



IOWA Substance Abuse Brief

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



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Increase in Methamphetamine Use by Iowans

Methamphetamine is a powerful stimulant that is chemically similar to amphetamine. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (2017), methamphetamine most commonly comes in the form of a white, odorless, bitter-tasting crystalline powder that easily dissolves in water or alcohol. Methamphetamine is often taken orally, smoked, snorted, dissolved in water or alcohol, or injected. This data brief provides estimates, information, and trends on methamphetamine use among Iowa youth and adults. The information is drawn from available data on emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and substance use disorder treatment admissions, and from youth survey data.

Key Findings

- From 2012 through 2016, the rate for methamphetamine-related treatment admissions nearly doubled from 183 treatment admissions per 100,000 in 2012 to 274 in 2016 (*Figure 1*).
- From 2012 to 2016, men (53 percent) and women (47 percent) were admitted at similar and increasing rates for methamphetamine treatment (*Figure 1*).
- Adults aged 25 to 44 had the highest rates of methamphetamine-related treatment admissions (*Figure 1*).
- Iowa youth report using methamphetamine at rates near zero (1 percent or less state wide for all grades on the last several Iowa Youth Surveys). This is despite declining perceptions of risk (*Figure 3*). Youth also reported difficulty in accessing methamphetamine (*Figure 4*).
- In 2016, the rate of amphetamine-related hospitalizations was 5.9 per 100,000 population for people aged 25 to 44 and 2.5 per 100,000 population for people aged 15 to 24 (*Table 1*).
- Methamphetamine-related deaths in Iowa have increased eight-fold since 2011 (*Figure 6*).

If you or someone you know is struggling with methamphetamine use, **contact**

YourLifeIowa for assistance:

Call: (855) 581-8111 Text: (855) 895-8398

(standard data rates may apply)

Chat and Website: <https://yourlifeiowa.org/>.

Methamphetamine-Related Treatment Admissions

The rate of methamphetamine-related treatment admissions in Iowa has nearly doubled since 2012. In 2016, more than 6,900 Iowans were admitted for methamphetamine use treatment. The rate of methamphetamine-related treatment admissions increased from 183.4 per 100,000 population in 2012 to 273.9 in 2016 (*Figure 1*). People aged 25 to 44 had the highest rates of methamphetamine-related treatment admissions compared to other age groups. Rates were higher for males than females and the increase from 2012 to 2016 was similar for both sexes. For males, the rate increased from 195 per 100,000 population in 2012 to 288 in 2016; and for females, the rate increased from 172 per 100,000 population in 2012 to 260 in 2016 (*Figure 1*).

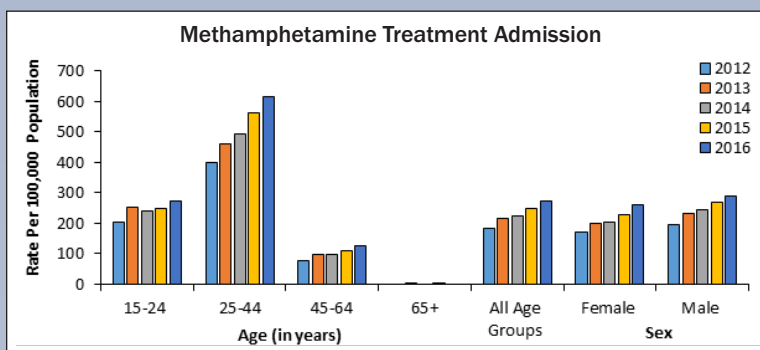


Figure 1: Rate of Methamphetamine-Related Treatment Admissions, by Age and Sex, IDPH, 2012-2016

Figure 2 maps the average annual rates for methamphetamine-related treatment admissions by Iowa county. County rates varied greatly, from 27.1 per 100,000 population in Cedar County to 613.4 in Wapello County. The five counties with the *lowest* rates of methamphetamine-related treatment admissions include Cedar (27.1 per 100,000 population), Johnson (28.5), Lyon (30.6), Ringgold (43.5) and Scott (46.6). The five counties with the *highest* rates include Wapello (613.4 per 100,000 population), Webster (594.8), Montgomery (450.8), Cerro Gordo (413.3) and Appanoose (412.6).

