Short-term and long-term effects of cocaine

What are the short-term effects of cocaine?

Cocaine’s effects appear almost immediately after a single dose, and disappear within a few minutes or hours. Taken in small amounts, cocaine usually makes the user feel euphoric, energetic, talkative, and mentally alert, especially to the sensations of sight, sound, and touch. It can also temporarily decrease the need for food and sleep. Some users find that the drug helps them to perform simple physical and intellectual tasks more quickly, while others can experience the opposite effect.

Increased energy, decreased appetite, mental alertness, increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, constricted blood vessels, increased temperature, dilated pupils, a feeling of euphoria, excitement, a feeling of strength and power.

The duration of cocaine’s immediate euphoric effects depends upon the route of administration. The faster the absorption, the more intense the high. Also, the faster the absorption, the shorter the duration of action. The high from snorting is relatively slow in onset, and may last 15 to 30 minutes, while that from smoking may last 5 to 10 minutes. The short-term physiological effects of cocaine include constricted blood vessels; dilated pupils; and increased temperature, heart rate, and blood pressure.

Large amounts (several hundred milligrams or more) intensify the user’s high, but may also lead to bizarre, erratic, and violent behaviour. These users may experience tremors, vertigo, muscle twitches, paranoia, or, with repeated doses, a toxic reaction closely resembling amphetamine poisoning. Some users of cocaine report feelings of restlessness, irritability, and anxiety.

In rare instances, sudden death can occur on the first use of cocaine or unexpectedly thereafter. Cocaine-related deaths are often a result of cardiac arrest or seizures followed by respiratory arrest. Various doses of cocaine can also produce other neurological and behavioural effects such as: Dizziness, Headache, Movement problems, Anxiety, Insomnia, Depression, Hallucinations.

What are the long-term effects of cocaine?

Cocaine is a powerfully addictive drug. Once having tried cocaine, an individual may have difficulty predicting or controlling the extent to which he or she will continue to use the drug. Cocaine’s stimulant and addictive effects are thought to be primarily a result of its ability to inhibit the re-absorption of dopamine by nerve cells. Dopamine is released as part of the brain’s reward system, and is either directly or indirectly involved in the addictive properties of every major drug of abuse.