

Meth Prevention Lesson - Teacher's Guide

Essential Questions to be addressed:

- Ingredients: What is Meth?
- Addiction: If I try Meth once, will I become addicted?
- Mental Effects: What does Meth do to your brain?
- Physical Effects: What does Meth do to your body?
- Speak Up: What can I do to prevent others from trying Meth?

Objectives: After completing this lesson, students will know and understand:

- The short-and long-term effects associated with methamphetamine use
- The danger and toxicity of the ingredients in Meth
- The mechanisms of Meth addiction
- The effects of Meth on the brain, body, relationships, and the community
- The risks of trying Meth, even once
- How to communicate the risks of Meth to their peers and take action to prevent Meth use

Handouts: "What Do You Know?" Worksheet

Activities:

Section	Topic	Overview	Time
1	Complete "What Do You Know?" worksheet	Students complete the "What Do You Know?" worksheet "Before the Lesson" section	5 Minutes
2	Myths vs. Facts	Information about and discussion of each "What Do You Know?" statement	30 Minutes
3	Speak Up	Explores ways students can speak up	5 Minutes
4	Complete and Collect the "What Do You Know?" worksheet	Students complete the "After the Lesson" questions on the "What Do You Know?" worksheet Teachers collect and send in the worksheet	5 Minutes
Total Time			45 Minutes – 1 Hour

1. Students complete the “What Do You Know?” worksheet

Pass out the “What Do You Know?” worksheet as they enter the classroom. Allow 5 minutes for directions and for students to complete the “Before the Lesson” section of the worksheet.

Please take a few minutes and think about each statement and fill out the worksheet to the best of your ability. If you have any questions or comments about Meth, write them at the bottom of the page. We will talk more about each of these statements, so please do not worry if you have any questions or are unsure about something.

You will complete the “After the Lesson” column when the lesson is over. I will collect the worksheets at the end of class.

Detailed Instructions for the “What Do You Know?” worksheet:

1. Pass out the worksheet as the students enter the room.
2. Have the students complete the worksheet to the best of their abilities. There are no right or wrong answers; this is just to get them to think about what they know about Meth.
 - The left-hand column of the worksheet called “Before the Lesson” is to be completed prior to the lesson being delivered.
 - The right-hand column of the worksheet called “After the Lesson” is to be completed after the lesson has been delivered.
 - This will help The Meth Project evaluate the effectiveness of the lesson.
3. Once the students have completed the worksheet and you have discussed their answers during the lesson, collect them at the end of the class.
4. Once the lesson is completed and the worksheets have been collected, send them in a large manila envelope to your local Meth Project organization.

2. Conduct Meth Prevention Lesson

Today, we are going to talk about the drug methamphetamine, commonly called Meth. You will see some things today that are graphic and perhaps disturbing, and they could be somewhat scary. (This should be an informal and relaxed conversation.)

During our Lesson, we will return to your worksheets and discuss your answers. I am going to use the website MethProjectLesson.org to show you some information, so we can learn more about methamphetamine. OK, by show of hands, who here has previously received drug education? *Pause for students to raise hands.* Who has received Meth education in the past? *Pause for students to raise hands.* Who has seen the Meth Project ads? *Pause for students to raise hands.*

The drug methamphetamine, also known as Meth, is a synthetic stimulant that affects the central nervous system. Throughout the discussion refer to the “*What Do You Know?*” worksheet to guide the discussion and address the students’ responses.

Navigating the website MethPreventionLesson.org to Guide Your Instruction

Login to the MethPreventionLesson.org website, and it will walk you through each of the statements on the “What Do You Know?” worksheet “Before the Lesson” section.

Make sure to turn up the speakers and dim the lights in the classroom, so that all students can clearly see and hear the website.

Allow 7-8 minutes to discuss each statement. There are six statements in all (30 minutes total time.)

The process for exploration is the same for each statement:

- *When you click on the “Lesson” tab, you will see a list of five questions; select a question in order from the list.*
- *The first 4 questions mirror the statements on the “What Do You Know?” worksheet.*
- *Once you select a question, the “Myths vs. Facts?” screen appears with the statement from the worksheet. Have a student read the statement.*
- *Each statement is followed by 2 – 4 pieces of content from MethProject.org that automatically play as you click on the red arrow.*
- *Sample classroom discussion questions are interspersed between content pieces, with one at the end.*
- **Navigating the Lesson Webpage**
 - *Click the right arrow to go forward in sequential order through the lesson.*
 - *Click the left arrow if you need to go back to content you have already covered.*
 - *Click on the Meth Project logo in the upper left hand corner of the screen to take you back to the list of questions at any time.*
 - *Select one of the questions that are white at any time to go to a specific question. The lesson is intended for you to go from top to bottom.*
 - *When “View All Answers” appears at the bottom of the screen, you can click on it and skip to a specific piece of content.*

A few words on the class discussions

After website content, we interspersed follow-up questions to encourage conversation and sharing. Suggested questions are included on the screen. Use them, or create your own.

