



# FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ATS INTOXICATION

The use of amphetamine type stimulants causes an increase in the availability of “feel good” neurotransmitters in the brain. These neurotransmitters are dopamine, noradrenalin and serotonin. They have numerous actions in the body including regulating the need for sleep. This is why ATS are considered “wakefulness” drugs, as ongoing or heavy use can keep people awake for long periods of time.

Noradrenalin plays an important role as a neurotransmitter and is associated with:

- › Increased heart rate
- › Increased blood pressure
- › Dilation of pupils
- › Dilation of air passages in the lungs
- › Narrowing of blood vessels in non-essential organs
- › Triggered release of glucose from energy stores

It is often referred to as a ‘fight or flight’ chemical, as it is responsible for the body’s reaction to stressful situations

Serotonin plays an important role as a neurotransmitter in the regulation of:

- › Anger/aggression
- › Mood
- › Sexual activity
- › Sleep
- › Sensitivity to pain
- › Appetite and metabolism
- › Temperature

Increased dopamine levels are associated with:

- › Euphoria and excitation
- › Intensification of emotions
- › Elevation of self-esteem
- › Increased alertness and aggression
- › Decreased appetite and elevation of libido
- › Dopamine deficits linked to ADHD

Disruptions to dopamine systems are closely linked to psychosis and schizophrenia

Sleep deprivation may result in:

- › Depressed state
- › Decreased mental activity and concentration
- › Delirium
- › Depersonalisation/derealisation
- › Hyperactivity
- › Irritability
- › Memory lapses or loss
- › Slurred or nonsensical speech
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