

The MYSTERY CLUB



brought to you by **Captain Overalls**, the Safety Crusader

CAPTAIN SEZ

Captain's Activity Puzzle

Using or making meth is "backwards." Most of us have seen the following warning sign on a vehicle:

EMERGENCY

Be warned that anything associated with meth is dangerous. Complete the following puzzle by replacing each blank with an e or an i. Then use a mirror to decipher the "meth-age."

(Note: remember these letters will appear backwards until viewed in a mirror.)

Why m_s w_th m_tr?

M_th_Dang_r!



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
University Extension

METH — Steer Clear, Stay Safe

Mind over Meth: Seeing the Dangers of Meth

News Flash: An explosion rocks a rural area. Local law officers arrive to find what is left of a farm house in flames. The meth "cook" was trapped when his concoction of deadly chemicals exploded. Recognizing this as the site of a meth lab, firefighters desperately try to save the occupants by entering the building. Worst of all, two young children were found inside the exploded meth lab because their father was the meth "cook."

News Flash: Paramedics found a severely injured child who accidentally tripped a home-made bomb set at a hidden meth lab. Local law enforcement officers dread what they will find as more and more of these illegal meth labs pop up.

These news flashes are repeated every day across our country as society faces the growing threat of methamphetamine (meth am FET ah meen). Methamphetamine, or meth for short, is a synthetic (man-made) drug that affects the central nervous system. A common side effect meth users experience is hallucinations. Meth is highly addictive (habit-forming) and once addicted, a meth user will do almost anything to get the drug.

Meth can be white, yellow, brown, or red chunks or powder depending on the specific chemical and toxic ingredients used to make it. It also can look like clear ice-like or crystal-like chunks. This is why street names for

meth include chalk, ice, glass, and crystal. Other street names for meth are speed, fire, crank, and tweak.

A meth "cook" uses various chemicals, many of them deadly, to produce the drug. In addition to ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, which is an essential chemical in making meth, other ingredients often include anhydrous ammonia, acetone, ethyl ether (starting fluid), and drain cleaner. Using a collection of bottles, hoses, and cylinders like propane tanks, scuba tanks, and fire extinguishers, a meth "cook" constructs a lab for producing meth.

Making meth is dangerous. The chemicals used in the process are harmful if they come in contact with skin or are swallowed. The vapors they produce are deadly if breathed and highly explosive if exposed to sparks or flames. Labs are considered hazardous waste locations and items and supplies found there should only be handled by trained professionals. The waste produced in a meth lab can harm plants, animals, soil, water, and people.

Making, using, transporting, selling, or possessing meth is against the law. In spite of the dangers, meth production and use have reached epidemic proportions in both rural and urban areas. Unfortunately, many children may come into contact with meth labs, meth litter, meth sellers, meth users, and even the drug itself. Be warned. When you know the signs of meth production and use you can avoid dangerous situations.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 BY THE NUMBERS

1..... out of every five hidden methamphetamine labs explode.

5.....pounds of poisonous waste produced for one pound of meth produced.

5,000.....dollars needed to clean up the average meth production site.

6,188.....pounds of meth seized by U.S. federal authorities in one year.

Meth Facts—The Human Damage

Meth is so dangerous. No one should ever use the drug but people do because they make poor choices. Unfortunately, meth is so highly addictive that after only one use, many people are hooked. Although the drug may cause a feeling of energy or well-being at first, users need to increase the dosage to get the same good feeling the next time. This can lead to overdosing, which can cause permanent injury or death. Even without a fatal overdose, meth has harmful effects on the body and mind.

Body on Meth

Meth is a dangerous drug because of all the ways meth affects your body. Meth attacks several of your body's organs at the same time. Your organs that are in danger and could be damaged are the liver, kidney, brain, and heart. There is an increased risk of heart attack and stroke for meth users. Meth users' bones also become very brittle and break easily.

A meth user may be identified by some of the visible effects the drug has on the body. A heavy meth user's gums may turn black and teeth turn brown. There is a good possibility teeth also will fall out. This change in color and loss of teeth is called "meth mouth." Not a pretty sight but a clear sign of someone using meth.

Another visible warning sign to identify meth use is sores on the skin. Meth users often develop very dry, itchy skin, which they

scratch. They also may feel like they have bugs crawling under their skin (a type of hallucination) and will scratch to get them off. Deep scabs often appear on skin as the meth user continues to scratch and pick at the skin.

Your nose also can help identify a meth user. Meth users often develop a terrible body odor. Some of this odor comes from poor hygiene—not showering or bathing often. Sometimes the odor is like glue or mayonnaise. This odor is from all the toxins in the drug being processed through the body.

A Mind on Meth

Not all the effects are physical. A user's mind and behavior are altered by meth. Users' behavior may become unpredictable, aggressive, confused, or violent. They typically experience anxiety, severe depression, and the feeling that someone or something is after them. It would not be uncommon to witness episodes of violence. They often commit crimes in order to get more of the drug.

