

Teen attitudes on meth are surprising

By [Andria Simmons](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

2:51 p.m. Tuesday, March 9, 2010

A third of Georgia teens see little to no risk in trying methamphetamine, and a fifth of them say it's easy to get.

The alarming statistics come from a new statewide survey released this week by the Georgia Meth Project, a public education campaign aimed at preventing first-time use.

The 2010 Georgia Meth Use & Attitudes Survey examined the attitudes and behaviors of teens, young adults, who are just out of high school, and parents. It was conducted over a period of several months among samples of 2,432 teens, 314 young adults and 400 parents of teens.

The study found that there is general disapproval of the drug among teenagers, yet many are clueless about the risk it presents.

Some other results of the study:

- One in five (20 percent) of 12- to 24-year-olds says someone has offered them meth.
- 39 percent of teens say their friends would not give them a hard time for using meth.
- 58 percent of teens say they have never discussed the subject of meth with their parents.
- Many young adults see benefits in using meth. Thirty-two percent of young adults and 21 percent of teens believe it helps you lose weight; 26 percent of young adults and 17 percent of teens believe it gives you energy; 23 percent of young adults and 19 percent of teens believe it will make you feel very happy; and 19 percent of young adults and 16 percent of teens believe it will help you deal with boredom.

During the past five years, meth has become the fastest-growing drug problem in Atlanta, Dalton and Gainesville, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration. Atlanta is also recognized as a regional hub for illegal drug trafficking by Mexican cartels.

Jim Langford, the executive director of the Georgia Meth Project, said the survey provides a baseline for measuring changes in attitudes and behaviors of teenagers, young adults and parents going forward.

Armed with \$6 million – nearly all from private donors – the Georgia Meth Project rolled out its advertising campaign this week. It's slogan "Not Even Once" encourages teens not to experiment with meth.

Experts say the stranglehold meth has on users is practically unparalleled. It causes the brain to release dopamine at levels four times greater than cocaine, altering the brain's chemistry and creating an intense cycle

of highs and lows.

"It's a lot more powerful than cocaine and the effect lasts longer," said Neil Kaltenecker, executive director of Georgia Council on Substance Abuse. "Not to mention the caustic materials used to make the drugs are just toxic."

The Georgia Meth Project is overseen by a national organization called the Meth Project. Its organizers say similar efforts have proven successful in Montana, Arizona, Illinois, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado and Hawaii. For more information about the Georgia Meth Project and the survey, visit www.georgiamethproject.org.

Find this article at:

<http://www.ajc.com/news/teen-attitudes-on-meth-358058.html>

 [Print this page](#) [Close](#)