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**Recent Alabama Statistics:**

**194,334**  
serious crimes a year

**297** homicides

**18,602** violent crimes

**182,241**  
property crimes

Almost all crimes take  
place in the communities  
where the victims live,  
work or go to school.

**John Tyson is providing parents with information that will help them tell if their child is using methamphetamine (meth).**

If a friend offered you a drug that made you feel more confident, made you more alert and helped you lose weight, would you refuse?

That's the question our children face when a "friend" offers them crystal meth, a methamphetamine also known as ice, glass, crank, or speed.

Why do they turn to meth? For a young person who is faced with the uncertainties of growing up, meth offers a feeling of confidence, even invulnerability. Kids use meth to control their weight and get through the school day after being up all night. But kids don't realize the price they will soon pay—in the harm done to their bodies, in damaged relationships, and in the blows to their self-esteem as they lie, cheat and steal to feed this addiction.

Meth changes the chemical balance in the brain and makes the user feel alert, euphoric and powerful. But there is a cost: brain cells are damaged each and every time the drug is used. And more of the drug is required with each usage to get high.

Mothers Against Methamphetamine, a group formed by a physician after the death of her brother from meth use, issued these statistics: after the first try of meth, 75 percent use again within one week, 90 percent within one month, and 98 percent within one year. Many people are hooked after the first use.

One former addict describes it: "The first high is the best – you spend the rest of your addiction chasing after that first high and you can never get there again."

Meth use is on the rise in Alabama. According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, methamphetamine has become the biggest drug threat in Alabama and is directly responsible for the increase in thefts, violent assaults and burglaries across the state.

Parents need to know that their children may be offered meth and that if they use meth, they may become addicted almost immediately. They need to know what to look for. Here are the signs.

# **JOHN TYSON JR.**

*WE CAN Stop Crime Now*

## **Early signs of meth use:**

- Unusual sense of well-being
- Incessant talking
- Aggressiveness
- Irritability or nervousness
- Disinterest in previously enjoyed activities
- Decreased appetite
- Erratic sleep patterns
- Clothes inappropriate to season
- Burn marks on fingers (if meth is being smoked rather than injected)

## **Evidence In the home:**

- Missing light bulbs (they can be fashioned into a tool to smoke meth)
- Small amounts of aluminum foil in garbage cans (users can place meth on foil to smoke it)
- Meth pipe (small glass tube with bowl shape on one end), lighters, syringes
- Room becomes extremely clean or extremely messy

## **Ongoing signs of meth use include the above and more:**

- Dramatic weight loss
- Itchy skin
- Teeth grinding
- Sores in mouth
- Sores on face
- Tooth decay
- Repetitious behavior such as picking at skin or pulling out hair
- Compulsive grooming or disassembling objects
- Anxiety
- Confusion
- Paranoia
- Auditory hallucinations
- Mood disturbances
- Delusions
- Violent behavior

The physical damage of meth addiction extends beyond the rotting teeth and skin sores that can be seen on an addict. Long-term brain damage, heart damage, strokes and symptoms that resemble Alzheimer's disease can also occur.



**Providing parents with steps they can take to help them keep their children safe:**

What can a parent do if they think their child is using meth?

**Get educated.**

There is good information at the National Institute on Drug Abuse about meth:  
<http://www.drugabuse.gov/DrugPages/Methamphetamine>.

The NIDA also has good information for teenagers about the effects of drugs at  
<http://teens.drugabuse.gov>

**Get help.**

Who can a parent call if they are concerned that their child (or a child they know) is using meth? Call a local agency that works with substance abuse or discuss it with your family physician. Phone numbers for local services, including agencies that work with substance abuse, are available on our web site: [www.johntysonjr.com](http://www.johntysonjr.com).