

KNOW IT The correct name for the speed is amphetamine sulphate.

On the street it is known as speed, whizz, billy, sulph, uppers.

Speed is the most impure illegal drug in the UK. The 'street' drug is often only 5% amphetamine.

Speed usually comes as a grey, white or dirty-white powder, or sometimes in tablets. Another form of amphetamine, known as paste, has become available in some areas.

Speed powder can be snorted, swallowed in a wrap, injected or smoked.

The drug used in the USA is methylamphetamine (methamphetamine) which has similar effects, but the dose required is lower and the effects last longer. It is very rare in the UK.

THE LAW Amphetamine is illegal and is a Class B drug.

The maximum penalty for possession of a Class B drug is 5 years' prison and/or a fine.

The maximum penalty for supply (selling or giving it to someone) of a Class B drug is 14 years prison and/or a fine.

Amphetamine carries Class A penalties if prepared for injection.

A drugs record can cause serious problems at home and school and could affect job prospects.

If you have a drugs record, it can be difficult to get a visa to travel to some countries.

The information given here is general. If specific legal advice is required, please consult a solicitor.

EFFECTS Speed is a stimulant. It quickens the heart beat and breathing rate.

Users may feel confident. Their mind races and they feel more awake, energetic and talkative.

Effects last up to 4 hours, depending on the dose. Common effects include sweating, nausea, abdominal cramps and headache.

Speed stops the user from eating and keeps them awake. If used regularly speed can lead to weight loss and exhaustion.

The comedown (tiredness and depression) lasts for one or two days, and sometimes longer.

Taking lots of speed can make user irritable, tense, anxious and sometimes aggressive.

Users report that speed causes jaw clenching and teeth grinding, which can damage the teeth.

RISKS Long-term use puts a strain on the heart.

Users can suffer panic attacks and anxiety.

Using speed can lead to mental illness such as psychosis. Anyone who has a history of mental illness should not take speed.

Snorting speed powder can cause damage to the soft tissue in the nostrils.

Tolerance can develop, which means the user needs more to get the same effect.

If used regularly, speed can cause depression, tiredness and eating problems.

Sharing injecting equipment puts users at risk of dangerous infections like HIV and hepatitis.

Speed paste may be stronger than the powder.