

Substance Use, Abuse and Dependence

Classification and Information on Substances

Methcathinone (Khat/Cat)

DESCRIPTION	Methcathinone is a structural analogue of methamphetamine and cathinone. The drug is made from a mixture of battery acid, Drano, and over-the-counter flu or asthma medication and sold as a white or off-white crystalline powder.
MODE OF ADMINISTRATION	Cat is usually snorted, but can be taken orally, intravenously or anally.
PRIMARY EFFECT	Central nervous system stimulant
SHORT-TERM EFFECTS	<p>The effects can last between 4 and 6 hours. The following effects are usually present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeds up the nervous system; • Increases blood pressure and heart rate; • Increases body temperature and sweating; • Enhances mood, with an increase in confidence and energy; • Increased alertness; • Increase in impulsive and erratic behaviour; • Increased sexual appetite; • Loss of appetite; • In large doses, may cause insomnia, tremors, muscle twitching, fever, headaches, convulsions, irregular heart rate and respirations, profuse sweating and dehydration, anxiety, restlessness, paranoia, hallucinations, delusions, depression, convulsions, stroke and death.
LONG-TERM EFFECTS	<p>Although toxic to the body, the long-term effects are difficult to identify because of variations in pharmacological agents, chemicals used to manufacture them, and possible contaminants present. However, long-term Cat use can lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive impairments (including memory loss); • Persistent nasal congestion (“Columbian Flu”) and perforated nasal septum; • Psychiatric complications (including depression, anxiety, paranoid ideation, increased impulsiveness, insomnia, psychosis); • Hyperexcitability, impulsivity and restlessness; • Malnutrition and weight loss; • Other long-terms effects may be present depending on other ingredients used;
ADDICTION POTENTIAL	High psychological and physical addiction potential.
TREATMENT OPTIONS	In cases of heavy and prolonged use, inpatient and/or outpatient treatment with the use of multiple therapeutic methods (individual, family and group psychotherapy) is usually necessary to achieve lasting abstinence. Co-morbid conditions are treated if required.