

Summary of Acute-Chronic Effects of Cocaine

During Early Use

- Magnification of pleasure, euphoria
- Alertness and in some cases hyperalertness
- Increased and/or a (grandiose) sense of well being
- Decreased anxiety
- Lower social inhibitions: more sociable and talkative
- Heightened energy, self-esteem, sexuality and emotions aroused by interpersonal experiences
- Appetite loss; weight loss

With Compulsive Use

- Extreme euphoria – “mental orgasm”
- Uninhibited behavior pattern
- Impaired judgment
- Feeling of grandiosity
- Impulsive reaction
- Hypersexuality
- Hypervigilance
- Compulsive actions
- Extreme psychomotor activation/agitation
- Anxiety; irritability; argumentative
- Transient panic
- Paranoia
- Visual hallucinations
- Gustatory and auditory pseudohallucinations

- Altered tactile sensations (with excoriation)
- Tactile paranoia (“coke bugs”)
- Terror of impending death
- Poor reality testing; delusions
- Extreme weight loss

Physical Effects of Chronic Abuse

- Chronic sore throat
- Subthreshold seizure levels (“kindling”)
- Nasal septal defect
- Contraction band necrosis in the heart
- Cardiac enzyme depletion
- Hoarseness
- Shortness of breath
- Bronchitis
- Lung cancer (smoking “ctack”)
- Pulmonary edema
- Emphysema and other lung damage
- Respiratory problems such as congestion of the lungs, wheezing, and spitting up black phlegm especially after crack
- Burning of the lips, tongue, and throat
- Slowed digestion
- Weight loss
- High incidence of dependence
- Blood vessel constriction
- Increased blood pressure
- Increased heart rate
- Brain seizures that can result in suffocation
- Dilated pupils
- Sweating
- Rise in blood sugar levels and body temperature
- Suppressed desire for food, sex, friends, family, social contacts
- Heart attack
- Stroke
- Death

Emotional/Psychological Effects

- Sadness and depression
- Loss of interest in appearance
- Unexplained loss of household valuables or vanishing of cash due to the expense of the drug
- Sleeplessness
- Extreme paranoia
- Intense craving of the drug
- Schizophrenic-like psychosis with delusions and hallucinations

Duration of Withdrawal Symptoms Following Cocaine Abuse

2–48 h 2–10 weeks
Paranoia Depression
Suicidal attempts due to Depression, Anxiety
Excessive sleep, Craving
→ Relapse! → Relapse!

Craving for the drug, even following months of abstinence, is a major reason why a previously stable former cocaine user has a relapse [55]