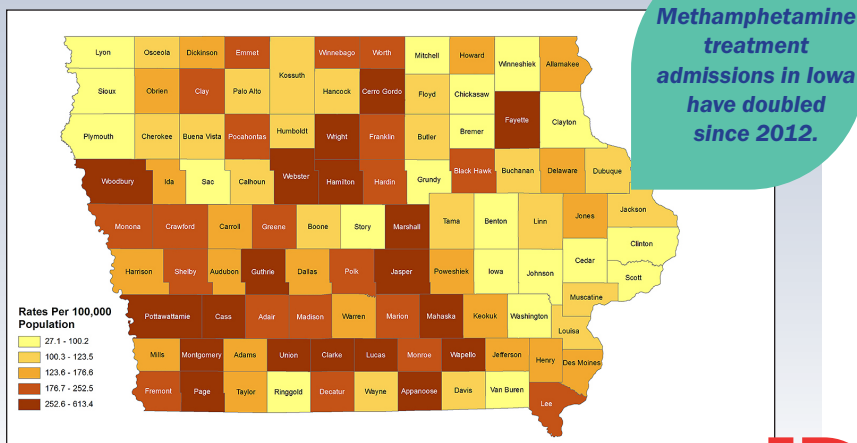


Figure 2: Average Annual Rate of Methamphetamine-Related Treatment Admissions, Iowa, IDPH, 2012-2016



Youth Perception of Risk

Perception of the risk associated with substance use is an important factor in whether an individual will use substances. Studies have shown that people who perceive a high risk of harm are less likely to use a substance than those who perceive a low risk of harm. Among Iowa youth, the perception of risk of methamphetamine use has been declining for the past several years. Since 2008, methamphetamine use risk perception decreased by more than 15 percent for 6th grade students and more than 10 percent for 11th grade. Male and female students reported similar perception of risk of methamphetamine use. In 2008, 84 percent of 8th grade students and 90 percent of 11th grade students reported great or moderate risk of harming themselves if they used methamphetamine once a week, compared to 79 percent and 81 percent in 2016 (Figure 3).

Youth Access to Methamphetamine

Youth in all three grades surveyed (6th, 8th and 11th) were asked how difficult they think it would be for a kid their age to get methamphetamine in their neighborhood or community. Iowa Youth Survey (IYS) data indicated the higher the grade, the less difficult the students thought it would be to get methamphetamine. The reported percentages by grade were relatively stable from 2008-2016 and the rates of methamphetamine use remain low for both males (1 percent in 2016) and females (<1 percent in 2016). (Figure 4)

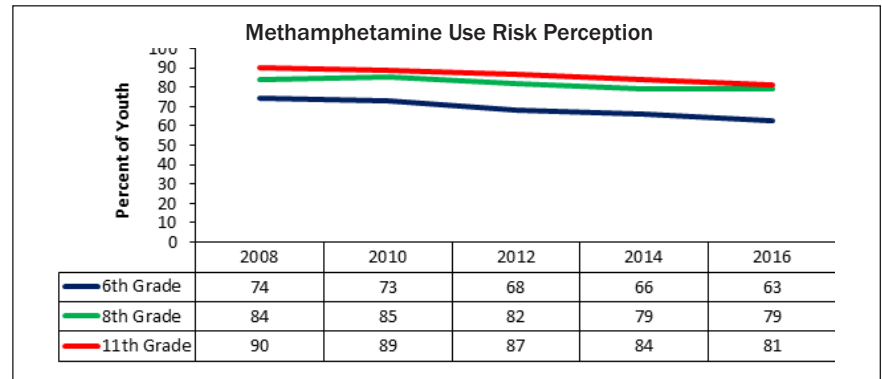


Figure 3: Percent of Youth Reporting Methamphetamine Use Risk Perception (Great or Moderate Risk), by Grade, IYS, 2008-2016