The aim is to try and get each student to participate, preferably all by the end of the lesson. Please wait 15-20 seconds before calling on any students and make sure to call on a variety of students. If after 30 seconds, no student has volunteered, use a different question or rephrase the current question.

It's also important to allow students who do know about Meth to share what they know, as it is beneficial for students to hear directly from their peers about the dangers of Meth.

Finally, should the students ask questions that are not covered in the lesson, encourage them to visit MethProject.org after class and find the answers themselves. Provide time in the next class for a follow-up discussion because if one student is brave enough to ask, likely, many others are silently wondering the same thing.

2.1 Click on question “What Is Meth?”

INGREDIENTS

- **Myths vs. Facts?**

Meth’s key ingredients are common household items that are only dangerous when combined. (Have a student read this statement on the screen out loud. Then, have the students refer back to their “What Do You Know?” worksheet “Before the Lesson” section and share their answers.)

- **Present the Information**

What do you know about the ingredients of Meth?

- **Explore “What’s in Meth”** (You can scroll over several of these ingredients and choose which ones you want to cover with your students.)
- **Explore “Unstable Recipe”** (You can drag any ingredient into the container and discuss the effects.)

- **Class Discussion**

Were you surprised by some of the ingredients in Meth?

Teacher’s Key: Common ingredients found in Meth include: nail polish remover, brake fluid, decongestant found in cold medicine, red phosphorous found on matchboxes and in road flares, and ammonia found in fertilizer.

- **Play expert video “Chemical Concoction”**
- **Class Discussion**

The person you just saw talks about how toxic the ingredients in Meth are. They are so toxic that even when you touch one of them—Drano—it will actually melt your skin. Knowing how toxic each of the individual ingredients in Meth are and what mixing Meth does, how do you think these ingredients affect the people who use the drug?

Teacher’s Key: Meth is highly toxic and has severe short- and long-term effects on the body and the mind. It affects user’s bodies on the outside, changing appearance—causing everything from rotting teeth to open sores—and is even more destructive to you on the inside, damaging organs including the heart and the brain.

2.2 Click on question “If I Try Meth Once, Will I Become Addicted?”

ADDICTION

- **Myths vs. Facts?**

Meth hooks people faster than almost any other drug, and users will keep taking it even though it stops giving them pleasure. (Have a student read this statement on the screen out loud. Then, have the students refer back to their “What Do You Know?” worksheet “Before the Lesson” section and share their answers.)

- **Present the Information**

What do you know about Meth addiction?

- **Click on the coin and explore “Coin Toss”**

- **Class Discussion**

Did you notice that the coin did not land? Why do you think that is?

Teacher’s Key: Meth is so powerful that someone can become addicted after the first use. Can you become addicted to Meth by just trying it once? The answer is: Maybe. Anyone can become addicted. Meth is one of the most addictive substances known to man and takes hold faster than almost any other illegal drug.

Why do you think someone decides to try Meth?

Teacher’s Key: People may decide to try Meth for a variety of reasons. Some people try it because of peer pressure, to try and fit in, or because they’re trying to escape their problems. They may also try it because they just don’t know what it is or how dangerous it is and think it’s no big deal.

Why don’t Meth users just stop taking the drug?

Teacher’s Key: Meth alters brain structure and function, changes behavior, and is one of the fastest-acting addictive agents known, with the potential to hook people faster than most other substances. The addiction is a chronic brain disease and causes people to have uncontrollable cravings, which means they will just keep using—even in the face of devastating consequences.

- Listen to “Tim’s Story”
- Class Discussion

What did Tim’s story say about the addictiveness of Meth?

Teacher’s Key: Tim talks about being 19 when he tried it, and, within one month, he lost everything - his job and his home. No one tries a drug because they want to be an addict. It’s an unintended consequence that happens to many Meth users.

Why do you think Tim talked about “signing your life away?”

Teacher’s Key: Nobody believes they will become addicted or that they will no longer be in control. Tim talks about not remembering months of his life. The drug took over, and there was even a point when he hoped that he was going to die. Meth acts on the central nervous system, changing the way the brain functions. It is one of the most addictive substances known to man.

2.3 Click on question “What Does Meth Do To Your Brain?”

MENTAL EFFECTS

- Myths vs. Facts?

Meth can make you hear, see, or even feel disturbing things that aren’t really there—like bugs crawling under your skin. (Have a student read this statement on the screen out loud. Then, have the students refer back to their “What Do You Know?” worksheet “Before the Lesson” section and share their answers.)

- Present the Information

What do you know about what Meth does to your brain?

- Watch an expert discuss the issue in “Mind Games”
- Class Discussion

The expert in the video talked about a guy who heard voices telling him to jump off a bridge. He would go out to the bridge and fight with the voices on whether to jump or not. Why do you think that happened? Why do you think he was hearing things?

Teacher’s Key: Methamphetamine can cause psychosis, a severe mental disorder in which people lose contact with reality and experience strong delusions, extreme paranoia, hallucinations, and obsessive/compulsive behavior. This includes delusions that make users see, hear, and feel things that aren’t really there. Research shows that as many as two-thirds of Meth users will experience some form of psychosis, which can begin within the first few months of use.

