

**“Catching Up to Speed”**  
**Accelerating Your Understanding of “Meth Mouth”**  
Ontario Dental Association ASM 2024  
April 19, 2024

**Learning Outcomes:** At the end of the presentation, the dental professional will be able to:

- **R**ecognize the signs and symptoms of methamphetamine misuse, including the oral, physical and behavioral effects of the drug
- **C**ontrol patients’ safety and professionals’ risk by adopting principles of harm reduction
- **T**reat the dental needs of patients with methamphetamine-use disorders safely and effectively

**Key Concluding Points:**

- The use of methamphetamine has become a ***global epidemic***.
- Methamphetamine ***negatively impacts*** the oral health of users.
- Multiple teeth that are blackened with decay, fractured and/or missing are ***diagnostic indicators*** of methamphetamine use.
- The delivery of safe, effective, and realistic care requires that the dental team ***know the drug use status of each patient*** to:
  - Prevent drug to drug interactions
  - Develop appropriate treatment plans and realistic patient expectations
  - Avoid dental malpractice associated with drug-related treatment failures and prescription-related relapses

## **Methamphetamine is...**

- A powerfully addictive stimulant that dramatically affects many areas of the central nervous system.
- Sometimes referred to as "speed," "meth," and "chalk." In its smoked form, it is often referred to as "ice," "crystal," "crank," and "glass."
- Comes in many forms and can be smoked, snorted, injected or orally ingested.

## **Populations using methamphetamine...**

- Traditionally associated with white, male, blue-collar workers, is now reportedly being used by diverse groups in all regions of the country.
- Use is increasing among men who have sex with men and use other drugs, making this population more vulnerable to contracting and spreading sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS.
- Young adults who attend "raves" or private clubs also are increasingly using methamphetamine.
- Include notable increases among homeless and runaway youth.
- Increasing use of methamphetamine is reported among male and female commercial sex workers who also trade sex for drugs and among members of motorcycle gangs. Also, people in occupations (such as long-haul truckers) that demand long hours, mental alertness, and physical endurance, have been using this drug at increased rates.

## Meth Mouth is...

The rapid development of dental decay that is seen in individuals who use the drug methamphetamine.

- Unaccounted for and accelerated decay in teenagers and young adults
- Distinctive pattern of decay on the buccal smooth surface of the teeth and the interproximal surfaces of the anterior teeth that is blackened
- Color (blackened), Age (young adults), Surface Location (Class III/V), Teeth (anterior and posterior)



3 years of meth use



5 years of meth use



15 years of meth use

## Where to get help for substance abuse...

ConnexOntario-Connects all people in Ontario to mental health and addiction support where, when, and how they need it

- **Call**-866-531-2600 or **Text** 'CONNEX' to 74174

## Additional Resources...

- Brown R., Chan WY & Whyte F. (2023) C.E. Credit. **Harm Reduction: A Strategy to Improve Outcomes for Dental Patients with Substance-Use Disorders**, Journal of the California Dental Association, 51:1, DOI: [10.1080/19424396.2023.2242570](https://doi.org/10.1080/19424396.2023.2242570)
- Brown RE, Morisky D, Silverstein SJ. **Meth Mouth Severity in Response to Drug-use Patterns and Dental Access in Methamphetamine Users**, Journal of the California Dental Association, 41:6, 421-428, DOI: [10.1080/19424396.2013.12222319](https://doi.org/10.1080/19424396.2013.12222319)
- **A State of Decay, Your Dental Guide to Understanding and Treating “Meth Mouth,”** by Ronni Brown, DDS, MPH. Available at: [www.DrRonniBrown.com](http://www.DrRonniBrown.com)
- **Meth Mouth Treatment Plan Assessment Form**© by Ronni Brown, DDS, MPH, FADI. Available at [www.DrRonniBrown.com](http://www.DrRonniBrown.com)
- Patient Brochures on the Oral Effects of Methamphetamine© by Ronni Brown, DDS, MPH, FADI. Available at [www.DrRonniBrown.com](http://www.DrRonniBrown.com) and [www.PreventMethMouth.com](http://www.PreventMethMouth.com)
- Ending the Silence: Can We DeW Better, by Ronni Brown, DDS, MPH. DeW Life Magazine 2020. [DeW Life Autumn 2020 by DewLife Magazine - Issuu](#)

### **Additional Resources, (continued)...**

- How to use fluoride varnish in patients with “meth mouth.” by Ronni Brown, DDS, MPH. Dental Products Report 51(9), 2017. [How to use fluoride varnish in patients with ‘meth mouth’ \(dentalproductsreport.com\)](https://www.dentalproductsreport.com/article/10.1002/dpr.10000)