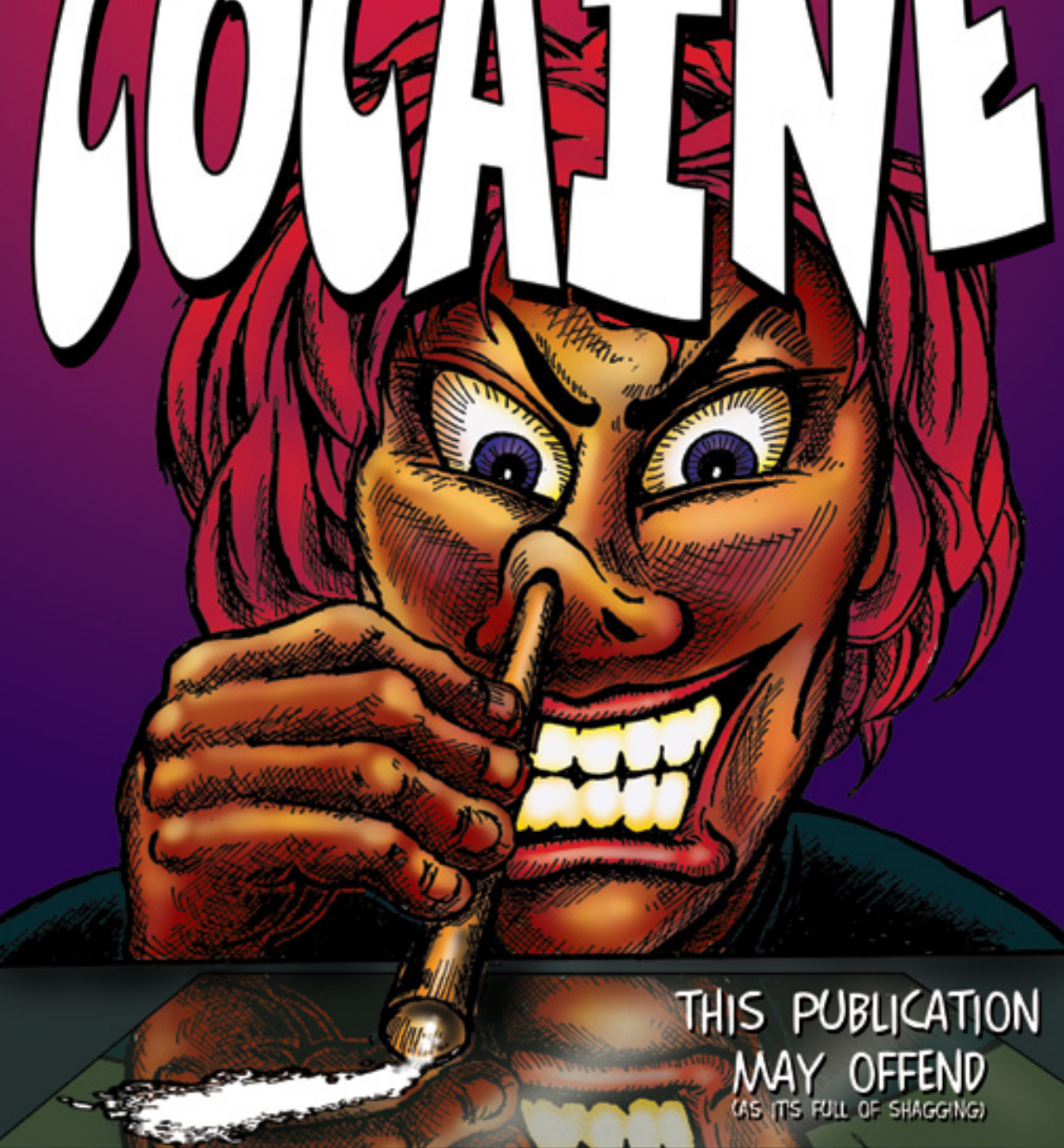


LIFELINE PUBLICATIONS PRESENT

McDERMOTT'S GUIDE TO

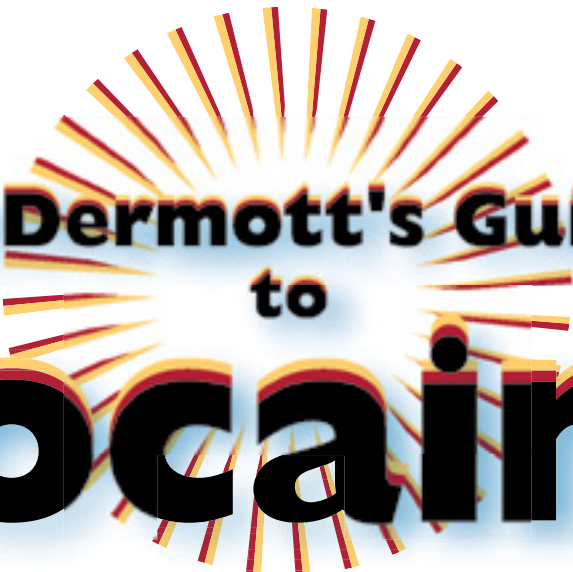
COCAINE



THIS PUBLICATION
MAY OFFEND
(AS IT'S FULL OF SHAGGING)



For many centuries, natives of South America have made offerings to Mama Coca, the Goddess of the coca plant in exchange for a good harvest. Today, local consumers regularly make large offerings of cash to a less traditional deity called 'Papa Dealer'.



