

# IDAHO METH PROJECT®

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## **New Survey of Idaho Teens and Young Adults Finds Dramatic Shift in Attitudes toward Meth**

*Research Shows Significant Increase in Awareness of Risks Associated with Methamphetamine Use*

**BOISE, Idaho—Jan. 19, 2010**—The Idaho Meth Project today released the results of the 2009 *Idaho Meth Use & Attitudes Survey*. The statewide survey found that compared to a 2007 benchmark survey that was conducted before the launch of the Idaho Meth Project, Idaho's young people are increasingly aware of the dangers of taking Meth, are less likely to believe there are benefits to using Meth, disapprove of taking the drug even once or twice, and are more likely to discuss the subject with their friends and parents.

“These new data show we are making significant progress in our efforts to prevent Meth use among Idaho's young people,” said Idaho Meth Project Executive Director Megan Ronk. “Awareness of the risks associated with using Meth has risen considerably since 2007, and today 87% of Idaho teens say they strongly disapprove of taking the drug even once or twice. Young people throughout the state have heard the messages of this campaign and now understand how dangerous Meth is.”

According to the survey, the number of teens who see “great risk” of several outcomes associated with Meth use has risen considerably since the benchmark in 2007. For example, 82% see great risk of getting hooked on Meth, up 11 points from the benchmark survey. More than seven in 10 teens (74%) see great risk of suffering brain damage (up 16 points), 63% believe they risk insomnia, and more than two-thirds of respondents (68%) see great risk of suffering tooth decay (up 20 points).

In addition, teens in overwhelming numbers agree that taking Meth will have a negative impact on behavior. Eighty-one percent see great risk of turning into someone you don't want to be (up 12 points), 78% say you risk losing control of yourself (up 15 points), 73% believe that Meth use could cause you to have sex with someone you don't want to (up 15 points), and 63% see great risk that taking Meth will make you become violent (up 13 points). Finally, 66% of teens see great risk of dying from using Meth, up 16 points from 2007.

Few Idaho teens believe that taking Meth benefits the user. They overwhelmingly disagree that Meth makes you intelligent (91%, up 4 points), helps you study (90%, up 4 points), makes you more popular (85%, up 3 points), makes you feel attractive (80%, up 4 points), or gives you energy (70%, up 6 points).

The survey also reveals that since the Idaho Meth Project began its efforts, communication about meth between young people and their friends and parents has increased. Six in 10 teens and seven in 10 young adults have told their friends not to use Meth (up 5 points for teens; up 10 points for young adults). In addition, 63% of teens (up 7 points) say they have discussed the subject of Meth with their parents in the past year.

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The survey results also indicate that the Idaho Meth Project is increasingly seen as an important source of information about methamphetamine use. Most teens “strongly agree” the ads showed them that Meth will make you look different than you usually do (82%), is dangerous to try just once (79%), will make you act in a way you would not want to act (76%), and is more dangerous than they had originally thought (72%). Seventy percent strongly agree the ads made them less likely to try Meth.

“The first step toward reducing use is raising awareness and parent-child communications, and the Idaho Meth Project has done an amazing job educating young people about just how dangerous Meth is,” said Sarah Woodley, President of Business Psychology Associates, a Boise-based provider of behavioral healthcare services. “From my experience in working with treatment centers around Idaho, the changes in attitude and increased dialogue have already resulted in changes in behavior. The number of people seeking substance abuse treatment services with Meth as their drug of choice is down throughout the state.”

The *Idaho Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* is conducted annually by the Idaho Meth Project to track attitudes and behaviors related to methamphetamine. A benchmark survey was conducted in fall 2007, prior to the launch of the Project’s media campaign. The 2009 *Idaho Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* was executed in November and December 2009 by GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media. The survey was conducted among random samples of 2,641 teens (ages 12-17) who attended one of 47 randomly selected junior and senior high schools across Idaho, as well as a random sample of 428 young adults (ages 18-24) from throughout Idaho. The executive summary and complete survey report can be obtained from the Idaho Meth Project’s website at [www.IdahoMethProject.org/Research](http://www.IdahoMethProject.org/Research).