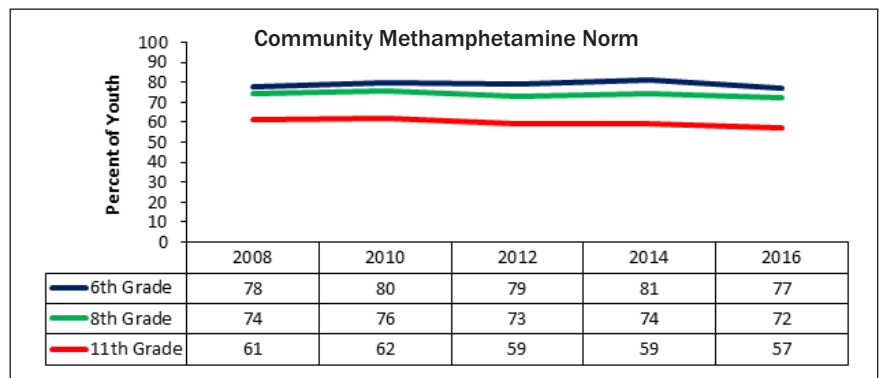


Figure 4: Percent of Youth Reporting Perception of Difficulty Accessing Methamphetamine in the Community (Very Hard and Hard), by Grade, IYS, 2008-2016

Methamphetamine Labs Seized and Production of Methamphetamine in the Presence of a Minor

The number of methamphetamine labs seized by Iowa local or state law enforcement decreased from 412 in 2011 to 85 in 2016 (Figure 5). Between 2012 and 2016, methamphetamine production in the presence of a minor decreased by more than 80 percent from 179 cases to 33 cases (Figure 5). **Note:** These data may be affected by data reporting changes and staffing levels within the Iowa Department of Human Services.

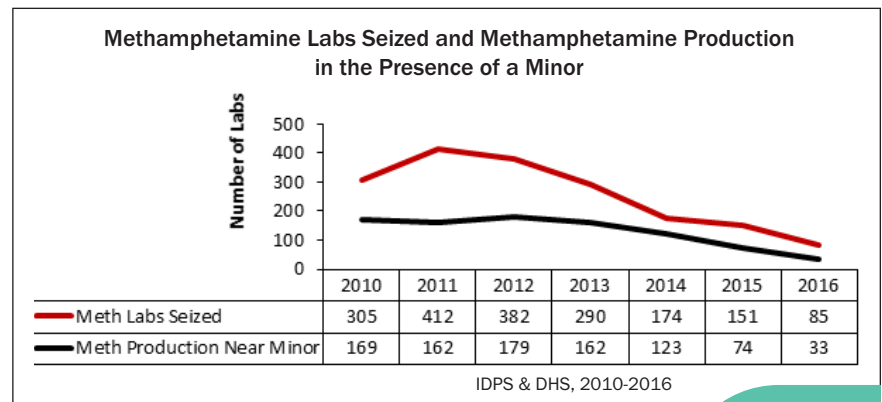


Figure 5: Number of Methamphetamine Labs Seized by Iowa Law Enforcement Agencies and Number of Methamphetamine Production Cases in the Presence of a Minor, IDPS & DHS, 2010-2016

Minor presence at methamphetamine seizures has dropped 80 percent.



Amphetamine-Related Emergency Department Visits and Hospitalizations

Available hospital data do not track methamphetamine individually, instead including it in the broader category of amphetamines. In 2016, emergency department visits and hospitalizations due to amphetamine were highest among Iowans aged 25 to 44. People 65 or older had the lowest rates of amphetamine-related emergency department visits and hospitalizations compared to all other age groups. The rates of amphetamine-related emergency department visits were higher for females than for males, while hospitalization rates were slightly higher for males.