McDermott's Guide to Cocaine

For many centuries, natives of South America have used the leaves of the coca plant as a medicine, a food, and an all-purpose means of getting through the day. Rich in thiamine, riboflavin and vitamin coca leaves are believed to tone the muscles, aid concentration, breathing in the mountainous regions, and exertion in the heavy labour of the Andean tin mines. Mama Coca is the Goddess of the Coca Plant, and South Americans still make offerings of coca leaves to Mama Coca, in exchange for a good harvest.

Cocaine hydrochloride is a white crystalline powder, derived from the coca plant, and today, local consumers regularly make large offers of cash to a less traditional deity called 'Papa Dealer', in exchange for a bag of said product. Unlike coca leaves, cocaine hydrochloride has no known nutritional value whatsoever.

Q: why do people take cocaine?

A: FOR THE SAME REASONS THAT PEOPLE take any drug. It's exciting, it's sexy, it's enjoyable and it's slightly dangerous. For a while, at least. The primary effect is an overwhelming sense of confidence and well being.

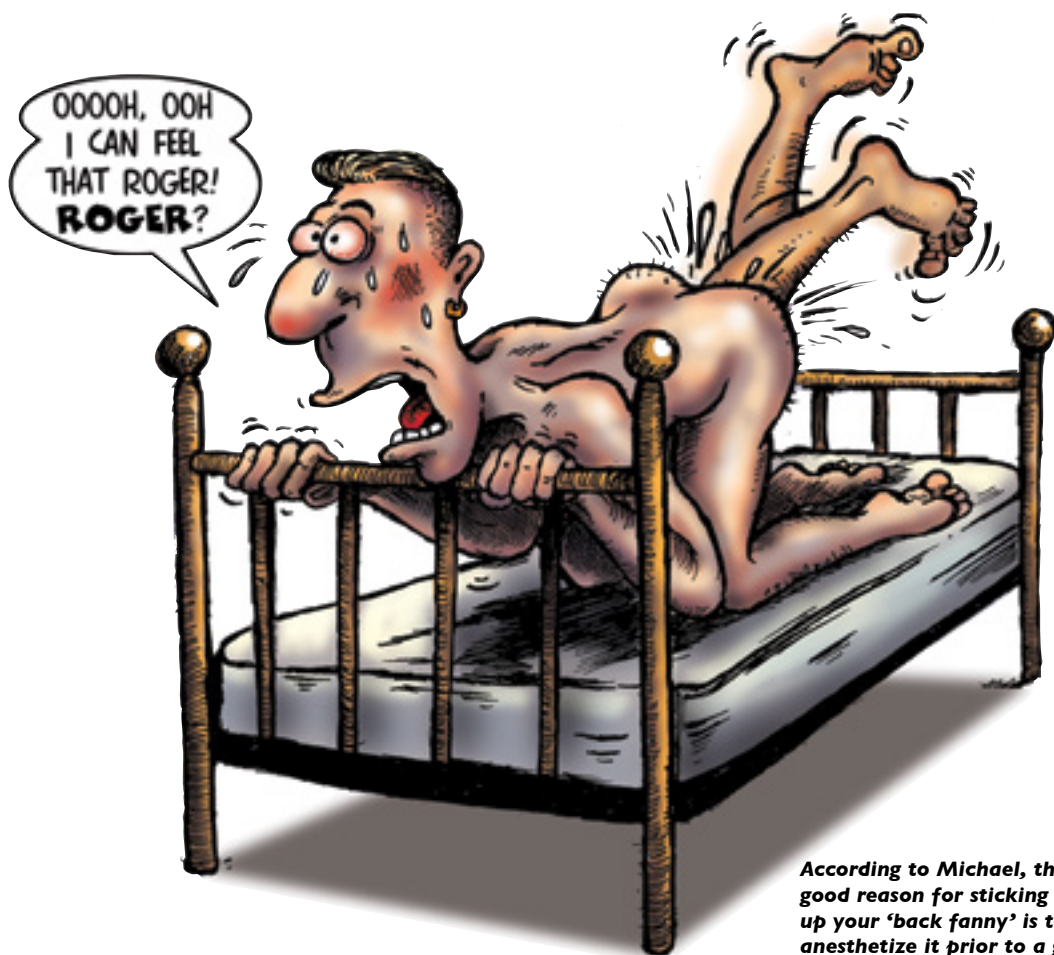
Think of James Cagney on top of that gas tank, wasting coppers left and right. 'Top of the world, ma!' Who on earth doesn't want to feel absolutely certain that, as long as the coke lasts, they're wittier, smarter and cooler than anyone else?

