

Information on Cocaine (Crack)

■ *Studies have shown that cocaine may be one of the most addictive of all illicit drugs. Some users spend hundreds or thousands of dollars on cocaine and crack and will do anything to support their habit. Many turn to drug selling, prostitution or other crimes. This creates an enormous burden on society in terms of drug related crimes, costs for health care and social services, and lost productivity.*

■ *There are more than 300,000 regular cocaine users in New York City alone. Many cocaine users also abuse other drugs.*

■ *Cocaine comes from the leaf of the coca plant. Sold on the streets, it can be in the form of a fine crystalline powder, flakes, or in a coarser form called "Rock" cocaine or "Crack."*

■ *Street Cocaine is typically diluted with fillers such as cornstarch, sugars and baby laxatives.*

■ *Sniffing or snorting the drug is the most common means of ingestion. It is also applied to mucous membranes, sprayed into the back of the mouth or throat with an atomizer, injected or smoked.*

■ *Cocaine is a potent local anesthetic which interferes with the action of chemical neurotransmitters that convey impulses to nerve centers in the brain.*

■ *Physical symptoms include an rapid heartbeat, a rise in body temperature and blood pressure, dilated pupils, sweating and pallor. Large doses may lead to bizarre, erratic or violent behavior.*

■ *Regular users report restlessness, irritability, anxiety, loss of appetite and sleep. Others report hallucinations of touch, sight, taste or smell.*
