

Amphetamine Addiction and Abuse

[Home](#) » [Drug Addiction Resources](#) » Amphetamine Addiction and Abuse



By [Orlando Recovery Center](#) Editor [Jonathan Strum](#)
Medically Reviewed By [Elizabeth Cambria, PharmD](#) Updated on 05/10/22

Amphetamines are mood-altering drugs that can be highly addictive when misused. They are legally available by prescription [to treat](#) attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), narcolepsy and several other conditions. They are also used illegally as recreational drugs for their stimulant activity and euphoric effects. Various [street names](#) for amphetamines include speed, uppers, dexies and pep pills.

If you or someone you love is taking amphetamines, it's important to understand the dangers of amphetamine abuse, dependence and addiction. Further, it's helpful to know where to turn if an addiction begins to develop.

Table of Contents

- [What Is Amphetamine?](#)
- [Is Amphetamine Addictive?](#)
- [How Long Does Amphetamine Stay in Your System?](#)
- [Amphetamine Addiction and Abuse Statistics](#)
- [Amphetamine Abuse Symptoms](#)
- [Amphetamine Addiction](#)
- [Amphetamine Withdrawal](#)
- [Amphetamine Addiction Treatment](#)

What Is Amphetamine?

Amphetamine is a central nervous system (CNS) stimulant. It [works by](#) increasing the levels of the neurotransmitters norepinephrine and dopamine in the brain. This stimulates the CNS, resulting in feelings of euphoria, alertness and decreased appetite. In addition to its desired effects, this CNS stimulation also causes the side effects associated with amphetamine use.

The original drug amphetamine has been altered to create new drugs that are part of a class called amphetamines. These drugs include dextroamphetamine, methamphetamine and lisdexamfetamine. Prescription amphetamines [are approved](#) to treat conditions such as narcolepsy, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and binge eating disorder. They can also be prescribed to help suppress appetite.

Amphetamine Brand Names

Amphetamines that are currently available by prescription include:

- Adderall, Adderall XR (mixed amphetamine salts)
- Adzenys ER, Adzenys XR ODT (amphetamine sulfate)
- Desoxyn (methamphetamine)
- Dexedrine (dextroamphetamine)
- Dyanavel XR (amphetamine sulfate)
- Evekeo, Evekeo ODT (amphetamine sulfate)
- Mydayis (amphetamine salts)
- ProCentra (dextroamphetamine)
- Vyvanse (lisdexamfetamine)
- Zenzedi (dextroamphetamine)

Is Amphetamine Addictive?

Prescription amphetamines are [Schedule II controlled substances](#). Schedule II controlled substances have approved medical uses in the United States but are considered to have a high risk of abuse, addiction and dependence. Taking prescription amphetamines only as prescribed by your health care provider can help prevent addiction.

Addiction usually occurs when amphetamines are misused to get high or enhance performance. When you become addicted to amphetamines, your body and mind feel like they can't get through the day without them. You may continue to use amphetamines even though they have negative effects on your life.

The [pleasurable effects](#) you may experience with amphetamine use are due to an increase in dopamine in the brain. These effects may include:

- Euphoria or a “rush”
- Feeling that you think more clearly
- Feeling more confident
- Feeling more sociable
- Increased energy

How Long Does Amphetamine Stay in Your System?

The amount of time amphetamines stay in your system depends on which amphetamine you are taking. The half-life of a drug is how long it takes the body to eliminate half a dose from its system. It generally takes around five half-lives for a drug to be removed from the system. Half-lives of some amphetamines are:

- **Adderall (dextroamphetamine-amphetamine):** [Nine to 13 hours](#)
- **Amphetamine sulfate:** [11 to 15 hours](#)
- **Dextroamphetamine:** [Six to 12 hours](#)
- **Methamphetamine:** [Four to five hours](#)

Amphetamines can be detected on a urine drug test [one to three days](#) after the last use. They are only detectable in the blood for [10 to 12 hours](#) after use. Hair tests can detect amphetamines for up to [90 days](#) after the last use. Amphetamine is tested on [standard five drug panels](#) and more in-depth 10 or 12 drug panels.

Amphetamine Addiction and Abuse Statistics

In 2020, [10.3 million people](#) aged 12 or older misused stimulants. About one-third of these people misused prescription stimulant medications like amphetamines, and [2.5 million people](#) used methamphetamine. For the most part, methamphetamine abuse is not attributed to the prescription product; rather, it involves meth that is produced and sold illegally.

Between 2017 and 2019, an average of [6.3%](#) of people aged 12 and older struggled with a substance use disorder in Florida. A single-day count in March 2019 found that [57,335 people](#) in Florida were enrolled in a substance use treatment program.