Simply put, meth can cause crazy behavior! Depression can last months after a user has stopped taking the drug.

Users find it hard to sleep for days. Over the long term not sleeping will cause chronic fatigue. This may cause memory loss and slow reflexes. A user may forget to pay attention to personal cleanliness or appearance. It is not uncommon for users to lose their appetite. These things can lead to extreme weight loss, which creates a skeleton-like appearance.



METH

It's Youngest Victims

Thousands of small children are exposed every day to the dangers of meth because meth labs can be family affairs. Children are present in the house, hideout, or motel room where the meth is produced. They get sick from living around these toxic chemicals. They breathe the toxic fumes, touch surfaces coated with deadly chemicals, or eat poisonous materials left behind. Young children with their smaller bodies that are not fully grown will react differently than adults when exposed to these dangerous chemicals.

Can you imagine a young toddler crawling on the floor where dangerous chemicals used to make the meth, such as battery acid, acetone, starter fluid, and drain cleaner, are left lying around? It can happen in homes where there is a meth lab.

Children are also at risk with meth users as parents. Being mistreated or neglected by parents who are high on drugs is not uncommon. Can you imagine not getting enough to eat and drink; getting sick and having no one take you to the doctor? That is what can happen to children of parents who are meth users because the drug becomes more important to them than taking care of their children.

Many children in meth lab homes will test positive for having the drug in their body because of access to the drug and exposure to contaminated surfaces. These **young children are also meth's victims**, and they don't get a choice because of their meth-using parents.



TOP 10 Signs of Meth Production

1. Strong odors like ammonia or cat urine—eewwwww!
2. Stockpile of cans, coolers, rubber tubing, or propane tanks.
3. Strangers in rural areas near abandoned buildings.
4. A lot of people coming and going for short periods.
5. Strangers around anhydrous ammonia tanks—duh!
6. Someone buying many packages of cold medicine.
7. Blacked out windows in buildings or homes.
8. A hideout in a remote place with strange trash.
9. A clown with big red balloons—NOT, ha ha!
10. A lot of empty packages of cold medicine, pill bottles, or blister packs.

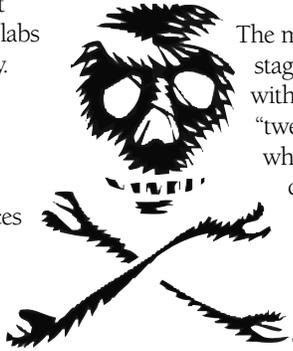
Wacky Science

This Recipe's a Killer!

Meth

The recipe for meth is a chemical nightmare and the cooking steps are just as scary. Meth starts as a sludge of various combinations of drain cleaner, engine starter fluid, methanol, anhydrous ammonia, lithium from batteries, pseudoephedrine from cold medicine, or other toxic yuck. These ingredients are cooked down, releasing poisonous and flammable fumes. These fumes can catch fire or explode. Law enforcement officials estimate that one in five labs explodes, causing death or injury.

Once the meth is produced, the "cook" has to dispose of the poisonous waste. To create one pound of meth, the cook produces about five pounds of extremely toxic chemical waste. The cook may just abandon the chemical waste if the meth lab was in a motel room or secluded rural area. This leaves the contaminated area for someone else to find and clean up. Sometimes the meth producer simply dumps it outside on the ground. This poisons trees, grass and other plants, soil, animals, and people who come into contact with it. Another option is to dump the toxic chemical waste down the toilet, sink, or into a stream, where the waste can end up in our water supply.



Users

Meth users smoke, eat, inhale, or inject this substance into their bodies. This drug alters the mood and behavior of those who take it. Meth addicts are nervous and extremely moody. Often they become paranoid and have hallucinations. Sometimes they imagine that insects are crawling under their skin. They may scratch great sores that won't heal as they repeatedly claw at the imaginary bugs.

The meth user cycles through several stages from a high to a crash to withdrawal and the dangerous stage of "tweaking." Tweakers are meth users who are in-between being high and crashing. They may react violently to others, a response that is increased with the use of alcohol or other drugs they take. Tweakers may appear to be normal, but their fast eye movements and their quick and jerky body movements are clues to look for. You might notice a quiver in their voice also. If you believe someone is tweaking then get away from them quickly and tell a trusted adult.

Bottom Line

Meth has an effect on more than those who use it. Meth hurts family, friends, and the community. Never take meth. Be alert for the signs of meth use, production, or distribution. Never touch anything that you suspect to be connected to meth. Contact a responsible adult or authorities immediately.

Q: What did the convicted meth drug dealer tell the judge?

A: "Your honor, I made a meth-stake."

Written by **Charles V. Schwab**, ISU professor and extension safety specialist; **Deborah Stabler**, Progressive Agriculture Foundation curriculum consultant; and **Barb Abbott**, ISU extension communication specialist. Designed by **Juls Design**, Ankeny, Iowa.

