

Easy-to-Read Drug Facts

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Heroin (Smack, Junk) Facts



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Heroin is a white or brown powder or a black, sticky goo. It can be mixed with water and injected with a needle. Heroin can also be smoked or snorted up the nose.

Heroin can cause a rush of good feelings just after it's taken. But some people throw up or itch after taking it. For the next several hours you may want to sleep, and your heart rate and breathing can slow down. Then the drug wears off and you may feel a strong urge to take more.

Some slang names for heroin are:

- Smack
- Junk
- H
- Black tar
- Horse

Signs of Heroin Use and Addiction

Heroin can give you a feeling of well-being and happiness. It can also make you feel like the world has slowed down. People on heroin may think slowly and might move slowly.

Heroin can make people feel sleepy, like they're in a dream.

Heroin makes the pupils (the black circle in the center of each eye) get very small.

People who inject (shoot up) heroin may have marks on the skin where the needle went in.

Heroin can be addictive no matter if it's injected, smoked, or snorted. People who get addicted to heroin need to keep taking it to feel normal and may take more and more of it to get the same high.

When heroin wears off, people might:

- have pain in muscles and bones
- get chills
- throw up
- be unable to sleep
- feel nervous



Effects of Heroin on Brains and Bodies

These are just some of the problems heroin can cause:

Sick and Itchy

Heroin can make you throw up and feel very itchy.

You Stop Breathing

Heroin can slow or stop your breathing. It can kill you.

HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis

Sharing used needles to inject (shoot up) heroin can give you HIV/AIDS or hepatitis (a liver disease). People can also get these diseases by having unsafe sex. They may forget to use condoms because they're high on the drug.

Overdose

People overdose on heroin because they can't tell how strong it is until they take it. Signs of a heroin overdose are slow breathing, slow or stopped heartbeat, blue lips and fingernails, cold clammy skin, and shaking. You may be unable to wake a person up or they are unable to speak. You can die from a heroin overdose. If someone you know has any of these signs, you should call 911 immediately. All you have to say is that the person isn't responding or breathing.

Coma and Death

Heroin can put you in a coma. That's when nothing can wake you up. Heroin can also kill you.

Addiction

It can be very easy to become addicted to heroin. When people addicted to heroin first try to quit, it can be hard. They might have pain in their muscles and bones, get chills, throw up, and feel nervous. They will feel a very strong need to take the drug to feel better.

The good news is there are medicines that can help someone with heroin addiction. Counseling can make treatment more effective.

Remember that even with treatment, it can be hard to stay away from heroin because your body may crave it. These cravings can happen even years later, and it may take many tries to stop using heroin. This is normal. This is also why it's important to stay in treatment for as long as your doctor suggests to have good results.



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Heroin can make you throw up.