

**DRUG  
ENFORCEMENT  
ADMINISTRATION**



# The Truth About **Heroin**

Heroin is an illegal and highly addictive drug.



#### **What is heroin?**

- It is an opiate drug processed from morphine, a substance extracted from certain poppy plants.
- It appears as a white or brownish powder or a black sticky substance, known as black tar heroin.

#### **Street Names**

Big H, Black Tar, H, Horse, Junk, Ska, Smack, Thunder

#### **How is it used?**

- It is injected with a needle, smoked or snorted.

#### **How does heroin affect your body?**

- Heroin enters the brain very quickly.
- It is **addictive both psychologically and physically.**
- It can depress breathing. Overdoses can be fatal.

#### **What is the effect of using heroin?**

- Abusers report feeling a surge of euphoria followed by a state of sleep and wakefulness.
  - Those who inject heroin risk infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, liver or kidney disease.
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## True or False?

- Heroin is less dangerous if you snort or smoke it. **False.**  
Fact: There is **no safe** way of using it. You can still **die from an overdose** or become addicted by snorting or smoking it.
- Stopping heroin use is easy. **False.**  
Fact: Withdrawal from heroin produces drug cravings, restlessness, muscle and bone pain, chills, nervousness, diarrhea, vomiting, and other symptoms that usually last about a week, but may last for months.

## Did you know?

- The vast majority of teens are not using heroin. In a 2013 national survey, only 0.6% used heroin in the past year. (Source: University of Michigan, 2013 Monitoring the Future Study)
- A large majority of teens think people **risk harming themselves** using heroin. In a 2012 national survey, 8 out of 10 think using heroin is very risky. (Source: SAMHSA, 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH))
- Recent trends indicate that heroin **use is increasing** for persons 18 years of age and older. The number of people reporting past year heroin use was almost two times greater in 2012 (669,000) than in 2007 (373,000). (Source: SAMHSA, 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH))
- Reasons for the increase in heroin use and addiction may be due to the decrease in the use of prescription painkillers, as a result of changes in the OxyContin formulary, stricter laws, and costs. Heroin is cheaper and offers the same type of high. (Source: SAMHSA News Release, 8/22/13)

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For drug prevention information, visit DEA's websites:

dea.gov	GetSmartAboutDrugs.com	JustThinkTwice.com
		
	For parents, caregivers, and educators.	For teens.