This publication is funded by The Rosen Family Foundation and Iowa State University Extension. For more information about the Progressive Agriculture Safety Day® program, go to www.progressiveag.org.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Many materials can be made available in alternative formats for ADA clients. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call 202-720-5964. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Jack M. Payne, director, Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Ames, Iowa. File: Health & Safety 2-2



Cheers to the brother and sister who noticed strangers hanging around the old building on their farm and told their mom.



Jeers to the adult who saw the signs that a friend was a meth user and did nothing.



Cheers to the 10-year-old boy and his friend who noticed a strong smell like cat urine coming from a "hide-out" they found in the woods, and quickly left the area.



Jeers to the meth cooks who dumped toxic meth waste into a stream.



Cheers to the law enforcement officials who responded to the report by the 10-year-old boys and found and deactivated the booby trap inside.



Jeers to the hikers who found rubber tubing, coffee filters, and a cooler in the woods and did nothing.

The **MYSTERY** of the Strange Litter



The community Stash-the-Trash day is a public service day that Jack and Sarah help with every year. A team of youth set off to clean up trash along the local rural route that passes by a small stream and wooded area.

Suddenly, Jack and Sarah stopped picking up trash and stared at the strange litter that was in front of them near the wooded area. Sarah said it reminded her of those items she learned were part of a meth lab. Frightened by the understanding of what it could be, the kids told their adult supervisor what they saw, and soon the sheriff came.

"It's a good thing you called us," the sheriff complimented them. "Criminals had set up a make-shift lab away from the road. They were making methamphetamine, or meth, an illegal drug."

"Jack and Sarah are real heroes," the sheriff continued, shaking their hands. "You two saved the environment and stopped others from being hurt. Meth labs can explode, and just breathing the air near the litter, or touching any of the items, can get harmful chemicals into your lungs or on your skin," the sheriff told them.

"You did exactly the right thing, kids, when you stopped without touching it and told your adult supervisor. We'll do our best to catch those criminals and have trained professionals clean up that toxic mess."

Your Challenge:

What strange litter did Jack and Sarah spot?

What did Jack and Sarah do correctly?

What did the sheriff find in the wooded area and why was it dangerous?

What should you do if you ever find what you think may be a meth lab or litter from a meth lab?

Word Find



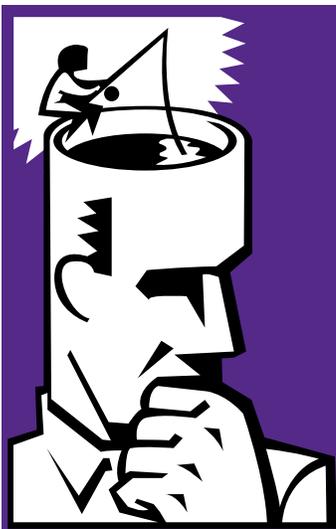
Can you help find all 13 words that help describe the type of litter or trash that can be expected near a meth lab?

(Look up, down, across, backwards.)

S	B	A	T	T	E	R	Y	K
R	S	E	S	O	H	R	S	R
E	Q	U	A	I	O	A	E	U
T	L	Y	E	S	O	M	L	B
L	W	R	E	F	A	M	T	B
I	C	N	D	U	C	O	T	E
F	E	A	S	N	E	N	O	R
E	C	L	K	N	T	I	B	G
E	W	E	N	E	O	A	P	L
F	E	U	A	L	N	P	O	O
F	E	F	T	S	E	B	P	V
O	B	G	N	I	B	U	T	E
C	C	O	O	L	E	R	S	S

ACETONE	HOSES
AMMONIA	LYE
BATTERY	POPBOTTLES
COFFEE FILTERS	RUBBER GLOVES
COOLERS	TANKS
FUEL	TUBING
FUNNELS	

USE YOUR



NOGGIN

Jayden, Lucy, and Elijah talked with their friends about what they learned about methamphetamine and how to be safe. When they shared with everyone what they learned from a safety day, each gave different examples of what they should do to avoid the dangers and how to protect themselves. Using the chart below, can you figure out what each person shared about (1) Things to avoid and (2) How to protect yourself? Hint: When you put a * in a box, put a "0" in the other boxes in that column and row.

1. Jayden knows to stay away from possible meth lab sites because of the toxic dangers.
2. Elijah knows that meth production has an odor like cat urine—eewwwwww.
3. Lucy never had to avoid meth litter abandoned in a remote area.
4. Jayden never had to report a smell or what she saw to an adult.

Who?	(1) Things to avoid			(2) How to protect yourself		
	Meth	Meth lab sites	Meth litter or trash	Detect odor like cat urine	Watch for strangers in remote areas	Report what you see or smell to an adult
Jayden						
Lucy						
Elijah						

ANSWER: Jayden knew that you avoid meth labs and be careful to watch for strangers. Lucy knew that you should never take meth and you should always report what you see or smell to an adult. Elijah knew that meth litter or trash is very toxic and you can identify meth production from the odor that smells like cat urine.