	Soft
Fast white lady	Star-spangled powder
Flake	Sugar boogers
Flave	Uptown
Foolish powder	White boy
Friskie powder	White dragon
Happy powder	Yao



Is powdered cocaine illegal?

Yes, powdered cocaine is illegal. Powdered cocaine is a Schedule II substance under the Controlled Substances Act. Schedule II drugs, which include PCP and methamphetamine, have a high potential for abuse. Abuse of these drugs may lead to severe psychological or physical dependence.

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