There's an important caveat here though. It makes you feel those things. It doesn't actually make them true. Unfortunately, regular use can also diminish your ability to make that distinction. Take, for example, some noted cokeheads of the past, such as Frank Bough, or David Crosby (of drippy 70's supergroup Crosby, Stills and Nash.) How cool do you suppose they are?

(Send your answers on a postcard to Blue Peter presenter Richard Bacon. c/o Clueless on Charlie, BBC Broadcasting House, London, and you might win a special 'white' Blue Peter badge. Don't send them to us. We don't care.)



The primary effect is an overwhelming sense of confidence and well-being. Think of James Cagney on top of that gas tank, wasting coppers left and right. 'Top of the world Ma!'



According to Michael, the only good reason for sticking coke up your 'back fanny' is to anesthetize it prior to a good fisting.

Q: can you stick cocaine up your bum?

A: IT HAS BECOME FASHIONABLE AMONG THE trendy vicar types who work in the drugs field, to argue for the health benefits of bizarre and outlandish methods of administering drugs.

"Hey kids, you don't want to catch AIDS. Why not dissolve it in water and pump it up your arse instead? Here, why don't you just come into this quiet back room and i'll show you how to do it. Shall we use your coke or mine?"

Despite Lifeline's traditional willingness to embrace every hobby-horse and bandwagon that comes along in our attempts to ingratiate ourselves with you, the drug-consuming punter, we just don't think this one will fly. Yes, it's true that the mucus membrane of the rectum is just as good as that of the nose – perhaps even better, as it has a bigger surface area. But we can't see this one catching on with the cocaine-using bouncers and gangsters of our acquaintance. We've also heard that some top

fashion models are experimenting with this method to avoid the Daniella Westbrook look and to protect their extremely valuable commodities, but we believe such rumors are just spread by perverts in a surreptitious attempt to handle their friend's rectal passages. I suppose it's possible that it might catch on with art students though.

My gay friend Michael, claims he's tried this method of administration and it did nothing at all for him. According to Michael, the only good reason for sticking coke up your 'back fanny' is to anesthetize it prior to a good fisting.

Important drug health warning: Lifeline does not advocate the use of cocaine enemas as a harm reduction strategy. Nor do we advocate their use as an adjunct to digital-rectal manipulation. We particularly don't advocate either practice for schoolchildren. And nor do we find either of them remotely funny.

Not even in the slightest...

Q: so how DO you take the stuff then?

A: THERE ARE THREE METHODS THAT ARE common.

snorting

Intranasal inhalation, or 'beaking it', is by far the most common method of use. The powder is dumped on a shiny surface, such as a mirror, or the back of an LP sleeve. CD's don't work for this, but it's possible to use the cover from a 12-inch single, provided you pick one that doesn't have a hole in the middle. The hippies among you might want to avoid using anything with a gatefold sleeve. Just as we've suggested you might wish to avoid lodging a load of coke in the crease of your bum, similarly, you don't want a load to get lodged in the crease in the centre of Pink Floyd's 'Ummagumma'. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, it is somewhat wasteful, and when the bag is all gone, you're going to be sorry. Secondly, it provides the police with valuable forensic evidence when they come around and arrest you. To avoid these drawbacks, some

regular snorters tend to prefer a mirror or a ceramic tile, which allows the obsessive-compulsive bastard who actually bought the stuff to sit around, chopping lines for hours, while everyone else sits, watching, tongues hanging out and pacing the room, waiting for when he's actually going to stop messing around and give everyone else another snort. However, there are disadvantages with the tile, as it doesn't allow you to chop out those really long, extremely fine lines, that look as though you're being more generous than you actually are.

Although snorting is actually the least problematic method of using cocaine, it is not without its serious drawbacks. Cocaine snorters are less likely to descend into uncontrolled, compulsive use as swiftly as people who smoke or inject the drug. Nevertheless, all those private 12 step, Minnesota Model Rehabs-for-the-Rich-and-Famous are full of people whose cocaine snorting has gotten wildly out of control.

The other major problem associated with snorting cocaine is damage to the mucus membrane of the nose. The reason cocaine hydrochloride is so called, is because it's actually an acid salt of cocaine, and so what you're effectively doing every time you do



Some regular snorters tend to prefer a mirror or a ceramic tile, which allows the obsessive-compulsive bastard who actually bought the stuff to chop lines for hours, while everyone else sits, waiting for when he's actually going to stop messing around and give everyone else another snort.

a line is applying a layer of hydrochloric acid to the membrane of your nose. Eventually, the septum, the part that separates the nostrils, just gets eaten away, or 'perforated' as the plastic surgeons that specialize in replacing them, like to call it.

