

Cocaine: harm minimisation strategies

Measure and track your dose

Start low, go slow: cocaine is often used in small doses (bumps). Start with a small amount to check how it affects you, especially if it's from a new source or batch. Use a milligram scale to measure precise doses.

Re-dosing: the short duration of effects often leads to compulsive re-dosing. Think about how much and how often you want to use and set limits before starting to avoid impulsive re-dosing or bingeing. Wait between doses.

Avoid “eyeballing”: use a milligram scale to measure doses. Cocaine's effects can be intense, and overdose is a real risk with high doses or strong batches.

Look after your body

Hydration: cocaine can make you dehydrated, especially during long sessions. Sip water regularly, but avoid overhydration.

Food: cocaine can make you not very hungry, but keeping up with good nutrition will help support your body and recovery. If you can't manage a full meal, try a smoothie or meal replacement drink.

Prioritise sleep: many of the unwelcome side-effects of cocaine - like irritability or feeling scattered - get worse when you're sleep deprived.

Care for your nose: if snorting, change which nostril you use each time. Saline (salt water-based) sprays will help moisturise and protect your nasal passages. Avoid using shared snorting tools to reduce your risk of infection.

Set = your body and mind

Cocaine can intensify whatever state you're already in. Being well-rested, fed, and in a steady headspace can reduce the chance of a negative experience.

Setting = your surroundings

Cocaine can increase energy, talkativeness, and impulsivity, so being in a chaotic or unpredictable environment can heighten the risk of harm. Being somewhere calm, safe, and with trusted people can help you stay grounded.



Contact us for support

If you're struggling with alcohol or other drugs, we're here for you.

We offer a variety of community and residential programs throughout Queensland and New South Wales, helping thousands of people every year to navigate alcohol and drug challenges and move forward in life.

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Risky mixes with cocaine

Cocaine and alcohol



Risks: mixing these can create a compound called cocaethylene, which makes effects last longer than cocaine. It's also more toxic to the heart and liver. This can significantly increase the risk of sudden death.

Cocaine and cannabis



Risks: cannabis can mask some of the stimulant effects of cocaine, which can lead you to consume more cocaine than usual to get the wanted effect.

Cocaine with other stimulants (MDMA, meth, speed)



Risks: mixing stimulants can overwork your heart and lead to psychosis. Although cocaine can reduce the effects of other dopamine releasers, this will also put an extra strain on your heart.

Cocaine and opioids (speedballing)



Risks: combining the stimulant effects of cocaine with the depressant effects of opioids can confuse your body's ability to properly know its limits. This can increase the risk of respiratory failure.

Remember:

The effects of any substance can vary based on individual factors, environment, tolerance, and purity.

No dose is completely without risk. When possible, start low and go slow, avoid using alone, and take steps to care for yourself and others.