

Yaba

Profile

Yaba, the Thai word for “crazy medicine,” is a tablet form of methamphetamine, a powerful stimulant. These synthetically produced pills contain 25 to 35 mg of methamphetamine and 45 to 65 mg of caffeine. Tablets are available in a variety of flavors (including grape, orange, and vanilla) and colors (most commonly reddish-orange or green). Various logos (commonly “WY” or “R”) adorn yaba tablets, which are the size of the end of a drinking straw. Yaba looks and tastes so much like candy that many young users (often including ecstasy users) underestimate its harmfulness.¹ Methamphetamine is also available in powder (“crystal”) form, which can be processed into a rock (“ice”) or liquid form.²

History

Methamphetamine was derived from amphetamine in Japan in 1919. Both of these chemicals were originally used in nasal decongestants and bronchial inhalers. Methamphetamine has also been used in the treatment of obesity. During World War II, the military in the United States, Great Britain, Germany, and Japan used methamphetamines to fight fatigue and enhance performance. After the war, when military methamphetamine supplies became available to the public, abuse of intravenous methamphetamine became an epidemic in Japan. During the 1950’s in the United States, methamphetamine tablets were legally manufactured and used non-medically by students, truck drivers, and athletes. In 1970, the Controlled Substance Act restricted the use of methamphetamine and made it a Schedule II substance.³ Since yaba contains methamphetamine, it is also illegal.⁴

Today, the United Wa State Army, the largest drug trafficking organization in Burma, is the primary manufacturer of yaba in Southeast Asia; Thailand is the primary market for these tablets. Yaba is a recent phenomenon in the United States, although it has been popular in Southeast and East Asia for some time. Methamphetamine tablets are sent primarily by mail to northern California and the Los Angeles area, and although the demand for yaba appears to be primarily in Asian communities, popularity is increasing among rave attendees.⁵

Methods of Use

The most common method of using yaba is oral ingestion. Tablets can also be crushed into a powder and either snorted or mixed with a liquid and injected. In addition, tablets can be heated on aluminum foil to produce a vapor, which is then inhaled.⁶

Effects

Yaba is a powerful central nervous system stimulant with longer-lasting effects than those of cocaine. This is because cocaine is metabolized in the body more quickly than

methamphetamine. Effects produced by yaba will be dependent on the dose taken.⁷
Some effects include:

- Euphoria
- Insomnia
- Irritability and aggression
- Decreased appetite and nausea
- Hot flashes, dry mouth, and sweating
- Damage to the small blood vessels in the brain
- Increased alertness, wakefulness, and physical activity
- Increased heart rate, blood pressure, respiration, and body temperature⁸

Effects of chronic abuse include:

- Tremors
- Hypertension
- Hallucinations
- Psychotic episodes
- Paranoid delusions
- Violent behavior
- Hyperthermia and convulsions
- Agitation, anxiety, and nervousness
- Mental confusion and memory loss
- Psychosis similar to schizophrenia (characterized by paranoia, picking at the skin, self absorption, and visual and auditory hallucinations)⁹

Addiction, Tolerance, and Withdrawal

Methamphetamine in all forms is very dangerous and has a high potential for abuse and dependence. Moderate to chronic use of yaba and other methamphetamines may lead to physical and psychological dependence, and even death.¹⁰ Tolerance can develop with chronic use. In an effort to intensify the drug's effects, users may take higher doses of the drug, take it more frequently, or change their method of drug intake. Some abusers may forego food and sleep while on a "run." A run consists of the injection of as much as a gram of the drug every 2 to 3 hours over several days until the user runs out of the drug or is too disorganized to continue.¹¹ When an individual goes through withdrawal from high doses of yaba, as well as other forms of methamphetamine, severe depression often results.¹²

Terminology

- Slang terms for yaba
Crazy medicine, Nazi speed

Links

- [NDIC: Yaba Fast Facts](#)
- [Street Drugs: Methamphetamine](#)

¹ DEA. Yaba, New Form of Meth, Now Appearing in US. Retrieved November 10, 2006, from <http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/ongoing/yaba012903.html>; National Drug Intelligence Center. Yaba Fast Facts. Retrieved November 10, 2006, from <http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs5/5048/>.

² Street Drugs. Methamphetamine. Retrieved November 10, 2006, from <http://www.streetdrugs.org/methamphetamine.htm>.

³ NIDA. Research Report Series: Methamphetamine Abuse and Addiction. Retrieved November 10, 2006, from <http://www.drugabuse.gov/ResearchReports/methamph/Methamph.html>; Greater Dallas Council on Alcohol & Drug Abuse. Methamphetamine. Retrieved November 10, 2006, from <http://www.gdcada.org/statistics/meth/meth2.htm>.

⁴ National Drug Intelligence Center. Yaba Fast Facts.

⁵ Time: Asia. (2002, December 9). "Soldiers of Fortune." Retrieved November 10, 2006, from <http://www.time.com/time/asia/magazine/printout/0,13675,501021216-397549,00.html>; Street Drugs: Methamphetamine.

⁶ NDIC: Yaba Fast Facts.

⁷ NIDA. Research Report Series: Methamphetamine Abuse and Addiction.

⁸ NDIC: Yaba Fast Facts; Street Drugs: Methamphetamine.

⁹ DEA. Methamphetamine. Retrieved November 10, 2006, from <http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/concern/meth.html>; Parents: The Anti-Drug. Methamphetamine. Retrieved November 10, 2006, from http://www.theantidrug.com/drug_info/drug_info_meth.asp.

¹⁰ Parents: The Anti-Drug. Methamphetamine.

¹¹ NIDA. Research Report Series: Methamphetamine Abuse and Addiction.

¹² NIDA. Research Report Series: Methamphetamine Abuse and Addiction.