Less frequent use, finer chopping and spraying the inside of the nose with a nasal spray container filled with clean water can help to moderate these effects, but the best way of avoiding them has to be steering clear of the stuff altogether.

injecting For those who don't feel as though they get enough of a buzz from snorting, some will try injecting. The advantage of injecting is that it gives a much more intense rush than snorting does.

The disadvantages are that injecting cocaine wears off much more quickly than snorting does.

As a result, injectors tend to be much more compulsive in their use patterns. Rather than sitting around, chatting and chopping out a line every hour or so, injectors are more likely to just keep doing shot after shot until the coke has all gone.

There are a number of significant risks associated with injecting cocaine. Firstly, there's the risk of overdose. It's reasonably easy to manage your intake when you snort cocaine – when you start feeling weird, you can just wait a little longer before your next line. The same is true, if to a somewhat lesser extent, of smoking. When you inject though, you pump an unknown quantity of an unidentified substance straight into your bloodstream. Talk about cocaine giving people the illusion of intelligence? How smart is that?



If you are going to inject in the company of other injectors, and you don't have enough clean syringes to use a fresh one for each shot, label your syringe in some way, so that you can identify it.

Then, if you manage to avoid overdosing, there's the problem of infections. Because of the intensity of the cocaine rush, there's a strong tendency for injectors to just put down their works until the coke settles down a bit, before they clean it out. If you have two or three people doing this, it becomes very hard to keep track of which syringe belongs to who. As a result, blood-borne viruses tend to be transmitted very rapidly among populations of cocaine injectors. If you are going to inject in the company of other injectors, and you don't have enough clean syringes to use afresh one for each shot, label your syringe in some way, so that you can identify it. You could either mark it, by making a nick in the barrel, or you could tape your name onto it, just like your mother did with your new winter coat when you first started school.

Finally, there's that acid thing again. Remember, cocaine hydrochloride is an acid, and this fact, combined with the fact that coke injectors tend to inject many, many more times over the course of a day than heroin users do, mean that they tend to suffer high levels of abscesses, deep vein thrombosis and other vein damage.

If you do inject cocaine, or any drug at all, you should never, ever share injecting equipment. Using small needles, and rotating injection sites frequently can help to minimize the damage, if not completely eliminate the risk.

smoking Cocaine is usually smoked in one of two ways. Firstly, there are those people who like to pile a heap of cocaine powder into a joint. This is probably the safest method of all of using cocaine — primarily because it doesn't work. The melting point of cocaine hydrochloride — i.e., the point at which the drug is vaporized, which is necessary so that the fumes can be inhaled — is higher than the point at which the powder burns and the drug is destroyed. Consequently, it's virtually impossible to get high smoking cocaine hydrochloride.

Of course, that doesn't mean that it's not common, even though it's a total waste of time and money. Nor does it mean that you won't hear people insisting that it works for them. I've got just two words to say to that. Placebo effect. But hey, nobody ever said that cocaine use was logical, right? It's the style that matters, and what can be more stylish than heaping a mountain of Peruvian marching powder into a nice big spliff of skunk? Who cares if it doesn't work, that's missing the point, surely?

Somewhat less stylish than smoking cocaine hydrochloride, is smoking freebase cocaine, or



crack. (Crack is just a quick and dirty way of making freebase cocaine using baking soda and avoiding a lot of messing around with ammonia, ether and other strange and noxious substances.)

Unlike smoking cocaine hydrochloride, smoking crack does work. If anything, it works rather too well. As with injecting, people tend to smoke crack for the intense rush, which can actually be even more intense than when injecting. Because there is a very large surface area in the lungs, you can absorb very high doses, very quickly by smoking crack. As a result, crack produces much higher cocaine plasma levels in the bloodstream much faster than any other method of use. The outcome of this is an extremely rapid and intense high.

Followed by an equally rapid and intense crash. Followed by another equally rapid and intense high. And then crash. Etc etc until the money or the cocaine runs out.



So I'm being perfectly honest with you when I say I can't think of a worse idea than smoking crack. Apart from possibly trying to have oral sex with a pitbull terrier.....At least you can only have your dick or clit bitten off once...

While it might not have some of the more obvious drawbacks associated with injecting, you'll get little argument from most people with experience of the heavier end of drug use that a crack habit is probably the fastest way to lose all control over your life. People who have managed to retain some semblance of control over a heroin addiction of ten years and more, find that they lose all control whatsoever when they pick up the base pipe. If there's one good thing about a crack habit though, it's that nobody ever maintains one for very long. It either kills you, or you quit, or you switch to being a sad alcoholic, waking up to a few cans of Tenants, or a regular heroin junkie. But sooner or later, you'll give up the crack. Your body and your brain just can't stand up to the sort of punishment that a serious crack habit hands out.

Crack tends not to be all that cool, either. Unless your idea of a hip role model extends to Smokey, from the PJ's.

