

Cocaine Misuse

Recognising the cycle of stimulation, crash, craving and increasing risk

Substance misuse can develop quietly. A substance may begin as a way to cope, sleep, socialise, manage pain, increase confidence or get through difficult feelings. This guide is here to help you notice patterns with curiosity rather than judgement.

Understanding the cycle

Cocaine produces a short-lived stimulant effect that can be followed by a crash. This can create a repeated cycle of use, craving, exhaustion and further use.

Risks

Cocaine can increase heart rate and blood pressure and is linked with chest pain, heart rhythm problems, seizures, anxiety and agitation. Mixing cocaine with alcohol creates additional health risks.

Signs of increasing harm

Spending more money than intended, disappearing to use, disrupted sleep, secrecy, repeated redosing, nasal problems, mood swings and neglecting food or hydration can all indicate a growing problem.

Support and recovery

Support can focus on cravings, triggers, sleep, nutrition, finances, relationships and the reasons cocaine became useful in the first place. Chest pain, collapse, seizure or severe breathing difficulty requires emergency help.

A gentle check-in

Ask yourself: What does this substance do for me? What happens before I use it? What happens afterwards? What has become harder because of it? What support would make change feel more possible?

Notice	Consider
Triggers, cravings, quantity, secrecy, sleep, mood and consequences.	GP support, local drug/alcohol services, counselling, trusted people and practical harm-reduction advice.

Important safety note

This resource is educational and does not replace medical assessment. Some substances can cause dangerous withdrawal or overdose. If there is unconsciousness, severe breathing difficulty, seizure, collapse, chest pain or immediate danger, seek emergency medical help.

You deserve support that looks at the whole person - not just the substance.