

HEROIN FACT SHEET

What is Heroin?

- It is a highly addictive drug that is produced from the opium poppy plant.
- It is a depressant that inhibits the central nervous system and affects the brain's pleasure systems, which interferes with the brain's ability to perceive pain.
- Pure heroin cannot be taken, as it causes a severe overdose. To lower the quantity of pure heroin, the drug is often cut with nutmeg, sucrose, starch, caffeine, chalk, powdered milk, flour or talcum powder. Local anesthetics, such as lidocaine and procaine, may also be used. Additionally, laundry detergent, Ajax cleaning powder and poisons like strychnine are also used to cut heroin.



Street Names

- Horse, Smack, Dope, Mud, H, Dog.....(many others)

Appearance

- Pure heroin is a white powder with a bitter taste. Street heroin comes in granule, powder, solution or pill forms and varies in color from white to dark brown. Color variations occur due to additives or impurities left from the manufacturing process.



Short Term Effects

- Euphoric surge or 'rush'.
- Dry mouth.
- Begin to nod in and out / arms and legs will feel heavy and rubbery.
- Diminished mental capacity / "cloudy" mental function / dulled emotions.
- Slower breathing rate - can reach a point of respiratory failure.
- The effects of heroin last three to four hours after each dose has been administered.
- Other heroin effects - slowed and slurred speech, slow gait, constricted pupils, droopy eyelids, impaired night vision, vomiting, constipation, hallucinations, and a dream like reality about life.
- Some drug users trying heroin for the first time become heroin addicts the next day.



Long Term Effects

- Heroin abuse is associated with serious health conditions, including fatal overdose, spontaneous abortion, and—particularly in users who inject the drug—infectious disease, including HIV/AIDS and hepatitis.
- Chronic users may develop collapsed veins, infection of the heart lining and valves, abscesses, and liver or kidney disease. Pulmonary complications, including various types of pneumonia, may result from the poor health of the abuser as well as from heroin's depressing effects on respiration.

- In addition to the effects of the drug itself, street heroin often contains toxic contaminants or additives that can clog blood vessels leading to the lungs, liver, kidneys, or brain, causing permanent damage to vital organs.
- Chronic use of heroin leads to physical dependence, a state in which the body has adapted to the presence of the drug. It is estimated that about 23 percent of individuals who use heroin become dependent on it.
- With regular heroin use, tolerance develops, in which the user's physiological (and psychological) response to the drug decreases and more heroin is needed to achieve the same intensity of effect.

How Is It Used?

- Heroin is injected, snorted, or smoked. Many new younger users begin by snorting or smoking heroin. These users often mistakenly believe that snorting or smoking heroin will not lead to addiction. Users who snort or smoke heroin at times graduate to injection because their bodies become conditioned to the drug, and the effects it produces are less intense.
- Most regular users inject either intravenously (into a vein) or intramuscularly (into a muscle, usually the shoulder) after heating heroin powder in water. When this method is used, the individual will start to feel the effects of the drug (feelings of euphoria followed by a deep sense of relaxation) in less than 10 minutes.
- When smoked, heroin is heated on foil and the vapor inhaled through a tube or rolled-up bank note. This is known as chasing the dragon.
- Those who snort may use a straw, rolled up dollar bill, outer skin of a ballpoint pen, or other similar items to inhale the crushed heroin.

Where Is It Coming From?

- The majority is believed to be coming from the Cincinnati area.

Withdrawal

- Withdrawing from heroin is a fact that all heroin users must face sooner or later. Withdrawing from heroin without help results in severe cramps, muscle spasms, sickness and pain for the heroin addict. Withdrawal pain keeps them going back to heroin in order to function throughout their day.

Legality

- Heroin is a Schedule 1 drug, which is defined as having a high potential for abuse and serving no legitimate medical purpose.
- Possession of heroin is a Class D felony, which carries a prison sentence of 6 months to 3 years and a fine up to \$10,000.
- Dealing heroin is a Class B felony, which carries a prison sentence of 6 years to 20 years and a fine up to \$10,000.

References

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