Q: but what about someone who is really committed to the idea of smoking crack? just to see what it feels like?

A: I'LL BE HONEST WITH YOU NOW. I LIKE drugs. I've scarfed them all up indiscriminately, in vast quantities my whole adult life and most of my childhood as well, and most of the time, I loved every minute of it. So I'm being perfectly honest with you when I say, I can't think of a worse idea. Apart from possibly trying to have oral sex with a pit bull terrier.

We here at Lifeline Publications are committed to providing accurate, non-judgemental information, to people regardless of their personal tastes and predilections, but if you're the sort of high-risk person that likes to live dangerously and feels an overwhelming urge to go out and try crack, can we suggest that you'd probably actually do yourself less harm if you changed your mind and went the pit bull route instead? At least you can only get your dick or clit bitten off once, while crack is the vice that keeps on punishing...



Cocaine doesn't have the pulling power that it did in the days when the Rolling Stones did end-of-tour parties wearing silver trays piled with coke strapped to their heads.

Q: do I have to use cocaine if I want a career in the media or entertainment industries?

A: QUITE POSSIBLY, BUT REMEMBER THAT STEPHEN HAWKINS' FREQUENT television appearances notwithstanding, most actors and performers aren't actually the sharpest tools in the box. The good ones spend the whole of their working lives pretending to be someone else, while the crap ones spend their lives playing the same character – themselves – over and over again. And as for the media, have you looked at the Sun or the Daily Mail lately?



Stones reputedly hired a selection of midgets to parade among the guests on one of their notoriously debauched

But if these are the sorts of career that you aspire to, then yes, the chances are that you probably are the kind of dim bulb that thinks they can impress people by flashing around big bags of 'Peruvian flake', even if they happen to consist of 95% bicarbonate of soda, 3% amphetamine sulphate and 2% of cocaine.

Be careful though. Cocaine doesn't have the pulling power that it did in the days when the Rolling Stones reputedly hired a selection of midgets to parade among the guests on one of their notoriously debauched end-of-tour parties wearing silver trays piled with coke strapped to their heads.

Since cocaine's glamorous heyday back in the 70's, the arse has dropped out of cocaine's high-status image. In the USA at least, the flood of cheap cocaine in the late 80's meant that it was more closely associated with trailer trash than with Hollywood. All the really big stars either quit, or went to rehab. Hi. My name's Jack and I'm an asshole.

And so the Colombian cartels targeted Europe, and a gram of coke, which would cost around eighty or ninety pounds – a week's wage – back in 1975, today can be had by any teenager with a slim forty in pocket money on any local council estate.

Q: **high status?
millionaire image?**

A: I CAN'T SEE IT MYSELF, BUT HEY, IF YOU SAY SO...

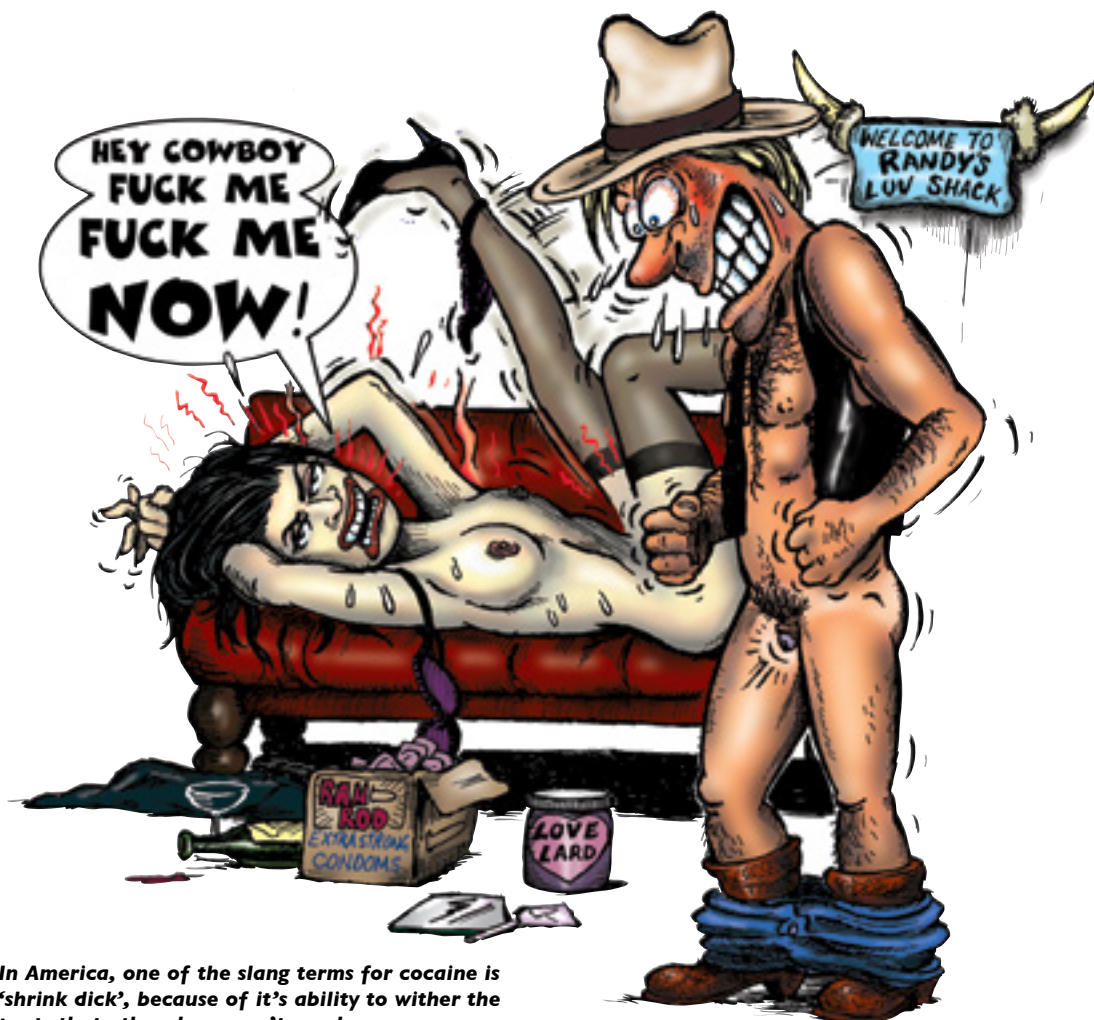
Q: **so what about sex
then? I've heard that
cocaine makes you
shag like a demon?**

