

HEROIN

and other OPIATES



HEROIN STREET NAMES

Smack, Horse, Mud, Brown Sugar, Junk, Black Tar, Big H, Dope, Skag Skunk, Hell Dust, Thunder, Chiba

Heroin is the most abundant and the most rapidly acting of opiate based drugs. It is processed from morphine, a natural occurring substance extracted from the Asian opium poppy plant. It is classified as a Schedule I drug—the group of the most highly addictive drugs—in the U.S. It is typically sold as a white or brownish powder or as the black sticky substance known as “black tar heroin.”

FACTS ON HEROIN

How is Heroin abused?

Heroin is injected, smoked, freebased (where pure forms of heroin are lit and the smoke inhaled), or snorted. All these methods can lead to addiction and other severe health problems.

How does Heroin affect the brain?

Heroin enters the brain very quickly and binds to many areas, especially those involved with feelings of pain and reward. In addition, it binds to areas on the brain stem that control automatic processes such as breathing, blood pressure and arousal. Because of this, heroin overdoses regularly involves slowed or stopped breathing.

What is a Heroin high?

Within 7 to 8 seconds, users report a surge of euphoria (“rush”) lasting anywhere from 5-8 minutes, accompanied by dry mouth, a warm flushing of the skin, and a heaviness of the extremities. Following the euphoria, users report going “on the nod,” an alternatively wakeful and sleepy state. Users who don’t inject the drug may not experience the initial rush, but other effects are the same.

How addictive is Heroin?

Heroin is **super-addictive**. This is because it enters the brain so quickly and affects the parts of the brain responsible for feelings of pain and reward.

HEALTH EFFECTS OF HEROIN

Heroin abuse is associated with serious health problems. Most common conditions include fatal overdoses, spontaneous abortions, and infectious diseases including HIV/AIDS and hepatitis.

Chronic users usually develop collapsed veins, infections of the heart lining and valves, abscesses (a collection of pus in any part of the body), and liver and kidney diseases. Many other complications are known to develop due to the poor health of the user including various types of pneumonia.

In addition to the effects of the drug itself, street heroin almost always contains toxic additives and chemicals that clog the blood vessels going to the lungs, liver, kidneys, or brain, causing permanent damage to vital organs.



Signs and symptoms of heroin use include:

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|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Track marks on arms | Slowed breathing |
| Scratches on face & body | “Glazed” expression |
| Slowed and slurred speech | Mood swings |
| Impaired mental function | Constricted pupils |
| Euphoria | Poor appetite |

Signs and symptoms of heroin overdose include:

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|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Shallow breathing | Seizures |
| Pinpoint pupils | Coma |
| Clammy skin | Weak Pulse |
| Bluish skin, fingernails and/or lips | |

Heroin Withdrawal

With regular use, tolerance develops—meaning the user must use more heroin to achieve the same effect. As higher doses are used, physical dependence and addiction develop.

Withdrawal symptoms include:

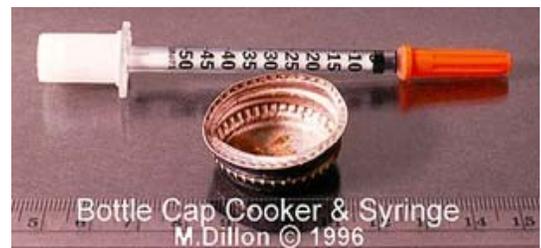
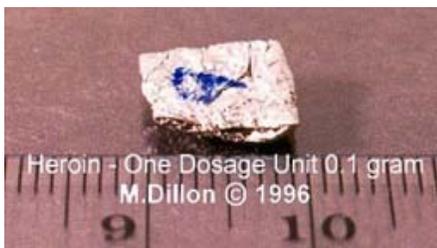
Abdominal cramp	Insomnia	Dilated pupils
Muscle and bone pain	Vomiting	Restlessness
Kicking movements	Chills	
Runny nose & eyes	Sweating	

Major withdrawal symptoms peak between 48 and 72 hours after the last dose and usually subside within a week, although some symptoms may last for months. Sudden withdrawal for heavy users in poor health can sometimes be fatal.

HEROIN IN HAWAII

In 2010, drug enforcement seized just over 2.5 kilograms of Heroin in Hawaii. Most of the heroin seized in Hawaii is black tar heroin from Mexico. The primary entry point for heroin remains the Honolulu International Airport with body couriers from Mexico sneaking it in or parcel post. Users get Heroin from street dealers with amounts packaged in tin foil, balloons, or plastic wrap.

The heroin problem in Hawaii has been slowly decreasing. In 2010, substance abuse treatment admissions for heroin at state funded facilities was 104.



WHAT ARE OPIATES?

Opiates are made from opium, which comes from the poppy plant. Opiates can be converted into Heroin, which is an illegal substance. Other opiates—like Vicodine and Oxycontin—are prescribed by physicians for the treatment of legitimate pain associated with chronic conditions, such as cancer. Prescribed opiates can be harmful because many people develop a high tolerance for the drug, often times leading to addiction and even overdose by mistake.

Abuse of prescription opiates are on the rise in Hawaii and is a growing concern because of its availability. The amount of opiate-related treatment admissions has increased from 2006 to 2010 with 244 admissions.

Effects of Opiates:

Opiates function as central nervous system depressants, which slow down responses—including the brain—to external stimuli. Depending on which opiate has been consumed, the user may:

Feel sedated, no response of pupils to light, slurred speech, exhibit decreased ability to reason, slowed breathing, and impaired reflexes.

Common Opiates:

Heroin	Morphine
Oxycontin	Methodone
Hydrocodone	Opium
Codeine	Vicodine

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Prevention Resource Center
(808) 545-3228 ext. 34
(800) 845-1946
prc@drugfreehawaii.org
www.drugfreehawaii.org



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All information was compiled by the Prevention Resource Center of Drug-Free Hawaii for educational purposes only. Sources: www.drugabuse.gov; www.streetdrugs.org; www.sayno.com; NIDA Community Drug Alert Bulletin on Heroin, www.nida.nih.gov; Drug Enforcement Administration, www.usdoj.gov, <http://www.addictionsandrecovery.org/opiates-narcotics-recovery.htm>