The Idaho Meth Project also unveiled its new Wave 3 media campaign today, including television, radio, online, and billboard advertising that will appear throughout the state. While previous advertising dealt with risks to potential users of Meth, the new campaign focuses on the potential damage to family and friends. The new spots will begin airing immediately, and include four television ads by Darren Aronofsky, the acclaimed director of *Requiem for a Dream* and *The Wrestler*.

### **About the Idaho Meth Project**

The Idaho Meth Project is a nonprofit organization that implements a range of advertising and community-action programs to reduce methamphetamine use in the state. Launched in January 2008, the Idaho Meth Project leverages a proven model that combines extensive research with a hard-hitting, integrated media campaign. The Idaho Meth Project is affiliated with the Meth Project, a national nonprofit organization headquartered in Palo Alto, Calif., aimed at significantly reducing first-time Meth use through public service messaging, public policy and community outreach. For more information visit [www.idahomethproject.org](http://www.idahomethproject.org)

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## **Survey Highlights**

Findings from the 2009 *Idaho Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* revealed that Idaho teens and young adults are more aware of the dangers of taking Meth. While significant progress has been made, the survey findings also stress the need for continued Meth prevention and public awareness efforts. All statistics are sourced from the 2009 *Idaho Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* report, available at [www.IdahoMethProject.org/Research](http://www.IdahoMethProject.org/Research). The following highlights some of the survey's principal findings:

### **Perceived Benefits and Risks of Meth Use**

- Compared to the 2007 benchmark survey, Idaho teens and young adults have come to view Meth use as more dangerous.
  - Sixty-six percent of teens (up 11 points) and 78% of young adults (up 10 points) now believe there is “great risk” in taking Meth just once or twice.
- Idaho teens and young adults are now more aware of the specific dangers of Meth use. Significant increases (as much as 20 points) in perceptions of risk in trying Meth just once were reported in every one of the 14 risk areas measured since the benchmark survey in 2007.
- Now, more than eight in 10 teens believe there is a “great” or “moderate” risk of the following after trying the drug once:
  - Tooth decay (85%; “great risk” up 20 points)
  - Lack of hygiene (88%; “great risk” up 17 points)
  - Stealing (87%; “great risk” up 13 points)
  - Getting hooked on Meth (94%; “great risk” up 11 points)
  - Losing control of themselves (91%; “great risk” up 15 points)
  - Having sex with someone they don’t want to (89%; “great risk” up 15 points)
  - Turning into someone they don’t want to be (93%; “great risk” up 12 points)
- Similarly, more than eight in 10 young adults believe there is a “great” or “moderate” risk of the following after trying the drug once:
  - Stealing (88%; “great risk” up 14 points)
  - Getting hooked on Meth (95%; “great risk” up 13 points)
  - Losing control of themselves (94%; “great risk” up 12 points)
  - Having sex with someone they don’t want to (88%; “great risk” up 12 points)
  - Turning into someone they don’t want to be (92%; “great risk” up 11 points)
- More than six in 10 teens (66%) see great risk of dying from using Meth, up 16 points from 2007.

- More teens now see Meth as risky to try once or twice or to use regularly—more so than heroin, cocaine, or marijuana.

### **Key Information Sources and Advertising Effectiveness**

- Anti-Meth advertising is clearly widespread in Idaho—seen or heard at least once a week by 60% of teens and 59% of young adults. Most have seen or heard a Meth-related ad in the past month (85% of teens and young adults).
- Idaho young people “strongly agree” ads by the Idaho Meth Project make them less likely to try or use Meth (70% of teens and 60% of young adults).
- Six in 10 teens and seven in 10 young adults agree that the ads gave them new information or told them things they didn’t know about Meth.

### **Social Approval and Parent-child Discussions**

- Eighty-seven percent of teens and 90% of young adults strongly disapprove of trying Meth once or twice compared to 2007 (up 7 points for teens; up 5 points for young adults).
- Peer-to-peer discussions about Meth are more likely to occur than they were prior to the launch of the Idaho Meth Project. Six in 10 teens and seven in 10 young adults have told their friends not to use Meth (up 5 points for teens; up 10 points for young adults).
- Parent-child discussions about Meth are more frequent among young adults than they were two years ago. Over half of teens (63%, up 7 points) say they have discussed the subject of Meth with their parents in the past year.

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