A: IF YOU'RE THINKING OF A DEMON WITH A TINY, flaccid penis, this may well be true. In America, one of the slang terms for cocaine is 'shrink dick', because of its ability to wither the parts that other drugs can't reach.

The truth of the matter is that some people do report an enhanced sex drive when using small quantities of cocaine. Whether this is due to the pharmacological effects of the drug itself, or a psychological effect deriving from the associations the drug has with power and glamour is a subject for some debate among cocaine aficionados.

Because cocaine is a local anaesthetic, its pharmacological action acts to deaden sensation rather than enhance it, so applied topically to the penis, it can allow men to perform for much longer periods without ejaculation. However, if the cocaine is transmitted to the woman's genital area, that will also be deadened, producing a strange, sensationless fuck that could well be extremely useful to people in their attempts to scale any social or career ladder.

On the other hand though, cocaine is a vasodilator, and so opens the blood vessels on



In America, one of the slang terms for cocaine is 'shrink dick', because of its ability to wither the parts that other drugs can't reach.

larger doses, which can make it almost impossible to get an erection.

(For more up-to-date information on this topic, as always, the Internet is helpful. I'd recommend the Yahoo club, 'crack smokers', as a location where a number of self-confessed 'coke 'ho's' hang out looking for men with the price of a pipe who like to get on down and party. The technologically challenged might want to check out their local 'ho stroll' and identify the skinniest skank on the block for up-to-date local intelligence.)

Either way, whether you're a coke 'ho or a Mack Daddy, doing that nasty freak shit with Uncle Charlie won't stop you getting pregnant or getting a sexually transmitted disease. So if there's any chance that you're going to do the wild thing on white, then plenty of water-based lubricants and some good strong condoms are highly recommended.

will people like me if I use cocaine?

 **A:** YOU'LL HAVE ALWAYS PLENTY OF FRIENDS for at least as long as the bag lasts. You'll be even more popular if you allow people to help themselves from your stash. On the other hand, a cokehead with no money and no credit is the loneliest man in the world.

does cocaine make you go mad?

 **A:** AS WITH SO MANY DRUG RELATED problems, this is somewhat dependent on dose. People who just buy the odd half gram and snort it over the course of an evening with a couple of friends are unlikely to ever experience the full delights of cocaine psychosis.

Unlike amphetamines, where you can get a good run of insanity going for less than a hundred quid if you spend your money wisely, cocaine psychosis is expensive. You really need to be taking large quantities – ideally, enough to keep you up all night – for a protracted period – at least three or four nights, but the longer it is, the crazier you'll get.

This is quite easy to achieve on speed, but can cost rather a lot of money with cocaine. However, thanks to the staunch commitment to equal opportunities by our friends in the Cali Cartel and the Medellin Mafia, the pleasures of cocaine induced insanity can be shared by anyone with a

decent credit limit or a moderate amount of equity in their house.

After a protracted period of use, thinking starts becoming confused. This is usually followed by paranoia – suspicion that people are watching you, talking about you, following you. This stage can sometimes be difficult to diagnose given how self-obsessed many cokeheads are prior to even taking the drug, but once people reach the stage of unscrewing all their electrical fittings to check for bugs, and start taping carpets over all the windows so that the cameras can't see in, you should have a pretty good idea that it's the coke rather than their normal overinflated ego that's causing the problem.

