



ICE

The latest substance to appear on the illicit drug scene is "ice." Also called crystal meth and L.A. glass, ice is not a new drug. It is a smokable version of crystallized methamphetamine. In the 1960's and 1970's methamphetamine was often ingested in pill form or snorted. More recently, this fairly cheap, widely available drug was generally injected. Appearing in Hawaii in 1987, the new odorless, tasteless form now called ice, closely resembling slivers of glass or rock candy, is well on its way to becoming the newest drug epidemic.

Ice is generally sold in quantities of a tenth of a gram. Costing about \$50, the ice is good for one or two hits. Compared with the thirty minute high from crack, ice is reputed to provide a high for eight hours or more. It is as highly addictive as crack, and shares some of the same side effects: intense depressive episodes and paranoia, as well as convulsions in cases of severe abuse. It causes lung, kidney and liver damage in addition to serious increases in blood pressure. Users lose their appetites, feel "wired" and cannot sleep. To prolong these sensations, addicts typically take increasingly large quantities of speed, sometimes staying up for more than three days in a row. Eventually they "crash" and sleep for 24 to 36 hours at a time.

Smuggled in from illegal labs in the Philippines and South Korea, ice will soon be making its debut in other states. Many law enforcement experts theorize that recent efforts to stop the flow of cocaine into the United States will make users turn to the more easily available methamphetamine, generally referred to as crank or speed. Producers of speed, the "cookers" usually doing business in California, Oregon and Texas, are making plans to expand their production and

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Sample of "ice," also known as crystal meth and L.A. glass.

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scope of operations to take advantage of the expected cocaine drought as drug enforcement in Colombia continues. State and federal enforcement agencies are therefore increasing their efforts to close clandestine labs throughout the state in an attempt to head off a future ice craze.

Based on interviews from the Honolulu Police Department, smoking ice is reported to cause highs that can last as long as sixteen hours. Some users say that the effect lasts only for as long as the ice is smoked. Still other users prefer to liquify ice and inject it, which they say produces the long-lasting highs. Smoking ice increases the speed with which it affects the brain, but does not necessarily mean that these effects last any longer.

In previous years, powdered methamphetamine has been sprinkled on marijuana or mixed with hashish and then smoked. But ice is a purer form and produces a quicker and more intense high. It is reported that manufacturers of ice in southeast Asia are rinsing the crystal form of methamphetamine with

a new solvent which may result in the drug being stronger.

*“ . . . Ice represents
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Clearly, the smokable form of ice, just as with crack, represents a change from the earlier prevalent method of injecting drugs. Has the wide-spread fear of AIDS played a role in this trend? For whatever reason, ice represents the newest potential drug plague in the United States. ★

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Sample of harmless rock candy which can be bought in most any candy store.

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