Amphetamine Abuse Symptoms

Amphetamine abuse involves taking amphetamines in a manner other than prescribed. You may be abusing amphetamines if you:

- Take a larger amount than prescribed
- Take amphetamines for longer than prescribed
- Use someone else's prescription

- Use amphetamines for their euphoric effects

Amphetamine Addiction

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) categorizes substance abuse and substance dependence as [substance use disorder](#). You may have a substance use disorder if you misuse amphetamines. Amphetamine abuse occurs when you use amphetamines for a purpose or in a way other than how they have been prescribed by a health care provider. There are [11 characteristics of substance use disorder](#) that may be symptoms of amphetamine abuse:

1. You take amphetamines in larger amounts and for a longer period of time than intended.
2. You want to or have tried to cut down or stop using amphetamines but have been unsuccessful.
3. You spend a lot of time trying to get amphetamines, use amphetamines or recover from amphetamine use.
4. You have a strong craving or desire to use amphetamines.
5. You have had troubles at work, school or home because of amphetamine use.
6. You continue to use amphetamines even though they have caused problems with your relationships and in social situations.
7. You have stopped doing activities that were once important to you or you enjoyed doing.

8. You place yourself in dangerous situations because of your amphetamine use.
9. You continue to use amphetamines even though they negatively affect your physical and mental health.
10. You need to take more amphetamines to get the same effect you used to.
11. You suffer from withdrawal symptoms when you stop using amphetamines.

Amphetamine Withdrawal

Amphetamine addiction may lead to uncomfortable physical and psychological withdrawal symptoms when the dose of a drug is reduced or eliminated. Amphetamine withdrawal symptoms occur when someone has developed a dependence on the drug and abruptly quits taking it. Withdrawal symptoms may vary in severity depending on the amphetamine being taken, but most amphetamines share similar physical and psychological symptoms and signs.

Amphetamine Withdrawal Symptoms

Common early amphetamine withdrawal symptoms often occur [within 24 hours](#) of the last amphetamine dose. They include:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Fatigue
- Tremors
- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Muscle aches or cramps
- Insomnia or excessive sleeping
- Vivid dreams
- Memory impairments
- Lack of focus or ability to concentrate
- Cravings for amphetamines
- Loss of interest in pleasurable activities (anhedonia)
- A general sense of unease or dissatisfaction (dysphoria)

Symptom severity is often related to:

- How long you have been taking amphetamines
- The dose and frequency of use
- Whether other drugs or alcohol were used alongside amphetamines
- Factors like age, metabolism, genetic makeup, physical health and mental health

Later signs of amphetamine withdrawal, often known as post-acute withdrawal syndrome (PAWS) or protracted withdrawal, are similar to those experienced during acute withdrawal but tend to be less severe. PAWS refers to acute withdrawal symptoms that last beyond the normally expected acute withdrawal timeframe. PAWS may persist for weeks or even months after acute withdrawal. People who are experiencing PAWS may feel like their recovery has failed. However, it is important to understand that PAWS is often a normal part of recovery and that withdrawal symptoms will continue to subside as time goes on.

Amphetamine Detox

The initial stages of amphetamine detox are the most severe and can be uncomfortable. Acute withdrawal symptoms set in as the drug starts to leave the body. The initial amphetamine withdrawal or “crash” typically lasts [about a week](#), and the uncomfortable withdrawal symptoms experienced during this time may make you want to return to drug use. Once the most severe symptoms of amphetamine withdrawal subside, milder symptoms may continue for weeks or months.

One way to minimize withdrawal symptom severity is to work with a professional who can develop a tapering schedule that gradually reduces the dose over time. This will help someone with amphetamine dependence or addiction slowly readapt to normal, drug-free brain function. It will also lessen the effects of the “crash” that occurs when suddenly stopping the drug or quitting cold turkey. Detoxing at a facility like the Orlando Recovery Center can aid in managing withdrawal symptoms and provide support and care that may not be available with an at-home detox.

Amphetamine Addiction Treatment

Amphetamine addiction can be challenging to recover from, especially without help. At the Orlando Recovery Center, we understand the unique aspects of amphetamine dependence and addiction. Our fully licensed and accredited rehab treatment programs help support clients throughout the entire recovery journey, from intake and detox to long-term aftercare.

Our [medical detox](#) program provides safety and comfort during detox with 24-hour medical support and medication-assisted treatment when appropriate. Along with medically assisted detox, the Orlando Recovery Center offers [inpatient](#) and [outpatient care](#) at varying levels of intensity. [Available treatment programs](#) include:

- Medical detox
- Inpatient/residential treatment
- Partial hospitalization program
- Intensive outpatient services
- Outpatient care
- Teletherapy programs
- Individual and group therapy
- Family and couples counseling
- Nutritional counseling and dietary planning
- Life skills training
- Fitness therapy

- Case management
- Aftercare planning

[Amenities at the Orlando Recovery Center](#) include a variety of indoor and outdoor activities, such as:

- A swimming pool
- A fully equipped exercise gym
- Basketball and sand volleyball courts
- Yoga, art and life-skills therapy options
- Designated smoking areas
- Lakefront views

How To Overcome Amphetamine Addiction

Getting help is the first step in the amphetamine addiction recovery process. If you or someone you love is struggling with an amphetamine use disorder, the Orlando Recovery Center can help you begin a life free from addiction. [Contact us](#) today to learn more about treatment programs that can work well for your situation.

844-716-0929

[Sources](#)
[Medical Disclaimer](#)