The final stage of cocaine psychosis is hallucinations. These can be visual, aural and tactile. People start to see the little dwarf that's been following them about. They literally feel the bugs that are crawling around under their skin.

This shouldn't be confused with crack smokers. Crack smokers might crawl around the carpet, picking up tiny pieces of fluff and putting it in the pipe, but that isn't because they are psychotic – they are still acting quasi-rationally – simply seeking more crack. When they pick the skin off their face, or pull out their hair, it isn't because they believe there are bugs underneath; it's simply a nervous tic.

When real cocaine psychosis sets in though, things start to get really weird.

Fortunately, provided we aren't talking about an underlying psychiatric condition that is triggered by the coke, the psychosis should subside after a period of abstinence and rest. Unfortunately though, this stage only tends to be reached by people who have become locked into a pattern of compulsive/addictive use.

Which brings us to our next question...

Q: is cocaine addictive then?

A: IT DEPENDS WHAT YOU MEAN BY addiction. If you mean does it cause physical dependence, in the same way that heroin, alcohol or tobacco does, then no. There isn't a well-defined withdrawal syndrome, and you don't have physical tolerance, even though the size of your lines may well increase over the course of a single binge.

When we do something pleasurable, one of the chemicals in our brain that regulates mood called dopamine releases a message that roughly translates as "Mmm. That was nice. More please." When we do cocaine, our dopamine levels go through the roof – that's the high.

Under normal circumstances, the dopamine level rapidly returns to normal (this is the crash) and we get on with our lives. With repeated cocaine use, though, your brain chemistry is altered and so the dopamine message keeps firing off, demanding more and more pleasure in the form of cocaine.

Which is why, even when cocaine use becomes unpleasant – you're agitated, paranoid and think you're in the process of having a heart attack – some people will still keep taking more and more. It isn't that they are particularly perverse. It's just that they've taken a drug that keeps hitting the 'do it again' switch in the brain, and so it's this rather than a simple lack of willpower that can sabotage attempts to wrest control of their brain back from the chemistry.

An example of how powerful this neurochemical reconditioning is, can be seen in a famous experiment where caged monkeys were provided with unlimited amounts of cocaine. Whenever the monkeys wanted to get high, they simply stepped on a lever and a dose of coke was whapped into their systems.

The monkeys just kept stepping on that lever, ignoring all of their other basic needs such as food and sex, until they eventually died.

Some other scientists did a similar experiment with rats, and they found that if they gave the rats other things to do – provided them with food, space, exercise and toys – in short, the things that make up a rewarding life, then those rats tended not to display the same self-destructive behavior, and their cocaine use was closer to that of the human recreational snorter.

But we can still see that same behavior pattern in heavy cocaine users, who are unhappy with what cocaine is doing to their health, their relationships



and their finances yet they still can't seem to break the pattern of buying and using cocaine, no matter how miserable it makes them.

Does that make it addictive? Or not? From where I sit, it doesn't much matter. If you're having a problem and you can't change your behavior on your own, it's a pretty good idea to go and get some help with it.



...scientists found that if they gave the rats the things that make up a rewarding life, then their cocaine use was closer to that of the human recreational snorter.

Q: how hard is it to stop?

A: HOW LONG IS A PIECE OF STRING? SOME people can be heavy coke users for years, decide they don't like it any more and just give up on the spot and never think about it again. Other people might smoke crack for a few days and not be able to stop until they've sold their house, their

car and their furniture, and then alienated all their family and friends by borrowing and stealing money from people they love and care about.

Basically, the answer is that you don't know how hard it is to stop until you try.

Q: is it possible to overdose on cocaine?

A: THERE IS SOMETHING OF A MYTH THAT IT IS impossible to overdose on cocaine. This isn't true. In the past, cocaine overdoses were quite rare, again, because there wasn't an awful lot of the stuff about, and when it was available, it was expensive.

Today though, Accident and Emergency Units see cocaine overdoses on a regular basis. A lethal dose is believed to be somewhere around a gram (depending on body weight), and it's not at all uncommon today for people to go through a gram in a couple of hours.



symptoms of cocaine overdose include;

- seizure/fitting
- high temperature
- dry, cracking skin
- delirium



the recovery position

Seizures are one of the more common side effects of cocaine use, and tend to resemble the kind of Grand Mal fitting that one sees in epileptics. Someone affected by a cocaine seizure will drop to the floor, lose consciousness and start to shake uncontrollably. If this happens try and ease their fall if they collapse. Give them room by moving anything they are likely to bang into. Loosen the clothing around the neck and protect the head by putting a cushion or coat underneath it. When the convulsions stop, if the person is unconscious, put them in the recovery position and call for an ambulance. A minor seizure is where someone is still conscious but often staring into space, with strange twitching movements. In this case sit them down and talk to them to reassure them.