Age (in years)	ER Visits (Rate per 100,000)	Hospitalizations (Rate per 100,000)
15-24	5.4	2.5
25-44	5.5	5.9
45-64	1.6	3.7
65+	—	—
All Age Groups	3.2	3.4
Sex		
Female	2.6	2.2
Male	1.9	2.4

Table 1: Rate of Amphetamine-Related Emergency Department Visits and Hospitalizations, by Age and Sex, IDPH, 2016

References

American Dental Association. (2017). Methamphetamine. Retrieved from <https://www.ada.org/en/member-center/oral-health-topics/methamphetamine>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018). HIV and substance use in the United States. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/substanceuse.html>

National Institute of Drug Abuse. (2017). Methamphetamine. Retrieved from https://d14rmgtrwz5a.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/df_methamphetamine_february2017_1.pdf

Methamphetamine-Related Deaths

From 2011 to 2017, methamphetamine-related deaths in Iowa increased from 12 to 96 deaths, an eight-fold increase. From 2016 to 2017, methamphetamine-related deaths increased by more than 23 percent.

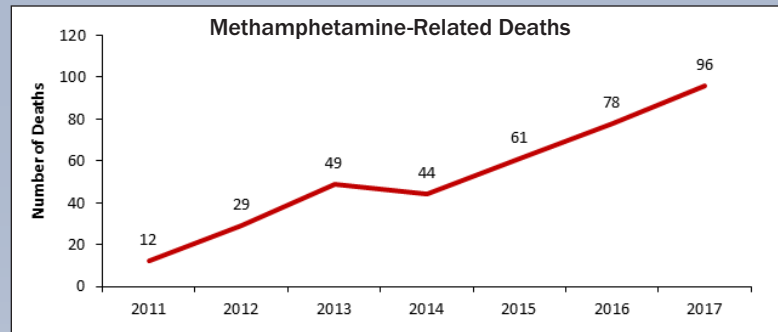
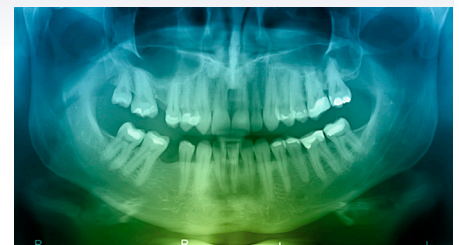


Figure 6: Number of Methamphetamine-Related Deaths, IDPH, 2011-2017

Other Consequences of Methamphetamine Use

- Methamphetamine use is linked to risky behavior that places people at greater risk of HIV and other bloodborne diseases (CDC, 2017).
- Continued methamphetamine use causes changes in the brain's dopamine system that are associated with reduced coordination and impaired verbal learning (NIDA, 2017).
- Methamphetamine is highly addictive, and when people stop taking it, withdrawal symptoms can include anxiety, fatigue, severe depression, psychosis and intense drug cravings (NIDA, 2017).
- Persons who use methamphetamine are twice as likely to have untreated cavities, four times as likely to have any experience of cavities, and twice as likely to have two or more decayed, missing or filled teeth (ADA, 2017).



Further Information

For more information about prevention and treatment resources in Iowa, please visit the IDPH Substance Abuse Prevention website at <https://idph.iowa.gov/substance-abuse/prevention> or Your Life Iowa at <http://www.yourlifeiowa.org/>.

Data Sources

Name	Website
Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS), 2010-2016	https://dhs.iowa.gov/reports/child-abuse-statistics
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), 2012-2016	https://tracking.idph.iowa.gov/
Iowa Department of Public Safety (IDPS), 2010-2016	http://www.dps.state.ia.us/jobs/dnesa.shtml
IDPH Iowa Youth Survey (IYS), 2002-2016	http://www.iowayouthsurvey.iowa.gov/

Check out these resources to help with prevention and treatment for substance abuse.