- Listen to “Rochelle’s Story”
- Class Discussion



What do you think about Rochelle’s story? What did Meth do to her brain?

Teacher’s Key: Rochelle suffered from frightening hallucinations—she would see and hear things that weren’t really there. Meth also makes users paranoid; they believe people are out to get them and that they are in danger—so when users like Rochelle have these hallucinations, they tend to be scary and threatening. Many Meth users report seeing phantom “shadow people.”

- **Watch scientific exploration of “The Brain on Meth”**
- **Class Discussion**

What happens to the dopamine supply in the brain? How does that affect a user?

Teacher’s Key: We just heard about dopamine, the chemical in the brain that allows us to feel pleasure. Initially, methamphetamine floods the brain with dopamine. With repeated use, Meth severely depletes the brain’s dopamine supply and damages the brain. Meth disables the ability to feel happiness or any pleasure at all, lessens the ability to think and remember, and can also affect movement.

- **Explore “Brain Damage”** (Rollover the brain to see the damage. You may choose a few examples to show the students.)
- **Class Discussion**

Now that we have seen how Meth can cause significant changes to the brain, what do you think are the worst effects?

2.4 Click on question “What Does Meth Do To Your Body?”

PHYSICAL EFFECTS

- **Myths vs. Facts?**

Meth causes rotting teeth, hair loss, foul body odor, and open sores. Users also develop strange, uncontrollable movements like facial tics. (Have a student read this statement on the screen out loud. Then, have the students refer back to their “What Do You Know?” worksheet “Before the Lesson” section and share their answers.)

- **Present the Information**
What do you know about what Meth does to your body?
- **Explore “Body by Meth”** (Grab the tweezers from the operation game to remove a few objects from the body and drop them in the tray. Then, discuss what happens. For instance, if you click on the bug and drag it to the tray, it will explain that Meth users often feel bugs crawling under their skin. Also, tell the students to visit MethProject.org to explore this more.)
- **Watch Graham tell his story in “It Eats your Muscle”**
- **Watch Tiffany tell her story in “Looks Horrible”**

- **Class Discussion**

Why do you think Tiffany picked at her face?

Teacher's Key: Meth users like Tiffany will become obsessed with one thing and just keep doing it, and, as she said, she can't control it. This is because Meth disrupts the brain's inhibitory control—the brain's brakes—so users can't stop, no matter how much they might want to. As we saw in the operation game, some users pick at their skin because they believe they feel bugs crawling under their skin, so they try to dig them out. This causes sores and scars to appear on their faces, arms, and torsos.

- **Class Discussion**

Now that we have seen some of the ways Meth can affect the body, what surprised you the most?

Teacher's Key: Pause for conversation.

2.5 Click on question “What Can You Do?”

- **Present the Information**

What would you do if a friend told you he or she was going to try Meth?

Teacher's Key: Pause for conversation.

- **Watch a girl tell her story in “Tracy”**

- **Class Discussion**

This girl stayed silent. She didn't say anything. Maybe she didn't know what Meth could do. Maybe she didn't know what to say. Maybe she didn't know Meth was so addictive.

Maybe she didn't think it was her place to speak up. If you care about someone, do you think it is your place to say something?

Teacher's Key: Pause for conversation.

If you were Tracy's friend, what would you have said when she told you she was going to try Meth?

Teacher's Key: Pause for conversation.

3. Speak Up

Discuss how students can share what they have learned.

Teacher's Key: You have the opportunity to proactively share this information with your friends. You heard and watched users talk about how Meth affected their lives—maybe they would have made a different decision if they knew about the risks of trying Meth.

Would you want them to have the information we discussed today? What if you could prevent one person from using Meth?

Let's talk about what each of us could do to prevent our friends and family from trying Meth. I want to challenge you, over the next two days, to take action. I'm going to tell you about some ideas I've come up with... I want you to start thinking about what you can do...

There is a section of the website called "Speak Up" where people have used their creativity to spread the word. You can post videos, stories, artwork, or anything you like to the "Speak Up" section of MethProject.org. You can also comment on and share what others have posted.

If you know somebody who is doing Meth, tell an adult immediately. Also you can visit MethProject.org and go to "Take Action" and "Get Help" to find treatment centers near you.

- **Class Discussion**

How can you prevent a friend from trying Meth?

What else could we do as individuals to prevent our friends and family from trying Meth?

Take ideas from students.

4. Students complete the "What Do You Know?" worksheet

Have students complete the "After the Lesson" column of the "What Do You Know?" worksheet. Then, collect the "What Do You Know?" worksheets and send them to your local Meth Project organization. A good way to mail these is to use a large manila envelope.

Now, please complete the "After the Lesson" column on the right-hand side of the "What Do You Know?" worksheet by checking either "Agree" or "Disagree", and I will collect the completed worksheet when you are done.

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