If someone you are with displays any of these symptoms, the only sensible approach is to call an ambulance immediately. Just pick up that phone and call 999. You can dump your stash or beat a hasty retreat after the ambulance has arrived, but

do make the call, and make it fast.

Seizures are caused by electrical activity in the brain. Although they tend to be caused in the first instance by high doses of cocaine, once a user has experienced one of these seizures, there is a very strong chance that they will continue to have them in the future. Experts call this the 'kindling effect', because of the way that after that first incident, even tiny amounts can produce the same electrical changes, resulting in further fitting.

Anyone who has experienced a cocaine-related seizure would be well advised to see a neurologist, for a full medical examination, and should avoid taking any cocaine in the future

Another of the problems cocaine causes is an increased risk of heart attack. If you have ever suffered from any coronary problems, or if there is a history of heart disease in your family, it would probably be a good idea to avoid cocaine altogether. If you experience discomfort in the chest while taking cocaine, you should stop doing it immediately. Often, this is nothing more than anxiety, but sometimes it actually isn't. If the pain doesn't subside after your intense paranoia and anxiety has worn off, you should seek qualified medical help. Unless they happen to be doctors, the people you're taking cocaine with don't count. Remember that they have a vested interest in seeing you drop down dead. They'll get your share of the coke as well. You think that's cold? Wait till you've been using a little longer...



Q: this is all government propaganda. I read an article in the Scientific American that said cocaine was about as harmless as marijuana.

A: THAT ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN IN THE EARLY 70's, in the days when cocaine was still very expensive and before the USA had seen the influx of enormous amounts of cheap cocaine on the streets. We know a great deal more cocaine since this article was written. As for the propaganda thing, personally, I really couldn't care less whether you took cocaine or not. We just think that if you're going to do anything, it's a pretty good idea to be in full possession of the facts. You wanna take cocaine? then go ahead and knock yourself out.

Q: OK, so what if I might have a problem? What kind of help is available, and does it work?

A: IT DEPENDS ON HOW SEVERE YOUR PROBLEM is, and how committed you are to over-coming it. There is help available out there, but the quality is more than a little variable.

For people who are just snorting small to moderate quantities, stopping or moderating your use without help shouldn't prove to be difficult at all.

For people whose intake had been somewhat higher, crack smokers and injectors and whose life

is becoming chaotic and unmanageable as a result, a more structured plan might be more helpful.

If you don't wish to seek help, there are a number of things you may be able to do yourself.

Perhaps the most important factor in returning to a normal life is achieving abstinence from cocaine use. Over time, dopamine and serotonin levels do return to normal, but this won't happen while you're still using coke.

Relaxation and physical exercise can reduce adrenaline levels, helping to control the cravings.

Self-help groups like Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous can provide a valuable system of social support. While the somewhat moralistic philosophy doesn't work for everyone, it seems to be working for Will Self at the moment, so it might work for you too.

A thorough medical work over is a good idea. There's a lot of evidence lately that much heavy drug use, particularly cocaine use, is an attempt to self-medicate an underlying problem such as depression. Anti-depressants like Prozac work better for this, and are a hell of a lot cheaper as well. Plus you won't go to jail for taking Prozac.

Finally, if your problem is particularly acute, especially if you're using other drugs like heroin or alcohol in combination, you might need in-patient treatment to help you achieve and sustain abstinence for an adequate period. If you have got loads of money, then it probably makes sense to check into an expensive rehab-after all, you'd only spend the money on coke anyway. If you've already blown it though, you'd better get your arse down to your local Community Drugs Team or Drugs Advice Centre along with the rest of us.



This is all government propaganda. I read an article in the Scientific American that said cocaine was about as harmless as marijuana.

top tips

1 If you insist on using coke, then stick to snorting, and keep it for special occasions.

2 Injecting coke is a bad idea. If you do inject coke, make sure that you use clean equipment, and be very careful about identifying your works, so it doesn't get mixed up with that of your friends.

3 Smoking crack is a real bad plan. Think of that pit bull again.

4 If you're spending more money on it than you can afford, you probably have a problem.

5 If you find yourself doing it every day, you probably have a problem.

6 If you find you do it on your own, you probably have a problem.

7 If you're trading sex for drugs, then you probably have a problem.

8 If you're lying about your use, you may have a problem.

9 Finally, if you do have a problem, you may want to think about getting help. Remember, help for a drug problem often isn't completely successful the first time, but the rates of success increase with additional treatment events. So don't let past treatment failures prevent you from getting further treatment. Uh, that's it.



about the author...

Peter McDermott has a background in drugs research that has embraced both formal and informal styles of data collection. After many years experience of using drugs services, he writes extensively about a range of drug-related issues for professional periodicals and national newspapers and magazines and has also worked as a researcher/consultant on a number of television documentaries.

Illustrations by Mike Linnell © Lifeline Publications 2001